

TAKE UP THY SWORD †

A newsletter with hope and encouragement from the Holy Bible

For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword... (Hebrews 4:16)

Issue 3

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Seeing Is not always Believing

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal...For we walk by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 4:18, 5:7).

Remember when Jesus said, “blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed”? If we can believe in the God which we haven't seen, why can't we believe in His promises before they're manifested? When I found out that I was pregnant with my daughter, I was expecting to give birth by a certain date before I heard the heartbeat, felt any movement, or saw her little hands and feet on the sonogram. We have all conceived a divine promise in the womb of our spirit, so we need to nurture it continuously until the delivery date – even in the midst of a dismal environment or time of adversity.

Why should we believe the report of the Lord regardless of what we see? Because “[the devil] is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44)! We should trust what the Word says about us and our situation, because “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” (Num 23:19). In our time of weakness, let's remind our Father:

...Behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee (Jer 32:17).

We shouldn't judge a book by its cover when we're facing impossible circumstances, because “with God all things are possible” (Matt 19:26)! But do we have the courage to stand strong during tribulations? Let's gain wisdom from two extraordinary predicaments where the enemy wanted to see the destruction of the saints, but their belief in the grace and mercy of the Lord gave them the victory:

The Lions' Den – *My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt (Dan 6:22).*

Envy is one of the seven deadly sins and is a familiar tool used by the devil to fuel attacks against God's obedient children. But we know that “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal” (2 Cor 10:4); and in the sixth chapter of Daniel, he did not let fear interrupt his faith. His 'co-workers' were jealous of him because he had much favor, and they persuaded King Darius to sign a law punishing those who prayed to any god or man other than the king. Facing the penalty of being cast into the lions' den, Daniel continued to pray to the Lord three times a day.

But even when his enemies assembled against him and saw the stone laid at the entrance to the den (similar to Jesus' tomb), the king and the King of kings were still on his side! Meditate on how Daniel survived this trial:

...And no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God (Dan 6:23).

The Fiery Furnace - *If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king (Dan 3:17).*

While we're in the book of Daniel, let's go back to chapter 3 to witness another great miracle based upon faith. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego infuriated King Nebuchadnezzar when they refused to worship the image which he set up. Unlike Daniel, this king was not on their side; but they still found the strength to keep their “face like a flint” (Isa 50:7), because they knew their God would save them. Even as they stood tied together and saw their enemies heat the furnace seven times hotter, they did not compromise their beliefs or try to escape. The men who threw them into the fire were instantly killed, but these boys came out unharmed because the Son of God was with them! Ponder this fact:

...[God] hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him and have changed the king's word... (Dan 3:28).

Can we afford to be like the ten fearful Israelites in Numbers 13 who brought back a negative report after exploring the promised land? Do we have time to wander through the wilderness in circles? Just because we see an obstacle or something that seems to be intangible doesn't mean that it's unattainable. Believe His Word - after all, “our God shall fight for us” (Neh 4:20)!

THUS SAITH THE LORD, “Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink...” (2 Kings 3:17).

PRAYER: *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance (Ps 42:5).*

“...Be encouraged in the law of the Lord” (2 Chron 31:4):

Psalm 27:13-14, 34:7-9, 37:32-34, 59:9-10, 106:10-12; Matthew 6:31-33; 21:31-32; Mark 11:22-24; John 1:48-51, 11:40-42; Hebrews 11:1-7&13, 12:1-2; 1 Peter 1:7-9.

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