

More love, more power

Catherine Barker 8.9.09

As I walked with God in the forest this morning I found myself singing the words of this song aloud at full volume with all that I am in praise to God for all He is and all I am because of Him. As I sang, my heart cried out, "I want more of You, Lord, less of me; I want to move out of the way and give You free reign in my life."

Scripture tells me that the same power that raised Christ Jesus from the dead is dwelling in me (Romans 8:11).

As I sang the words of this song I began to question, "Am I experiencing the fullness of this power that scripture is telling me dwells in me?" It was a rhetorical question, I already knew the answer. (No I'm not, but oh how I would love to!) At that moment I saw a picture in my mind's eye of a dam across a reservoir and my focus moved to the sluice gate. As I looked into the picture I realized that all the force of the water waiting behind the dam is available in all its power, but if the sluice gate isn't opened then the power cannot be utilized. This, I believe, was the answer to my question. Yes, the fullness of the power of the Holy Spirit is available to me but the level at which that power is operating in my life is directly proportional to how far I open the 'sluice gate'. So how can we apply this picture to our lives? What is this sluice gate that needs to be opened?

God has ultimate control over His creation, but many times we read in the Bible "If...then..." 2Chron 7:14 *If* my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, *then* I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.'

We were all created with free will and as a consequence of that, ultimately we have the choice as to how much of ourselves, our mind, our heart, our strength, our finances, our time, our emotions, our past, present and future we give God free reign over. Jesus commanded us to, "Love the Lord your God with ALL your heart, ALL your mind and ALL your strength." ALL means every single bit, it means totally! It also means that He is there to catch us if we fall, comfort us when we hurt, speak to us when we're lost, guide us when we can't see the way ahead. He's there to receive our praise, our thanks and to bestow blessings on us, through good times and bad.

This process of trusting God is just that, a process, and one which we learn more about the more we do it. The more we learn that God is true to His word and always does what He says He will do, the greater our testimony; not only can we share our testimony with others but we can also use it to encourage ourselves in the Lord, just as David did through the Psalms. And as we continually encourage ourselves, and one another, through the word of our testimony we move to a place of genuine realization and deep understanding that when God asks something of us, it is ALWAYS for our own good. He ultimately knows what's best for us, even if we can't immediately see it for ourselves.

Matthew 10: "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."

When I was a student we did trust building exercises as part of an activity weekend. One of the activities involved standing on a table whilst your friends stood below, arms outstretched and linked. You had to allow yourself to fall backwards over the table edge

and trust that your friends would catch you. Falling backwards put you in a vulnerable position because you had no defense to stop your fall, but it also meant that your trust levels increased as, in those seconds between stepping backwards and being caught, you had to surrender to the belief that your friends wouldn't let you fall. So it is with putting our trust in God; we have to surrender and stand on His Word which tells us that He will never let us fall, He will never leave us or forsake us. But faith without works is dead, so unless we step into action, like falling over that table edge, we won't feel His arms catching us and we are robbing ourselves of a blessing.

Through the blood of Jesus we are blessed to have the privilege of walking in covenant relationship with God. The more we give of ourselves to Him, the more we will see His power at work in our lives. But there's a BUT! Are we prepared to endure the turbulence along the way? God desires a people who are holy and righteous before Him, He desires to be glorified through His people and He will sift us and shake us as He sets us apart for Himself. Just as in Bible times there are times in our lives when God comes suddenly. We may have been praying for/about something for years or for just a short time but when God comes suddenly it can turn our world upside down. If we ask for patience God will teach us through testing times, if we pray for wisdom God will teach us through challenging circumstances, if we ask for strength we will first need to be reminded of our own weakness.

Malachi 3:3. When God comes suddenly He moves with purpose and with intent. Holy Spirit may bring to the surface areas that have remained buried, He may reveal strongholds over our lives, He may reveal wrong thought patterns or habits that He wants to free us from. When God comes suddenly it can leave us feeling disorientated, it can affect our equilibrium. During this time the enemy can try to attack us at our point of weakness and so it's vitally important that we have brothers and sisters to whom we are accountable; if the enemy can get us isolated then he can wreak havoc in our lives. If we remain accountable within our fellowship and friendships then we can endure the refiner's fire and emerge transformed. We need to rely on the Word of God to bring clarity and peace as we endure the sifting. The Word of God is living and active, sharper than a double edged sword, it separates bone from marrow. We are 3 part beings. Scripture speaks to our spirit and brings peace even if our emotions are in anguish. As our spirit finds peace so our emotions will come in line with our spirit and then our mind will be at rest. Our emotions can change like the weather but the Word of God is constant and reliable.

So, my friend, let me encourage you; if you desire more of God, more of His love, more of His power in your life then do not be afraid to surrender those areas of your life that you have held on to so tightly for so long. Living in the stretch zone can be uncomfortable but it's exciting, exhilarating, satisfying.....and it's safe because we have a beautiful Heavenly Father who knows what's best for His children, who desires a personal relationship with each one of us and who desires to set us apart and use us for His glory.

What better way can there be to live our time on earth?

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