

Moving in Faith

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

“And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like?

“They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.

“For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.

“The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!

“But wisdom is justified of all her children.

“And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee’s house, and sat down to meat” (Luke 7:31-36).

In true friendship, the function and motiva-

tion of God's character of love reveals the characteristics of God's heart. Sadly, this is one of the things that few believers understand.

Jesus was called the "friend of publicans and sinners." We know from Hebrews 7:26 that Christ was holy, harmless and undefiled. He was separate from sinners because He was born without sin. Throughout His life on earth, He knew no sin, yet He died bearing our sin. In fact, the Word of God says that He who knew no sin became sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21).

He is the friend of publicans and sinners because, when we had no strength, He paid for all of our sins (Romans 5:6). He commended His love toward us. This love never includes compromise. It does, however, include the power of His endless life that motivates and changes us in the Spirit of God.

This quality of friendship does something to the believer. It gets him moving. It draws him out of where he is and what he is doing and into a deep relationship with God. This is the movement of faith. We are touched by God's love toward us, and that touch moves and attracts us in a love relationship that is stable, secure, and powerful.

Chapter One

MOVED BY HIS SACRIFICE
OF LOVE

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,

“And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.

“Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.

“But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:

“And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.

“But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their

city.

“Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

“Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

“So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

“And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

“And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

“Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

“For many are called, but few are chosen” (Matthew 22:2-14).

In Matthew 22, Jesus was speaking a parable. In it, He called the man without the proper garments “friend.” The Son of God was a friend to this man in that He took upon Himself all of his sins at Calvary.

Jesus did not die upon the Cross because people deserve it. Really, He is the only friend to every sinner. His grace took care of all of our sins. That is the promise from the Book, just as He has promised forgiveness and heaven and grace. He also promises that, in Him, He will perfect every single believer (John 17:23).

We have to start here in any move of faith. We have to stand on the promises of God our Savior, get a vision for our lives from the Lord, and then go from faith to faith and from glory to glory.

Jesus Asked Why

“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?” (Psalm 22:1).

“And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46).

I want to show you just how much of a friend Jesus was to us in His humanity. As a man, Jesus cried out to the Father, “Why? Why?” Think of that little question. Sometimes we say “Why?” We ask it often during any number of difficult situations, and He understands.

But Jesus gave us a great pattern to follow. Though He asked, "Why?" He also said, "My God, My God." The Lord understood that we would have times of difficulty and questions. He suffered through those things as the Son of man. His humanity was real in all respects. The pressures of life were there, but they never were allowed to affect His walk with the Father in His communion through the Holy Spirit.

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:15-16).

When we come to the place of the why, we must move toward the place of grace, the throne of God, where we will find mercy and help in those times of need.

Chapter Two

FAITH RESPONSES

“Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?” (2 Chronicles 20:7).

“But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend” (Isaiah 41:8).

“And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God” (James 2:23).

Abraham heard God and got moving. He came out from Ur of the Chaldees, in Genesis 12:4. The call of the Lord drew Abraham away from family and friends to a deep relationship and to a land of promise.

His great obedience in moving with God reveals itself in Genesis 13. There, Abraham handled a contentious situation. The keepers of

Abraham's herds were having trouble with the keepers of the herds of Lot, Abraham's nephew. So Abraham moved in faith toward his nephew.

"And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.

"Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

"And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.

"Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

"Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.

"But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.

"And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine

eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:

“For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever.

“And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.

“Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee” (Genesis 13:8-17).

Answering God’s Call

There were thirteen backward years for Abraham. During that time, we have no record of Abraham talking with God. But God remained Abraham’s friend. Abraham failed, and the product of that failure was an affair with Hagar and the wild son, Ishmael, from who would come wild and contrary nations of people.

Still, God never altered His purpose for Abraham and the nation that would spring from Isaac, the son of promise who would come from his union with Sarah. Sarah was long past child-bearing age, and Abraham was ninety-nine years old. This conception was a miracle of God. It was a great move of the Lord, and Abraham

knew it.

