

The Reality

Life is not easy. The life of faith not easy at all.

In my Sunday School days I grew up fascinated by stories of young David killing Goliath, Daniel unharmed in the den of lions and the dreamer Joseph becoming Prime Minister in Egypt.

As I grew up I also dreamed of becoming such a giant of faith. But then the reality slowly made itself clear. Such greatness is not destined for every one of us. Those were God's specially chosen children.

But that doesn't prevent anyone from becoming strong in faith. So I still dared to dream to become Somebody for God making a difference in the world. I started reading great faith-building books. I listened to emotionally charged sermons talking about prosperity. Honestly, I believed it all to be true. And I tried to make my faith-muscles as strong as possible.

Slowly my world started falling apart. Instead of a smooth sail what I got was winds and storms. When I looked for light I found darkness. I turned to the Church to find some meaning in my struggles. They seemed to ignore the reality of such a struggle. For them keeping traditions is what mattered most. That burdened me more.

Even when my struggles did not make meaning I tried to believe. Through repeatedly falling into sin, through failures, through discouragement I battled on with a firm resolve to become a giant of faith.

But then I had started asking questions: Does God really like me? Why is there no immediate change in me? When I want to become a saint why does not God make me victorious in the twinkling of an eye? Why am I not experiencing peace at all times?

The funny part of it all is that God did not answer these questions!

So the struggles continued. During brief moments there were flashes of heavenly light giving me a little hope. But then the returning darkness after that killed all those fleeting glimpses of joy.

Now I have grown up. Still many questions remain unanswered. Not that I do not expect answers. But the reality is that God may not bother to answer them at all.

Yet the quest for answers taught me some lessons about the reality. The most important one is that there is a process involved in becoming a man or woman of faith. Joseph had his waterless pit and prison, David had his years of fleeing from Saul, and Daniel his years of training in the king's court; before they were ready for God's best.

The Christian world today generally teaches about the possibility of instant imitations of such giants of faith. But the reality is that such faith cannot be imitated without passing through the process of tests of faith; where doubts, confusion, failures, disappointment all mix together to shake faith itself. Peace amidst such a process cannot be defined as the absence of such trouble. But I learned the hard way that peace is the Presence of Christ with us in the midst of such trouble.

Along with it came the realization that Jesus was the greatest Realist of all times. He talked realistically about heaven and the life to come. And He talked about the glory that we would have in heaven. But He also said that in this world we will have trouble. He asked us to cheer up because He has overcome the world.

Paul is an example of one who believed in this realism. He had all kind of struggles, heartaches, sadness, physical troubles and the added burden of being let down by people. Yet in spite of all this he rejoiced, terming these as "light and momentary troubles." All this was possible because He enjoyed the presence of God. Sometimes he seemed to miss that even. Yet he ran his race of faith and finished it.

This is reality. We are called to run with faith. That does not prevent us from going through struggles. It may not bring us a hundred percent return on the money that we gave to God—in popular terms, “the seed that we sowed into God’s kingdom.” The race of faith does not take place in a modern Olympic stadium even. It takes us through byways and rough terrains, across seas and over mountains and through shadowy valleys. We may be practically unknown, battling alone; trying hard to finish the race; perhaps to collapse once the finishing tape is touched.

Sometimes God never gives us company. It almost seems He has forsaken us. In spite of His promise of never leaving us or forsaking us we feel as if God has indeed forsaken us. He may also choose not to answer our prayers as we expect.

But all this does not deny the reality of God. And His great love towards us in and through His Son Jesus Christ. Neither does it stop Him dwelling within us through the Holy Spirit.

The reality therefore is that God is still with us. His words are still true. But many mistaken interpretations of His Word is what misleads us: False hopes are bombarded onto our minds to suit our materialistic and selfish attitudes. They drive us away from the reality found in His Word.

Another confusion is regarding the supernatural. Definitely, signs and wonders and miracles are all the normal part of the Christian life. But they are not greater than the reality of God. And they should never be permitted to obscure the face of God.

Let us also remember that we have a giving God. He spend His Son on us; fully.

Shall we at least consider to give something of our lives for Him? That would truly imitate the reality of Jesus on the cross. He died not to give us prosperity. But He died to purchase our forgiveness. And to give us life eternal.

Yes, God did not spare His own Son. He did that for us.

That is the Reality!

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