

Victory in the waiting

The one thing we can be guaranteed of in terms of the promises of God is that before receiving them there will be a period of waiting. That period of waiting is usually the hardest for most of us.

Q: Is it possible that we can do the will of God, that we can be obedient and still not receive the promise?

A: Yes!

*Heb 10:36 (NKJV) For you have need of endurance, so that **after you have done the will of God**, you may receive the promise.*

We have need of patient endurance so that after we have done God's will we receive His promise. We need to do the will of God, and then continue with endurance while we wait however long it take before we into the promise of God.

Last week we looked closely at Exodus 14. The account of the Israelites camped at Pi Hahiroth trapped between Migdol and the sea, with the Egyptians bearing down upon them. We read how they had to wait all night with the Angel of the Lord between them and the Egyptians. Their enemies were close at hand all night. The Israelites had to wait for their deliverance. Of course, their deliverance was assured, God had promised it, but they didn't feel assured of this in their vulnerable position. They had to wait. We too are often in situations like this.

And when they crossed the Red Sea, their enemies still pursued them. Even as they were walking in the very miracle of God, they couldn't see their deliverance. They still felt vulnerable. Their enemies were still pursuing them. The Israelites could probably still see them, still hear them. They were still waiting for complete deliverance from their enemies, and they were still waiting for the full manifestation of God's promise. And so, it often is with us.

*Heb 10:35-36 (NLT) So do not throw away this confident trust in the Lord. Remember the great reward it brings you! **Patient endurance is what you need now**, so that you will **continue to do God's will**. Then you will receive all that he has promised...*

To make sure we are on the same page in terms of exactly what I mean when we talk of endurance:

Strong's:

ὑπομονή

hupomonē

hoop-om-on-ay'

From G5278; cheerful (or hopeful) *endurance, constancy*: - enduring, patience, patient continuance (waiting).

Thayer's:

ὑπομονή

hupomonē

1) steadfastness, constancy, endurance

1a) in the NT the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings.

1b) patiently, and steadfastly

2) a patient, steadfast waiting for

3) a patient enduring, sustaining, perseverance

Word Study:

- to persevere, remain under. A bearing up under, patience, endurance as to things or circumstances.
- Generally meaning endurance, patience, perseverance, or constancy under suffering in faith and duty

Webster's dictionary defines endurance:

- the ability to withstand hardship or adversity.
- the ability to sustain a prolonged stressful effort or activity.
- staying power

Collins dictionary defines endurance:

- the ability to continue with an unpleasant or difficult situation, experience, or activity over a long period of time.

Definition from my perspective:

Endurance: strength to go the distance.

We need to do God's will and continue to do God's will whilst waiting and enduring until we receive the promise. This is what I am speaking to today. This place of waiting.

What are some of the things we need to be reminded of in that time of waiting, that time of patient endurance before complete deliverance from our enemies and/or into God's promise? What do we need in the waiting to ensure that we receive the promise? How do we have victory in the waiting? I will look at a few aspects of this today.

I would like to take three lessons from the account of David.

1. Remember who makes it happen.

I'd like to remind us of the situation around Samuel's declaration over David regarding David's future Kingship.

Now the Lord said to Samuel, "You have mourned long enough for Saul. I have rejected him as king of Israel, so fill your flask with olive oil and go to Bethlehem. Find a man named Jesse who lives there, for I have selected one of his sons to be my king." But Samuel asked, "How can I do that? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me." "Take a heifer with you," the Lord replied, "and say that you have come to make a sacrifice to the Lord. Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you which of his sons to anoint for me." So, Samuel did as the Lord instructed. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town came trembling to meet him. "What's wrong?" they asked. "Do you come in peace?" "Yes," Samuel replied. "I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Purify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." Then Samuel performed the purification rite for Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice, too. When they arrived, Samuel took one look at Eliab and thought, "Surely this is the Lord's anointed!" But the Lord said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." Then Jesse told his son Abinadab to step forward and walk in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "This is not the one the Lord has chosen." Next Jesse summoned Shimea, but Samuel said, "Neither is this the one the Lord has chosen." In the same way all seven of Jesse's sons were presented to Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen any of these." Then Samuel asked, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse replied. "But he's out in the fields watching the sheep and goats." "Send for him at once," Samuel said. "We will not sit down to eat until he arrives." So, Jesse sent for him. He was dark and handsome, with beautiful eyes. And the Lord said, "This is the one; anoint him." So as David stood there among his brothers, Samuel took the flask of olive oil he had brought and anointed David with the oil. And the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David from that day on. Then Samuel returned to Ramah. 1 Sam. 16:1-13

