

September 17, 2020

Words of encouragement to live by.

Faith is necessary for salvation, of that there is no question. However, faith also grows and matures and as it matures it sees beyond today to a reality that is born of that faith which is in God. Scripture is filled with stories of people who could see beyond today by faith. Some of them are; Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Hannah, Stephen, the Syro-Phoenician woman, and many others. Let us read 1 Samuel 1:9-11.

9 Then Hannah rose after eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. 10 She, greatly distressed, prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly. 11 She made a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and a razor shall never come on his head."

Scripture defines faith as "The substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). There is no doubt that this is true and accurate. Yet, many Christians fail to realize their faith should grow each day. Your faith should get stronger as you are drawn by God into a deeper relationship with Him through His Son, Jesus.

The story of Samuel is introduced to us through the story of his mother's visionary faith. Elkanah, Samuel's father, had two wives. The one Peninah had children but the other, Hannah had none. Peninah ridiculed and mocked Hannah for not having children. Despite Peninah's attitude towards her, Hannah saw a time when God would bless her with a child.

Hannah's prayer to God was made from a sincere and desperate heart. She promised God that if God would grant her a son she would give and consecrate her son to God. When Eli, the priest, saw her praying he thought she was intoxicated because of her fervent prayer.

God answers prayer. God answers Hannah's prayer enabling her to conceive. The child is consecrated to God from the womb. Samuel is born to Hannah and Elkanah. This is a wonderful story of visionary and victorious faith. But what should we apply to our lives from this story?

Our circumstances are used by God to grow our faith. It is the difficult times of our lives in which God strengthens and increases our faith. Consider these biblical stories: Jonah rebels against God and because of the storm (physical and spiritual) that surrounds Jonah his faith and that of the sailor's is increased. Then there is this account of Paul, in chains, who is being taken to Rome. On the way a great storm arises and the ship is wrecked but not before God uses Paul to encourage the other people on the ship.

Visionary Faith sees beyond today. While we may not know what tomorrow will bring we do know who holds tomorrow in the palm of His hand. Therefore when our faith is in God it is in the One who controls tomorrow. We can live with the assurance of a future of God's design. Job asks, "Does God not see my ways, and number all my steps?" (Job 31:4). God already knows the plans that He has designed for your future (Jeremiah 29:11-14). Pray with visionary faith for God to keep you on His chosen path.

Visionary faith seeks God's direction and blessing. Hannah prayed fervently. She prayed from a desperate heart knowing God is able to accomplish the impossible. When we pray do we pray fervently? Are we desperate for God to work miracles in our lives? Consider these words from Jesus to the father desperate to see his son healed, who

asked Jesus, “If You can do anything, take pity on us and help us! ‘If you can! All things are possible to him who believes” (Mark 9:22-23).

Visionary faith trusts in the faithfulness of God. God is faithful despite our faithlessness towards God. The author of Hebrews admonishes, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering; for He who promised is faithful” (Hebrews 10:23). Remember it is God who made the promises to us.

Visionary faith waits for God to be God. Once we have prayed we believe that God will accomplish on our behalf that which we have prayed for. Jesus challenges the believer, “Have faith in God. Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it shall be granted him. Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you” (Mark 11:22-24).

Can you see tomorrow? Or is the future dark and cloudy? Trust in God with visionary faith that sees a brighter future. Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, thank You for being faithful to us despite our faithlessness towards You. Thank You, almighty God, for answering all of our prayers through Jesus our Lord, amen.

Never forget: The prayer that touches the heart of God will move the hand of God.

Until the nets are full