

Step Into the Realm of Glory

All of creation is waiting for the day that you and I become like Christ. It is waiting for the day we become God's holy love revealed to a world that desperately needs that love.

It is waiting for the day on which we finally step into the realm of glory that God has prepared for His sons and daughters—those of us who, like Jesus, have fully yielded our lives to Him.

“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us,” Paul wrote in Romans 8:18-19 (NIV). “The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.”

That is a powerful scripture! According to Paul, a time is coming when God will so possess His children that we will manifest His glory to the whole world!

Already we see people who operate in this realm of glory—forerunners whose lives are characterized by the love and power of God. We may, at times, even step into this realm of glory ourselves.

The Role of Suffering

Taking that step, however, is neither easy nor painless. Romans 8:17 reminds us that we are children of God and heirs of Christ—“if indeed we *share in His sufferings* in order that we may also share in His glory” (emphasis added).

Suffering is part of the human experience. In life there will always be times of pain, sickness and misery. In a fallen world, they're unavoidable.

But that suffering is nothing compared to the glory God has prepared for us!

I personally know what it means to suffer. During my years as a missionary, I've experienced great suffering.

But when I compare that suffering to the glory God has poured out in my life, which has spilled over to many hundreds of the world's poor, homeless and orphaned, the pain seems like nothing.

We have to share in Christ's sufferings in order to share in His glory. I have experienced both. And the glory has always far eclipsed the suffering.

My husband, Rolland, and I began our ministry in Mozambique in southeastern Africa in 1995. The government offered us a horribly dilapidated orphanage as our base. Before long we had planted a church and taken in 320 orphans, all products of years of brutal civil war.

Ministry was a struggle from the start. We had little support, and the formerly communist officials in the town were openly hostile toward us.

At one point I went into our warehouse and saw that it was empty, except for a little ketchup and some herbal tea. "How am I going to feed 320 hungry children with that?" I thought to myself.

"What should I do?" I cried out to God.

"Get together a couple of people who believe," He said.

Immediately I went and got two or three believers, and we started worshiping in the empty warehouse.

"God, I choose not to look at the ketchup and herbal tea," I prayed. "I choose to look at You. And here are a few people who will look at You with me."

Within three hours, a huge Mack truck pulled up to the warehouse, and a man stepped out of the truck. "This food is

for you," he said. "Where do you want it?" Then he and another man proceeded to unload the truck, filling the warehouse with food.

We were ecstatic! We didn't know where the food had come from—except, of course, from the hand of God.

Our happiness was short-lived, however. Thieves came, broke the lock on the warehouse and stole all the food.

But God's glory would not be deterred. Soon another truck arrived and filled the warehouse a second time. I quickly changed the lock!

More Suffering, More Glory

More suffering—and more glory—followed.

The local newspaper ran a story that called my husband and me Marxist spies. A contract was put out on my life, offering \$20 to the person who killed me.

Government officials came and told us we could no longer pray, worship or sing to God at the orphanage. Neither could we continue to distribute "unapproved" food, clothing or medical assistance. I was personally banned from the property.

"I don't think I can do this anymore," I told the Lord. Overwhelmed and exhausted, my husband and I and our two children evacuated to our office in the city, 20 miles away.

The orphans who stayed behind refused to follow the government's new rules. They continued to praise and worship God until officials came and beat them.

One by one, the children began making the 20-mile trek to our office on foot. Before long we had more than 50 children with us in the city—with one bathroom and not even a pot to cook in! But once again, God's glory broke through the suffering.

A woman from the U.S. embassy brought dinner to us: chili and rice, enough to feed our immediate family of four.

"We have a very large family!" I told her, thinking of all the orphans who were living with us.

"Oh, this is only enough for you and your two children," the woman responded.

"We have a lot of children," I replied.

Not feeling particularly full of faith, I asked her to pray over the food. Then I directed all the children—several dozen of them—to sit down, and we began serving the meal.

Amazingly, everyone ate until he was full! But what was perhaps more amazing was that we never ran out of the plastic bowls we were serving the chili in or the utensils we gave the kids to eat it with.

God caused faith to rise in my spirit that day. "I have so much faith right now," I told the Lord, "you could tell me to feed 100,000 people, and I would say yes."

Some time later, when I was praying and worshiping God, something like a video screen appeared before my eyes. Face after face after face of starving people in Malawi, the small country bordering Mozambique, began to flash before me.

As I cried about the suffering I saw, I heard God say, "You give them something to eat."

I was momentarily speechless. Then I said, "OK, I will."