- when everyone else overlooked David as even a possibility, the Lord never did. He was fetched from the fields, from the bush, from obscurity so that the Lord's prophet could anoint him as the next King.
- God knew where to find him then. God would always know where to find him. God knows.

I love this verse. When David has finally been made king many years and trials and battles later, listen to what the Lord says to him through the prophet Nathan:

*2Sa 7:8 (NKJV) Now therefore, thus shall you (Nathan) say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "**I took you from the sheepfold**, from following the sheep, **to be ruler over My people**, over Israel.*

- Who made the promise to David?
- Who fulfilled it?
- Who made the promise to you?
- Who must fulfill it?

Isa 55:11 (NKJV) 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.

Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. Heb. 10:23NLT

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. Heb. 10:23NKJV

Yes, we must wage war with the word.

1Ti 1:18 (NKJV) This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare,

Yes, we must mix it with faith and continue to believe it.

Heb 11:11 (NKJV) By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.

But at the end of the day, it is only God who can bring us into that promise.

2. Remember where your strength comes from.

1 Samuel 29-31.

David had been hunted by the king who wanted him dead for years. King Saul. This is the king he had served faithfully I might add. The king to whom he had done no wrong. Dave had grown weary of being chased around the countryside, living in caves, and hiding in holes, and so he went to live with the Philistines, the enemies of his people so that he could have peace from Saul. He remained there for some years and was faithful to the King (Aschish). When the time came for King Aschish and the other philistines to war against King Saul, the Philistine leaders refused for David to join them in the battle citing that they didn't trust him. It must have been difficult for David to receive this. Betrayed, falsely accused, and hunted by His own king and people, now rejected by the enemies of his people to whom he had been faithful. He went back to Ziklag....

Three days later, when David and his men arrived home at their town of Ziklag, they found that the Amalekites had made a raid into the Negev and Ziklag; they had crushed Ziklag and burned it to the ground. They had carried off the women and children and everyone else but without killing anyone.

When David and his men saw the ruins and realized what had happened to their families, they wept until they could weep no more. David's two wives, Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal from Carmel, were among those captured.

David was now in great danger because all his men were very bitter about losing their sons and daughters, and they began to talk of stoning him. But

David found strength in the Lord his God. (1 Sam. 30:6)

(Other translations say ***"David strengthened himself in the Lord"***)

I find this portion of the life of David particularly intriguing. It reveals such a depth of character and maturity in David. To find himself in that place of complete rejection, misunderstanding, loss, betrayal, aloneness, exhaustion, and possible fear, and to find strength in the Lord.... What an example! Look what He then asks the Lord after strengthening Himself in the Lord...

Then David asked the Lord, "Should I chase after this band of raiders? Will I catch them?" And the Lord told him, "Yes, go after them. You will surely recover everything that was taken from you!"

David received strength to do what needed to be done. The hard thing. The warfare. The confrontation. The rallying together and leading of this band of men some of whom wanted to kill him. And look what God did:

David got back everything the Amalekites had taken, and he rescued his two wives. Nothing was missing: small or great, son or daughter, nor anything else that had been taken. David brought everything back. He also recovered all the flocks and herds, and his men drove them ahead of the other livestock.

When we look at 1 Samuel 31, we find that the Philistines fought against Saul and his sons, and this resulted in the death of Saul and his sons. The Lord was protecting David from being part of that and positioning him for his promotion to King. Directly after this death of Saul, David become King over Judah. These last few battles that David fought, internally and externally, where he needed God's strength, were directly before his entrance into the beginning of the promise of God. Sometimes the night gets dark before the dawn. Often it is hard just before the breakthrough. This is where we really need God's strength to continue enduring so that we do walk out and into His promise.

