

Take Heart

This is an excerpt from Watchman Nee's book, *The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*.

"When God repeated to Abraham that his wife Sarah would bring forth a son, he fell upon his face and laughed. Was he laughing at God? (Genesis 17:17)

No, he was really laughing at himself. It was too impossible of a situation for him. Yet in the midst of such a situation, he believed in God.

It is strange that in easy situations, it is hard to believe in God, while in hard situations, it is easy to believe in God. Easy situations do not help a person believe in God.

When a man reaches a desperate situation, he truly believes in God. Hence, God always guides us in two ways: He causes us to trust in Him by bringing us to the end in our environment and by bringing our flesh to its end.

The lesson from the environment is outward, while the lesson from circumcision is inward.

For Sarah's womb to be deadened was an end in the environment; this was something outward.

For Abraham to be circumcised was for his flesh to be brought to its end; this was something inward.

We must be brought to our end before we can believe in God. If our flesh is dealt with, we will believe in God whether the environment is smooth or difficult.

God does not want a mixed faith, but a pure faith. We should not believe only when things look bright and we have confidence in ourselves. We should believe simply because God has spoken.

Abraham could not believe in this way thirteen years previously. But now he was brought to the point where he considered his body as being already dead and his wife's womb as being deadened.

The faith which he now had was a pure faith; it was one that believed in God alone. His previous faith was based on God and on himself.

His faith now was based on God alone because all his strength was gone, and there was nothing left in him; everything was finished. Abraham's laugh confirms this: To him everything in him was finished."

We have all faced difficult situations. Situations where we could find no solution, no resolution without God's intervention. These situations cause us to come to Him, to turn fully and face Him, to put our trust in His hands alone. Jesus forewarned us in John 16:33, "I have told you all this so that you may have peace in Me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

God never intended that we would live life on our own terms. Going our own way and doing things in our own strength often lead to times of frustration, pain, and agony of the soul. God's dream from the beginning, even before the foundations of the world were set in place, was that He would have a family on the earth who would reflect His nature, His Glory, with every breath taken. His intention was that we would be a people of faith who took Him at His Word and lived fully from that place.

James 1:2-8 says, "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, *knowing* that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking *nothing*. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to *all* liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. **But** let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."

We have a small window of time to get our story straight about who God is in our lives. He is our all in all. He did not give us things or pieces of Himself, He gave us everything in Christ. We lack for no good thing.

Watchmen Nee said there was a time in Abraham's life where his faith was twofold...some in God and the rest in what he could do for himself. And God allowed the promise to delay until Abraham could not bring it to pass in his own strength. Now, the dependency was upon God for the promise to be fulfilled.

God does the same with us. He allows situations to come to strengthen our trust, our faith in Him alone. Diagnosis come. Jobs are lost. And the only way that help can come is from God. Doctors cannot help. Medicine fails. The bank account is empty.....yet, God is our all in all. And He did not come to give us things, He came to give us Himself.

Personal Applications

1. What situations are you facing in your life today that you have the strength to resolve yourself?
2. What situations are you facing today that are impossible for you to resolve in your own strength?
3. It took Abraham 13 years before he came to a place where he realized his strength was not sufficient to bring about the promise of God. God was not nervous about it. He was not moved by Abraham or Sarah's age. He was not wringing His hands because they were past the age of child bearing.

Isaiah 55:10-11 *For as the rain comes down, and the snow from Heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, So shall My Word be that goes forth from My mouth; **It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.***

Take a moment to look back at places where you seemed to wait for a long time before you felt God touched a certain area in your life. Can you see how the wait worked for good in your life? If not, journal a few of your thoughts and then ask God to open your eyes to see the situation like He sees it.

4. 2 Corinthians 5:7 says that we walk by faith, not by sight. What does this mean to you?

Practical Applications for the Lighthouse

1. What situations are you facing as a Lighthouse - that has been planted by God in your town as a gift to that town – that can be resolved through the giftings and talents of those in the group?
2. What situations are you facing as a Lighthouse that are impossible to be resolved by the giftings and talents of those in the group and cause you as a group to depend totally upon God?
3. As a Lighthouse, what promises do you have from the Lord that have yet to be fulfilled and how are you partnering with Him to see those promises come into fruition?
4. As a Lighthouse, what assignments do you feel that the Lord has given this group to fulfill in your town?
5. What are the steps you are taking to see those God-given assignments fulfilled?
6. Would you say that the team spends more time trying to accomplish the assignments out of their own strengths or worshipping and thanking God for revealing the next step to take? Do you see any places where adjustments need to be made? Record answers.