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Finding Faith to Go On



When you find yourself with your hopes and dreams lying in a million pieces around your feet, can you find the faith to go on? I found myself in that place about three and a half years ago. Every time I reference the story, I count the years, months, and days since the dam broke and my life was flooded with the violent waters of trouble. There seems to be some kind of solace in making that time further and further away from today. But in another way, my life will always be referenced from that point.

I don't say that to be overly dramatic. In a short time period, I found my marriage on the rocks, I lost my job, seemed to lose my ministry, lost many friends who found themselves taking sides, caught in a whirlwind of gossip, and I found myself scrambling to survive emotionally and spiritually.

And yet I did. I survived. And really more than that. I thrived. Eventually. My marriage is healthier than ever. I've found a new job and a deeply meaningful ministry. I have wonderful friends and much healing and restoration have happened.

It certainly didn't happen on day one or two or three or thirty or one-hundred but it did happen. And while the bottom line is that God sustained me, there were choices I had to make along the way. Hard choices. Difficult choices.

The first few months seemed to be a free fall. I identified with Job who lamented about his feelings about God:

12 I was at ease, but He has shattered me;

He also has taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces;

He has set me up for His target,

13 His archers surround me.

He pierces my heart and does not pity;

He pours out my gall on the ground.

14 He breaks me with wound upon wound;

He runs at me like a warrior. Job 16:12-14.

When the dust finally settled, I was left to face my reality. With the writer of Hebrews (12:27), I faced what remained. "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

And I dared to believe. Again. Not every day, but some days I began to hope. Somehow God could make something out of the rubble. Purpose could be born in adversity. Eventually, I began to radiate with the quest. I put one foot in front of the other. Again and again. I began to see what God was getting at *in me*. And it's always about that. No matter what comes our way, God is there to birth insight and wholeness and purpose in us individually.

The violent shaking of my life opened me in such deep ways that suddenly I could see things I couldn't see before. I was faced with my own deep brokenness. And I could choose. Would I miss the opportunity to face truth and use all my energy pointing my fingers at others? There were many days I did just that.

Yet I found myself in a dance with God. He invited me to dance with Him. I joined His hands. Then I moved away. Then I took His hands. Then I released them. Over and over, this ambivalent dance continued. At times, I still resist His leading and yet I've found the most outrageous truth, one I've long taught and believed but I began to experience the living reality of it in a deeper way. God can make something good out of something bad.

And perhaps, is that the essence of faith? God is on the throne. He is good. He is involved. He does care even when we can't see His handiwork. Even when we can't feel His presence, He is there.

As I write these words, I am keenly aware that some of you are in those difficult places. You are struggling to survive. You feel abandoned by God and by others. While I wish I could rescue you from that place, I know that it is a place where your foundations can be strengthened. Your life purpose can become clearer. You can find healing and wholeness. I have prayed for you at this moment.

Will you dare to look inside your own heart? What's there that needs healing? What needs throwing out? What needs changing?

Jesus told us that we would have trouble in this world but then he assured us that we could have hope and courage because he had overcome the world. This promise means that even when life is tough, we can access the power to overcome. It may be three steps forward and two steps back, but it is our ordained journey. It is the way we change from glory to glory into his image.

Although your faith may be being tested, I believe in you and the God in you. Although you may be being shaken, there will be a foundation that remains and God will build something true and good on that foundation.

Perhaps you could pray, "Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief." The God who hears and answers prayers is listening and is actively involved on your behalf.

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