

4 Truths to Remember in Times of Tragedies, Trials and Tests

There are some who are facing their darkest hours of tragedy, persecution and loss right now. My family and I have recently faced a heart-shattering tragedy when my uncle was brutally murdered on Good Friday. I had already personally faced and persevered the most difficult year of my life, and this tragedy knocked me down flat.

As my family and I pick up the pieces of our shattered hearts and literally walk moment by moment through this tragic loss, I feel as though God has abandoned us. There are still many unanswered questions; we are waiting for justice; and I am angry. People have told me that my faith is weak, or I don't have enough faith because I haven't been saying or doing the right things in my time of grief and unknown future.

I started to believe them until I had a revelation on what faith in God really is. My outlook of what defined faith changed when I heard these words from my pastor:

"Faith is not really faith until it is tested."

It is easy to say we have the right amount of faith or real faith when everything is going well, comfortable and safe. It is easy to believe that we must have had big faith when our prayers were answered. It is easy to encourage others who are suffering when we haven't faced their loss, tragedies, rejection and persecution. In these last days, Satan is waging an all-out assault on Christians around the world to turn from God. He is ruthless, relentless and brutal. The persecution of God's children come in many forms, and we are tested now more than ever if we really believe in the goodness, love and eternal hope of God.

Measures of faith are not based on how many Scriptures we recite, how we appear to others or how loud our praises can be heard. Authentic faith is based on our trust and commitment to God, even when our feelings, understanding and rational thinking conflict. Faith arises through each wave of desperation, suffering, grief and pain and is just as real through a whisper or tears. Faith can come after words of anger and anguish to God when we tell Him how we really feel about what is happening yet choose to still love and trust Him despite those feelings. When we read about those with great faith throughout the Bible, it always accompanied a great need, hardship and loss.

Here are four things to remember when our faith is tested:

- 1. As we experience brokenness and devastation, faith may only appear to be small and not of any significance to others.** However, the roots of authentic faith are anchored deep in the one who will help us in our darkest hours. Our feelings, thoughts and circumstances may feel like God has abandoned and failed us, yet our decision to trust Him regardless of the tests, tragedies and trials we face is faith.
- 2. Jesus Himself had to have faith in His Father when he was betrayed, falsely accused, tempted and put to death.** He was tested in every way we were. As He hung on the cross and became sin for us, He cried, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46b). His commitment to God's plan and love for us despite his physical emotional and spiritual anguish in that moment demonstrated pure faith.
- 3. Our decision to trust in a loving God and Jesus as our Savior in this lost and broken world takes true faith.** When the enemy has come to rob, steal, kill and destroy, and all hope seems lost, it is faith that surpasses all human understanding, intellect and feelings. We can cry out for Jesus to help us keep the faith. "I called on

Your name, O Lord, from the lowest pit. You have heard
my plea: 'Do not close Your ear to my cry for help!'