So convinced of God's friendship and promise was Abraham, he did not hesitate in his obedience to a tremendous request from the Lord. In Genesis 22, God said, "Abraham." Abraham's heart leapt, and he said, "Here I am."

Faith friendship had developed the power of faith response in Abraham. So, when God commanded that Abraham take the son of promise, Isaac, and offer him as a burnt offering, Abraham answered that call. He headed toward Mount Moriah, bound Isaac on an altar, and raised the knife to slay his son. Then, God spoke again.

"And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I.

"And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.

"And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son" (Genesis 22:11-13).

Chapter Three

SERVING IN FAITH, LOVE, AND POWER

“But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.

“Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised.

“Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

“Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.

“Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.

“For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord’s freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ’s servant.

“Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.

“Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God” (1 Corinthians 7:17-24).

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

“For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself” (Galatians 6:1-3).

This old world needs to see people in revival, in biblical friendships, moving in faith because of the drawing power of God. Friendship does not compromise. It handles these situations in divine love and divine order, in mercy, grace, and wisdom. We serve and restore others. We want to help them to move in faith.

Christ’s ministry of reconciliation has been placed upon us. He removed all barriers to walking and moving in the power of the Spirit. We should be very careful not to erect walls or to allow hindrances that would keep others from moving in the faith of the Son of God.

Conditional, superficial relationships may come, but God will work in those things too. We

do not have to be controlled by them. Do not let those things change your walk with God. He moves you in faith. His Word fills you with faith, for faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Hold fast to the convictions God gives you. Remain faithful and true. Avoid the temptation to alter your godly lifestyle.

Your call.

Your work.

Your marriage.

These all belong to God. They were given by Him to help you move in the faith of the Son by the leading of the Holy Spirit. Be fruitful where you are. He has planted you in a place of grace, and it is so crucial.

Little Is Much with God

A pastor once said to me, "I just want to be in a place where I can have a big church."

That comment really struck me because it revealed a deep problem. This man did not know how to move in faith. He had been called to a certain area. It wasn't an easy field to work in, for sure. But he was sent out and said as he went that God gave this place to him. Now it seemed things weren't working the way that he thought

they should.

Let me say this: There are no small churches. When God is in the midst of something, it is as big as all eternity. How many disciples did Jesus have with Him at the end? Some of you are saying twelve. I am saying zero—for all of them forsook Him as He went to the Cross. Now, of course, we read that all the disciples but Judas came back to Him, and Acts 2 reveals that they were all in that upper room when the Holy Spirit fell upon them. At that moment, God indwelt them, and the age of the Church was birthed.

It only takes a few people following after God to do mighty things for Him. When they move in faith, they make a difference. They go with power and authority, and people and places are transformed. All of this happens by presence of the Lord when God's people are moving in faith.

CONCLUSION

Let's think as God thinks. God looks at everything from His vantage point in eternity. He sees the end, the middle, and the beginning of all things at once. We have a future that is finished forever because of the Finished Work of Christ. He knows the way that we take, and He shall bring us to that expected end, the conclusion of the matter, that He ordained from before the foundation of the world (Jeremiah 29:11).

Knowing this reality should get us going. We have nothing to fear but human fear itself, to paraphrase President Franklin D. Roosevelt. God knows the way that we take, and we can say as Job did that when He is finished with us, we shall come forth as gold (Job 23:10).

We who believe in God have been made complete in Him. The praise and glory of the Father is that we have been accepted in the beloved (Ephesians 1:6). The blood of the Lamb of God has washed us clean, once and for all.

Did Abraham work for his friendship with God? No. All that he did was believe and go, moving toward the land of promise.

Just believe and go.

Go into you neighborhood.

Go into your city.

Go to a country where no other Christian has gone before.

Move in faith in the call and leading of God, and it will prosper and reveal the power of His majesty and strength.

Move through your Bible and learn it again and again and again. Move in the finished faith of the Finished Work of Christ.