

# Jonestown Bible Church

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**The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice; Let the many islands be glad. Clouds and thick darkness surround Him; Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. Fire goes before Him, and burns up His adversaries round about. His lightnings lit up the world; the earth saw and trembled. Psalm 97:1-4**

April 26, 2023

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We rejoice over what the Lord did in hearts as the JBC Choir and drama team presented our Easter musical, *He Is Risen...Amen*. As the gospel was shared and an invitation given we were privileged to know that there were at least five decisions made for Christ. There is no greater miracle than a heart made new by the transforming power of Christ. In the midst of all the trials and tragedies we must endure, let us remember that through it all the power of Christ is at work. For the believer there is so much to be grateful for as we focus upon what God is desiring to do in and through us in the midst of the storm. Those who are lost in their sin are looking at us in the midst of those storms and watching to see how we handle it and if this Jesus is real. The Psalmist reminds us of who is in control of all things and who has all the power; *The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice; Let the many islands be glad. Clouds and thick darkness surround Him; Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne. Fire goes before Him, and burns up His adversaries round about. His lightnings lit up the world; the earth saw and trembled*, Psalm 97:1-4. We look at the universe He created and we marvel at the awesome power He displays. Have you ever gazed at the ocean and the power of the waves or the wind of a storm, or the lightning as it flashes across the sky? As believers the Lord wants to show us an even greater display of his power. It is the power of His grace when we are at our weakest.

The Apostle Paul came to experience this when he asked the Lord to deliver him from some kind of ongoing affliction. He wrote to the church at Corinth; *And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me—to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong*, 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.

When the world sees that we are relying completely on Christ and the power of His grace they will be drawn to the Savior as they see Him at work in our lives in the midst of the storm. It is then that we, the light of the world, shine the brightest. Christ, the true light, shines through us. Take heart dear Christian, His grace will empower you and carry you through. Remember, His grace is without limit and never weakens. It is a constant source of power.

There's something strange in the air where the Catatumbo River flows into Lake Maracaibo. For 260 nights out of the year, often up to 10 hours at a time, the sky above

April 26, 2023  
Page 2

the river is pierced by almost constant lightning, producing as many as 280 strikes per hour. Known as "the Catatumbo lightning," this everlasting lightning storm has been raging for as long as people can remember.

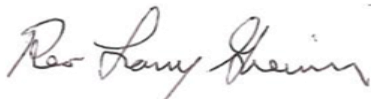
In 1595, Sir Francis Drake's attempt to take the city of Maracaibo by night was foiled when the lightning storm's flashes gave away his position to the city's defenders.

This happened again during the Venezuelan war of Independence in 1823, when Spanish ships were revealed by the lightning and fell to Simon Bolivar's upstart Navy. In fact, the lightning, visible for 25 miles away, is so regular that it has been used as a navigation aid by ships and is known among sailor's as Maracaibo Beacon. Interestingly, little to no sound accompanies this fantastic light show, as the lightning moves from cloud to cloud above the ground. It's still unknown exactly why this area, and this area alone, should produce such regular lightning.

As the Psalmist said; *His lightnings lit up the world; the earth saw and trembled*, Psalm 97:4. God has the attention of the world through this incredible display of lightning. God wants to display His incredible power in you and me.

*Your light must shine before people in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven*, Matthew 5:16.

In Our Savior's Love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Pastor Larry".

Pastor Larry