



~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

"come just as you are"

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

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Worship Music

[I Know-Mercy Me](#)

[Take The Time-Mercy Me](#)

[The Garden-Need To Breathe](#)

Prayer

Lord, I thank You that I am not a spiritual orphan in this world. You didn't abandon me or leave me to figure out everything on my own. You sent the Holy Spirit to be my Teacher and Guide. So right now I open my heart wide to the Holy Spirit, so He can be the Helper You sent Him to be in my life. I give You thanks for sending this divine Helper, and I ask You to teach me how to lean upon Him more and more in the course of my life. I ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

Video's / New Information/ Prayer Requests

Matthew 24:36 (AMP)

36 But of that [exact] day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

" A Passing Opportunity"

Charles Stanley

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1 AND BEHOLD, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the Lord to Bethel. Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. **2** The man cried against the altar by the word of the Lord, O altar, altar, thus says the Lord: Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name; and on you shall he offer the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men's bones shall be burned on you. **3** And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the Lord has spoken: Behold, the altar shall be split and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out. [Fulfilled in II Kings 23:15, 16.] **4** When King Jeroboam heard the words the man of God cried against the altar in Bethel, he thrust out his hand, saying, Lay hold on him! And his hand which he put forth against him dried up, so that he could not draw it to him again. **5** The altar also was split and the ashes poured out from the altar according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the Lord. **6** And the king said to the man of God, Entreat now the favor of the Lord your God and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me. And the man of God entreated the Lord, and the king's hand was restored and became as it was before. **7** And the king said to the man of God, Come home with me and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward. **8** And the man of God said to the king, If you give me half your house, I will not go in with you, and I will not eat bread or drink water in this place. **9** For I was commanded by the word of the Lord, You shall eat no bread or drink water or return by the way you came. **10** So he went another way and did not return by the way that he came to Bethel. **11** Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel; and his sons came and told him all that the man of God had done that day in Bethel; the words which he had spoken to the king they told also to their father. **12** Their father asked them, Which way did he go? For his sons had seen which way the man of God who came from Judah had gone. **13** He said to his sons, Saddle the donkey for me. So they saddled the donkey and he rode on it **14** And went after the man of God. And he found him sitting under an oak, and he said to him, Are you the man of God who came from Judah? And he said, I am. **15** Then he said to him, Come home with me and eat bread. **16** He said, I may not return with you or go in with you, neither will I eat bread or drink water with you in this place. **17** For I was told by the word of the Lord, You shall not eat bread or drink water there or return by the way that you came. **18** He answered, I am a prophet also, as you are. And an angel spoke to me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied to him. **19** So the man from Judah went back with him and ate and drank water in his house. **20** And as they sat at the table, the word of the Lord came to the prophet who brought him back. **21** And he cried to the man of God who came from Judah, Thus says the Lord: Because you have disobeyed the word of the Lord and have not kept the command which the Lord your God commanded you, **22** But have come back and have eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which the Lord said to you, Eat no bread and drink no water—your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your fathers. **23** And after the prophet of the house had eaten bread and drunk, he saddled the donkey for the man he had brought back. **24** And when he had gone, a lion met him by the road and slew him, and his corpse was cast in the way, and the donkey stood by it; the lion also stood by the corpse. **25** And behold, men passed by and saw the corpse thrown in the road, and the lion standing by the corpse, and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt. **26** When the prophet who brought him back from the way heard of it, he said, It is the man of God who was disobedient to the word of the Lord; therefore the Lord has given him to the lion, which has torn him and slain him, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke to him. **27** And he said to his sons, Saddle the donkey for me. And they saddled it. **28** And he went and found the corpse thrown in the road, and the donkey and the lion stood by the body; the lion had not eaten the corpse or torn the donkey. **29** The prophet took up the corpse of the man of God and laid it upon the donkey and brought it back, and the old prophet came into the city to mourn and to bury him. **30** And he laid the body in his own grave, and they mourned over him, saying, Alas, my brother! **31** After he had buried him, he said to his sons, When I am dead, bury me in the grave in which the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones. **32** For the saying which he cried by the word of the Lord against the altar in Bethel and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria shall surely come to pass. **33** After this thing, Jeroboam turned not from his evil way, but made priests for the high places again from among all the people. Whoever would, he consecrated, that there might be priests for the high places. **34** And this thing became the sin of the dynasty of Jeroboam that caused it to be abolished and destroyed from the face of the earth.

