

In Dire Times, Faith Must Fight

Years ago, I was very frustrated at the spiritual condition of the church and our nation. I prayed, “Lord, many of us have faith that things can change, but nothing seems to be working!”

Through Scripture reading, I soon realized that faith often involves action: “The day I pray for God to move the mountain, I often wake up next to a shovel” – Anonymous.

By faith, Abel offered the right sacrifice. By faith, Noah built the ark and saved his family. By faith, Abram obeyed God and left his country in pursuit of the promise (Heb. 11). And on and on it goes—faith obeys God.

Faith Must Fight to Ignite

To be clear, I’m not talking about physical warfare but spiritual warfare. The same gospel that brings peace with God brings war with sin. We must be prayed up in order to be built up, live in the Word so we don’t live in fear and worship to drive out worry.

We cannot usher in utopia while things continue to decline, but God calls us to fight, not flee. He calls us to step out in faith rather than run like cowards because our faith ignites faith in others.

Are we igniting fear, or are we promoting strong faith in the midst of adversity? Worry comes when we put fear over faith.

The Best Way to Please God

Walking in faith trains spiritual muscles for spiritual battles. We don’t always know the exact course we are to take with absolute certainty, but faith provides hope for the

journey. "The Lord never builds a bridge of faith except under the feet of the faith-filled traveler. If He builds the bridge ahead, it would not be a bridge of faith." – Streams in the Desert

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Hebrews 11:6 reminds us that without faith it is impossible to please God and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. When God calls, faith answers.

What Are We Filled With?

Before entering the promised land, 10 spies saw giants, and eight of them discouraged the people, but Joshua and Caleb had faith in God and said, "Let's go now and possess the land; we can take them" (Num. 13:30, paraphrased).

How was it that the 10 spies, who saw the same thing as Caleb and Joshua, responded so differently? It's simple: They let the sin of fear, the wrong attitude of worry and the disaster of discouragement enter their hearts.

Instead of being like Joshua who loved to linger in the presence of the Lord (Ex. 33:11), these 10 no doubt loved to sit around the campfire, murmuring and complaining. What they were filled with eventually came out.

What are you filled with? Repent today of wrong attitudes and ask to be filled with the Spirit of boldness by prioritizing prayer, worship and the Word. Faith must be built as well as sustained.

The Painful Process of Faith

After the children of Israel eventually entered the promised land, God didn't drive their enemies out immediately. God is practical and knew that Israel needed to build spiritual muscle. Building faith and waiting on the promises of God can

seem like a daunting process, but God knows the danger of moving too quickly.

Often, the prodigals have to eat with the pigs, and the wayward have to hit rock bottom before coming home. Many successful pastors had their ministry built in the furnace of affliction as they trusted in God every step of the way through trials and disappointments. It often takes time to dig the well that reaches the water of faith.

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There Is No Faith Without Warfare

Prolific author J.C. Ryle once said, "The child of God has two great marks about him: He may be known by his inward warfare, as well as by his inward peace ... he is a child in the Father's home, and he is a soldier in the Savior's war." All of us soon realize that there is no faith without warfare.

Scott Hubbard continues to unpack this point: "When I entered the Christian life, I had no idea I was walking into war ... But soon I landed in a country I didn't recognize, amid a fight I wasn't ready for ... I still enjoyed a measure of peace in Jesus, but it felt now like peace under siege."

Hubbard is of course describing the battle within the soul:

Two natures beat within my breast

The one is foul, the one is blessed

The one I love, the one I hate.

The one I feed will dominate.

— Anonymous

Faith gets back up and fights again: “Lift up the hands that hang down. March straight through the flood, and lo, the waters will divide, the Red Sea will open, the Jordan will part, and the Lord will lead you through to victory” – Streams in the Desert.

You are not in this battle alone. God told Joshua, “Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go” (Josh. 1:9, NKJV).

We must be like Joshua, strong and courageous: There are battles ahead, but there is no victory without warfare—our faith must fight.

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