After all, I'd seen Mack trucks full of food show up out of nowhere. I'd seen chili and rice multiplied. Why would I question God now?

That was the beginning of our outreach into neighboring countries. At some point, you don't care how much suffering

you have to go through in order to see the glory of God touch people's lives!

Spiritual Renewal

Thankfully, our God is a loving God. He doesn't allow us to suffer indefinitely. He is faithful to renew our spirits with His glory when we need it most.

At one point I decided to leave Mozambique to attend a conference in Toronto, Canada. Exhausted, ill and discouraged, I'd heard that many people were experiencing spiritual renewal through a move of God there called "the Toronto Blessing."

I determined to make the 30-hour journey against the advice of two doctors. I'd just been diagnosed with pneumonia, and they said I should not travel.

I went anyway, determined to trust God. Mercifully, He opened my lungs at the start of the conference, and I was able to breathe freely for the rest of my stay.

Each day I was there, my strength increased. I spent many hours receiving prayer from the people on the Toronto ministry team.

One night during ministry I began groaning in intercession for the children of Mozambique. In my mind's eye I could see thousands of children coming toward me.

"No, Lord, there are too many!" I cried.

"Look in My eyes," He said to me. "There will always be enough bread and drink because I paid the price with My life. Don't be afraid. Only believe."

I returned to Mozambique healed and strengthened—and ready to take another step into the realm of glory God had prepared for me.

God is saying the same thing to each of us: "Don't be afraid. Only believe." He's waiting for us to step into a new realm of glory.

Will it involve suffering? Yes. But the suffering won't compare to the glory we'll experience as the children of God!

Romans 8:22-23 says, "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons."

Once I asked the Lord, "I know your Word says elsewhere that we're sons and daughters already. So why all the groaning? What are we waiting for?"

He responded, "You know those orphaned children you take home with you?"

"Yes, Lord."

"They have to want to come. Some want to. Some don't know the opportunity is available to them. But others, even though they know they're welcome in the house, prefer to stay outside."

As Christians, we're like those children. We're all welcome to move in the authority of sons and daughters, living in the realm of glory, seated with Christ in heavenly places. But we must want to come.

We must make that choice, even if it involves suffering.

If we choose to stay outside, I believe it's only because we don't understand how wonderful our God is. We don't understand His love for us.

First John 3:1-2 says, "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And

that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

The Language of Love

Let me give you a picture of the love of God. One Christmas I was giving out presents to the children in our ministry. Throughout the year I'd bought up presents here and there and saved them to give out on this special day.

I also invited all the street children and other children from the village to come and receive a present. Literally hundreds of children showed up.

As I sat on a grass mat and prepared to hand out the gifts, the Lord said, "Look in their eyes."

So I did. As I handed each child a present, I looked him directly in the eyes.

I started with the street kids, the prostitutes and the town alcoholics. I looked each one in the eyes and handed him clothes and toys and beads and other fun items.

Finally it was time to give gifts to our own children—the ones from our orphanage.

"Heidi, there are only stuffed dogs left in the bag," whispered Bridgett, a woman who was working with us.

"Stuffed dogs?"

"Yes," Bridgett said. "Used stuffed dogs."

While Bridgett looked again into the bag of old stuffed animals, I looked into the eyes of the children.

"What would you like?" I asked the first little girl in line.

“Beads,” she said.

Bridgett was beside herself. “Heidi, I told you, we have only stuffed dogs!”

“Look in the bag,” I said to Bridgett.

Bridgett opened the bag.

“There are beads in the bag!” she cried.

That’s our God! There’s nothing He can’t or won’t do for those who believe—for those who step into their places as sons and daughters of God.

Jesus never doubted His Father for a moment. When Jesus took the bread and fish in His hands (Matt. 14:19), He knew, without question, that as He gave thanks to the Father, there would be enough to feed the multitudes.

He didn’t look at the five loaves and the two fish. He looked into the eyes of the hungry, and He looked into His Father’s eyes. He said, “Thank you, Father,” and He proceeded to feed more than 5,000 men, women and children (v. 21).

God wants us to be like Jesus feeding the five thousand. He wants us to move in the fullness of Christ, fully yielded to Him. He wants us to walk as His sons and daughters in the earth.

He wants us to look into His eyes—and into the eyes of a world that desperately needs His love.

The whole creation is waiting for us to step into the realm of supernatural glory He has prepared for us. It needs to see and experience God’s love through us. What are we waiting for?

Read a companion devotional.

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