Chapter 13

And so there came a young man out of Judah by the word of the LORD to Bethel: where Jeroboam was standing by the altar ready to burn incense. And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD (1Ki 13:1-2);

There is that character in Los Angeles that has the golden altar and I've been tempted to go up and cry against his altar. "O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord."

Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones will be burnt upon thee. And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the LORD hath [This is the sign by which the Lord has spoken.]spoken; Behold, the altar shall be torn, and the ashes that are on it shall be poured out (1Ki 13:2-3).

Now he prophesies that there's going to be a king raised up, a descendant of David, Josiah by name. Now this is long before Josiah was ever born. But he prophesies exactly what Josiah is going to do in the offering of the priest there upon the high places that burn incense on this altar. And in order that you might know that God has really spoken, this altar is going to be torn in two and the ashes are going to be spilled out.

So it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which cried against the altar there at Bethel, that he said, Lay hold on him. [Put forth his hand, lay hold on that man.] And his hand, he just lost its use, it just dropped and he had no use for that hand or arm. He could not pull it back to him again (1Ki 13:4).

He just lost use of it.

And the altar was torn or rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign of the man of God that he had given by the word of the LORD. And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Pray now the face of Jehovah thy God, pray for me, that my hand may be restored again. And the man of God besought the LORD, and the king's hand was restored him again, and it became as it was before. And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give you a reward. And the man of God said unto the king, If you will give me half your house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that you came. So he went home another way, other than what he had come to Bethel. Now there was an old prophet there in Bethel; and his sons came home and they told him all of the things that happened (1Ki 13:5-11):

How this young prophet came from Judah and prophesied and how the king's arm lost its use and was restored, how that the whole prophesy. And the old man said, "What way did he go?" And so the sons told him.

And he said, Saddle my donkey. And he got on his donkey: and he pursued after this young prophet. And he came to him and found him under an oak and he was just sitting there: and he said, Are you the prophet who came from Judah? And he said, I am. And he said, Come on home with me, and eat bread. And he said, I may not return with you, nor go in with you: neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: For it was said to me by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that you came. And he said unto him, I am a prophet myself; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into your house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him. So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water. And it came to pass, as they were sitting at the table, the word of the LORD came to the old prophet that had brought him back: And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as you have disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and you have not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee, But you came back, and you have eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of which the LORD did say unto thee, Eat no bread, drink no water; thy carcass will not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers. And so it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and he had drunk, that he saddled for him the donkey. And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcass was cast in the way, and the donkey stood by it, and the lion also stood by the carcass. [So men came into town, and they said, we saw an interesting sight, a young man out there. He was killed by a lion and the lion and the donkey are standing by his carcass.] And the old man said, That truly must be the young prophet. He said, Saddle my donkey. And he went up and he found the young man lying there, and the lion and the donkey standing by. And he brought him back: and he buried him in his own sepulchre. And he said to his boys, he said, When I die, [he said,] I want you to bury me next to the bones of this young prophet (1Ki 13:13-31).

Now it's an interesting story that surely has an important lesson for us. And that is we better pay attention to what the Lord has to say to us and not what man has to say to us.

There is a movement afoot within the United States that is called the Shepherding Doctrine. And in this you are to submit yourself unto a shepherd who is responsible to lead you and to guide you in your spiritual development and growth. So you take an older person in the Lord, one with more maturity, an older man, and you submit yourself to him. He becomes your shepherd. He tells you when you can buy a house, when you can sell a house, when you can buy a car and just what job you should take, and so forth. I mean, you bring all of your decisions to him and he shepherds over you and he watches over you and your spiritual growth. He tells you when to do things and what to do and so forth. And you are to submit totally to your shepherd. You are to pay all your tithes to that shepherd, and you commit totally your decisions in your life to him.

It's really sort of a pyramid thing. Some guys at the top started it. They're the head shepherd and all of these other shepherds are under them. And it's sort of like those pyramid sales games where you know you get so many reps under you and then you get a certain percentage of all what your reps sell and they get reps under them and you get a certain percentage of what their reps sell and you know you get this pyramid thing going and the guys at the top really make out great. And so these shepherds that are at the top, and all of the shepherds pay their tithes, of course, on up the line ultimately get up here to the top shepherds. And they've got this whole thing going and many people have gone for it.

