

“How to Have Faith During the Famine”

Genesis 12:1-20, (vs. 1, 5, 10)

Introduction: Many times it is difficult for the child of God to walk by faith and not by sight. Learning to walk by faith during the hard times is a life-long process.

Body: As we come to Genesis 12:10, we notice that Abram disobeyed what the Lord told him to do. Shortly after Abram arrived in Canaan, the place where God had told him to go, a famine came. A famine coming where God has sent you is a real test of your faith. Abraham's faith was tested here regarding the will of God, the promises of God, and his obedience to God.

- I. Rejoice in the Purposes of God Genesis 12:1, 4-5, 10
 - A. We often think that when we do the will of God everything will be grand. The tither thinks he will be prosperous, the salesman thinks it will mean more sales, the farmer thinks it will bring good crops, and the pastor thinks it will build a large church.
 - B. All of this can indeed occur; but if success and outward prosperity does not occur, it does not mean it is not the will of God.
 - C. The will of God is not determined by outward success but by the Word of God.
 - D. Romans 8:28- *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”*
 - E. “purpose”- (Webster) “That which a person sets before himself as an object to be reached or accomplished; the end or aim to which the view is directed in any plan, measure or exertion.”
 - F. Although we may not see it now, everything will one day be seen to fit into God's perfect plan.
 - G. This principle is seen in the life of Jacob.
 1. Joseph was gone; Reuben was disgraced; Judah was dishonored; Simeon and Levi had broken his heart; Dinah was defiled; Simeon was in prison; Rachel was dead; and famine threatened the family.
 2. Then came the demand from Egypt that Benjamin must appear there before its governor would release further supplies.
 3. Notice what Jacob said.
 4. Genesis 42:36- *“And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.”*
 5. How wrong he was! “These things” and many more were secretly working to his own good, as the end of the story proved. Certainly, all things work together for good.
 - H. God has two purposes in His plan: our good and His glory.
 - I. Revelation 4:10- *“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”*
 - J. Keep in mind that it was God's Word that sent Abram to Canaan.
 - K. It made no difference whether Abraham experienced a famine or not, his moving to Canaan was the will of God.
 - L. Our goal should be doing the will of God in our life. Hebrews 10:7, 9

1. The Will of God is Educated Psalm 143:10- *“Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.”*
2. The Will of God is Enjoyed Psalm 40:8- *“I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.”*

II. Rest in the Promises of God Genesis 12:2-3, 7-8

- A. Trials seem to mock the promises of God but they do not cancel those promises. Instead, they often enlarge the blessings of promises.
- B. I Peter 1:7- *“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ”*
 1. A Precious Faith— A faith that cannot be tested cannot be trusted!
 2. A Purging Fire—Just as the assayer tests the gold to see if it is pure gold or counterfeit, so the trials of life test our faith to prove its sincerity.
 3. A Priceless Find—Faith is more precious than gold. It is encouraging to know that we are born for glory, kept for glory, and being prepared for glory.
- C. Our faith is developed by our trials.
- D. Trials block out vision to see blessings in the future from the trial. However, this is where faith enters. If God has promised, we put faith in His Word, not in circumstances for the fulfilling of the promises.
- E. “There seems to be friction in our home,” a concerned wife said to a marriage counselor. “I really don’t know what the trouble is.” “Friction is caused by one of two things,” said the counselor, and to illustrate he picked up two blocks of wood from his desk. “If one block is moving and one is standing still, there’s friction. Or, if both are moving but in opposite directions, there’s friction. Now, which is it?”
- F. The famine will not hinder God from fulfilling promises.
- G. Philippians 1:6- *“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ”*
 1. The good work of God begins in us when the Holy Spirit takes up permanent residence in our hearts.
 2. The Holy Spirit never loses sight of the end of His work.
 3. What is this work?
 - a. The Work God Does For Us—Salvation
 - b. The Work God Does In Us—Sanctification
 - c. The Work God Does Through Us—Service
 4. This work will continue until we see Christ, and then the work will be fulfilled.
 5. This is the real basis for joyful Christian fellowship, to have God at work in our lives day by day.

III. Remember the Precepts of God Genesis 12:1, 4

- A. Nothing challenges our obedience to God like hard times.
- B. Many will obey God in good times, but hard times is a different story.
- C. If we are praised we obey, but if we are criticized, we rethink our commitment to obedience in God’s Word.
- D. Abraham failed here. When the famine came, he left Canaan and went to Egypt. Bad times drove him to disobedience, and that disobedience scarred the rest of his life.

- E. Obedience to God's Word must be unconditional.
- F. Hebrews 5:6-9, (vs. 8-9)
- G. I Samuel 15:22- *"And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."*

Conclusion: Ultimately, it will be faith during the famine, or failure because of the famine. God's purposes, promises, and precepts should determine our obedience to Him and not the famine.