

Real Talk Kim: We See a Mess; God Sees a Chance!

The obstacles in your life are God's opportunities to reveal Himself to you. He turns your mess into a message and your test into a testimony. God never wastes a hurt. Psalm 56:8 (NLT) says, "You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in a bottle. You have recorded each one in your book."

God is sensitive to your pain and desires your wholeness. Your wound might not be your fault, but your healing is your responsibility. What you deem as failure, God uses to promote you into your next season.

When David wrote Psalm 56, he was held captive by the Philistines and knew that only God would be his strength. He trusted God, knowing He understood every sorrow and fear and would take care of him, no matter how deep his despair was. I'm not sure how David saw his tears being collected in a bottle, but those tears resulted from pain, so his insight was very personal. David could not help sharing how God made sure none of his tears went to waste. We talk about accepting Jesus as our personal Savior; what an example David was of having a personal relationship with God!

God loves us intensely. In Ephesians 5:2 Paul said that Jesus' death on the cross was a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. I am amazed that our heavenly Father gave His only begotten Son to walk this earth as a sacrifice, to be our pattern in life and to die in our stead. I don't know how I could have lived so many years in selfishness, not even considering what Jesus Christ did for me. My only consolation is knowing that when God saw the mess my life had become, He also saw the chance to make it amazing.

For God to elevate you to your next level sometimes requires separation from the things that have kept you stuck. It can be your busy lifestyle that puts everything before God. Even your friends may influence you to look in every direction before you seek God's will. After his conversion, Paul could have allowed doubt and fear to distract him from God's will. The fear of what others might think could easily have defined his direction. He could have gone straight to Jerusalem to learn from the apostles who had walked with Jesus and to seek their approval. He could also have gotten ahead of God by immediately building a ministry platform, traveling, and sharing his testimony.

Paul did none of those things. Instead, he spent three years in Arabia, realizing that he needed to separate himself even from religious circles. Galatians 1:12 suggests that Paul spent that time studying the teachings of Christ. His time was obviously fruitful because when Paul went to Jerusalem 14 years after his conversion and met privately with church leaders, they found that "there was absolutely no difference between what he had been teaching for 11 years in Antioch and what the apostles had been teaching in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria."

Paul did not allow his past to determine his future. He released himself from the guilt of his cruelty to others. He walked in forgiveness, even forgiving himself. He also allowed the Lord Jesus to instruct and prepare him for his next season.

I doubt the devil was happy about Paul's conversion and ministry. Scripture tells us to be "strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" (Josh. 1:9, NIV). The enemy can see who you are, even in your premature state. He is not trying to kill you. He is trying to kill the deliverer in you. He's not after who you are but who you are going to be.

If I had known at 18 about the international call on my life, I might not have created the storms that kept me in crisis. I had no idea that my decisions at 18 would hinder my life for another 18 years. Yet God knew every decision I would make before I made it, and still He decided to be there when I called.

If you knew what God purposed when He wrote your name in His book, you would disconnect from people who are trying to steal your dreams. Scripture says, “Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in your book, they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them” (Ps. 139:16). When you discover that you have been chosen by God to fulfill a purpose, you know you have to make decisions for your future. Paul’s decision for Christ changed everything. Before that, he was revered by the Jews as one of the most learned men of the day. After that, he spread the gospel everywhere he went.

I have seen many people’s prophetic words go unfulfilled because they lacked character or were too lazy to pursue God and begin to walk out the plans He spoke through those words. I have learned in my journey that God does not answer your list of wants with a bagful of goodies. He took time to give you your unique attributes, gifts and abilities for His own good pleasure and yours. However, you have to prepare yourself to use them.

 *Adapted from When Your Bad Meets His Good by Kimberly Jones-Pothier, © 2018, published by Charisma House. Motivated by her personal testimony, the author shares how God turned her mess into a message and how He can do the same for you. To order your copy, click on this link.*

Prayer Power for the Week Beginning March 17, 2019

Remind yourself this week that God can take your mess and turn it into a message that brings Him glory. Increase your faith

by seeking Him daily through Scripture and prayer. Thank Him that He already has a plan for you and trust Him to direct your steps. Continue to pray for the nation and our allies (including Israel). Remember those in authority over us and ask for divine intervention where needed. Read: Joshua 1:9; Psalm 56:8, 139:16; Ephesians 5:2.