3. Remember to guard your heart.

*Heb 12:1 (NKJV) Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, **let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us**, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us...*

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***David found strength in the Lord his God.** (1 Sam. 30:6)*

- David had spent years with these men, pouring his life into them, leading them.
- They had fought together, slept together, eaten together, laughed together, trusted each other with their lives.
- They were his warriors, his closest allies on earth.
- They wanted to kill him.

1Sa 30:9-10 (NKJV) So David went, he and the six hundred men who were with him, and came to the Brook Besor, where those stayed who were left behind. [10] But David pursued, he and four hundred men; for two hundred stayed behind, who were so weary that they could not cross the Brook Besor...

1Sa 30:16-23 (NKJV) And when he had brought him down, there they were, spread out over all the land, eating, and drinking and dancing, because of all the great spoil which they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. [17] Then David attacked them from twilight until the evening of the next day. Not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men who rode on camels and fled. [18] So David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away, and David rescued his two wives. [19] And nothing of theirs was lacking, either small or great, sons or daughters, spoil, or anything which they had taken from them; David recovered all. [20] Then David took all the flocks and herds they had driven before those other livestock, and said, "This is David's spoil." [21] Now David came to the two hundred men who had been so weary that they could not follow David, whom they also had made to stay at the Brook Besor. So, they went out to meet David and to meet the people who were with him. And when David came near the people, he greeted them. [22] Then all the wicked and worthless men of those who went with David answered and said, "Because they did not go with us, we will not give them any of the spoil that we have recovered, except for every man's wife and children, that they may lead them away and depart." [23] But David said, "My brethren, you shall not do so with what the LORD has given us, who has preserved us and delivered into our hand the troop that came against us."

When I look at David's life, especially how God prepared Him for the throne, (his destiny and calling), I see God using rejection, betrayal, and false accusation as 2 of the primary tools to fashion him. David seems to have passed these tests time and

again on different levels. I think this is what set him apart from Saul. Saul feared man and the opinions of man. He was obsessed with being betrayed to the point of seeing betrayal where there was none. His fear of man disqualified him and his descendants from the throne. David feared God and obeyed God (did His will). He was betrayed time and time again but kept his heart pure and continued to do God's will. This, I believe, is what set him apart and allowed him to be known as the man after God's heart.

I firmly believe that the reason David could strengthen himself in the Lord was because he had learnt to keep his heart. The truth is that Saul had tried to pin him with his spear many times, David dodged it physically, yes, but more importantly, he never allowed the spears coming his way from Saul and other men to penetrate his heart. When our heart harbours bitterness, malice, offense, unforgiveness, even anger toward God, we are not positioned to be able to strengthen ourselves in the Lord. Wit means that if we do make it into the promise of God, we walk into that with time bombs and become a liability like Saul.

Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life. Prov. 4:23

Keeping our hearts: spears to watch out for -

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1. Bitterness

*Therefore, strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any **root of bitterness springing up cause trouble**, and by this **many become defiled**; lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food **sold his birthright**. Heb. 12:12-16*

Part of strengthening ourselves is removing the bitterness. It defiles and weakens. We see in Acts 8:23 how Peter clearly states to Simon the sorcerer that bitterness

poisons us. We end up not seeing aright and being weakened and make resultant poor decisions.

*But Peter said to him (Simon the sorcerer), “Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this your wickedness and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are **poisoned by bitterness** and bound by iniquity.” Acts 8:20-23*

David had multiple opportunities to become bitter. I don't see bitterness having any place in his life as he moves from being shepherd to being king.

2. Offense

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. Phil. 1:9-11

3. Unforgiveness

“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Mt. 6:14-15

4. Judgement

Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. Mt. 7:1-2

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Gal. 6:7-9

Conclusion:

Q: Is it possible that we can do the will of God, that we can be obedient and still not receive the promise?

A: Yes!

*Heb 10:36 (NKJV) For you have need of endurance, so that **after you have done the will of God**, you may receive the promise.*

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