Now they say that if your shepherd tells you to do something, you've got to submit to him and do it even if it is wrong. And if it is wrong, your shepherd is responsible and will have to answer to God. You are right because you submitted and obeyed your shepherd. So you're free, even though what you've done is wrong, you'll be free because you obeyed your shepherd and you were submitting to him. And thus, he will be the one that will be responsible to God for the wrong things that you've done because he told you to do them. If they would only read this account, they would find out that God holds each man responsible for what God has told them to do.

Now this young prophet, the Lord said, "When you get there, don't eat any bread, don't drink any water in that place. And when you come back don't even come back by the same route you went." So the old man, an old prophet, finds him and he says, "Come on home with me. Eat bread and drink water."

And he said, "No, I can't. The Lord commanded me not to. Wow, I'm also a prophet, you see. I'm an older man. And an angel came and spoke to me and said, Come and bring him and invite him back."

The old man was lying to him. Told him to do something that was not according to the word of the Lord to him directly. And as the result, the young man disobeyed the Lord's command that the Lord had given to him.

You are responsible to listen to God and to follow the Lord and the Lord's command. And God will hold you responsible for that. And of course, he's back there eating bread and drinking water and the true prophecy then came from the old man that he was not going to get back home, that the Lord would take him before he could get home, which of course, did happen.

N Jeroboam did not turn away from his evil doings, but he made the lowest people priests there in the high places: and whoever he would, he consecrated, and he became one of the priests of the high places. And this thing became a sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth (1Ki 13:33-34). Now after this experience that Jeroboam had where God was giving to him a warning, verse thirty-three. (Through The Bible Series C-2000; Chuck Smith; 1979-1986; Commentaries Through The Bible)

 A.W. Tozer; Jesus, Author of Our Faith; AND OTHER ESSAYS ON FAITH; COMPILED AND EDITED BY GERALD B. SMITH

Aiden Wilson Tozer (April 21, 1897 - May 12, 1963) was an American Protestant pastor, preacher, author, magazine editor, Bible conference speaker, and spiritual mentor. For his work, he received two honorary doctorates. Among the more than forty books that he authored, at least two are regarded as Christian classics: *The Pursuit of God* and *The Knowledge of the Holy*. His books impress on the reader the possibility and necessity for a deeper relationship with God. Living a simple and non-materialistic lifestyle, he and his wife, Ada Cecelia Pfautz, never owned a car, preferring bus and train travel. Even after becoming a well-known Christian author, Tozer signed away much of his royalties to those who were in need. Prayer was of vital personal importance for Tozer. "His preaching as well as his writings were but extensions of his prayer life", comments his biographer, James L. Snyder in the book, *In Pursuit of God: The Life Of A.W. Tozer*. "He had the ability to make his listeners face themselves in the light of what God was saying to them", writes Snyder.

Tozer himself produced the works: *Let My People Go*; *Man : the Dwelling Place of God*; *Paths to Power*; *The Divine Conquest* *The Knowledge of the Holy*, (1961) New York: Harper & Row, ISBN 0-06-068412-7; *The Pursuit of God*, (1957) Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, ISBN 0-87509-522-4; *The Root of the Righteous*; There are also many compilations of sermons and other writings which were edited and published by Christian Publications, Inc., after Tozer's death. Although the books were published posthumously, authorship is attributed to A. W. Tozer.

 Wikipedia

THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN outright, vocal critics of the Bible. Among them are those who try to generate sympathy for Old Testament Abraham.

These insist that Abraham was comfortable and well adjusted in Ur of the Chaldees, surrounded by relatives and friends. Probably he had his own business. He may have been about eligible for Social Security. He had stature in the community and status with his neighbors.

Into that happy, successful situation, a spoilsport God, with utter disdain for Abraham's personal feelings, called him to a nomadic, isolated existence.

But the critics have failed to see the most important element in God's approach to Abraham. The living God made an almost incredible offer to the patriarch: "I want to be your Friend, and I want you to be My friend!"

The man or woman who by faith is a friend of God has lost nothing but sin and guilt. He or she has come into an eternal kingdom that assures everything that is good, forever and ever!

I want to make here a case for faith. The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews gives us a summary look at Abraham and at the nature of his faith:

By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. (Heb 1:1-10)

I have discovered that if I want to learn more about God and faith and righteousness, it is profitable to think deeply about Abraham. I have tried to decide which were the most critical moments and the most important events in his life.

The single most critical, most important time in Abraham's life was when he heard and answered God's call.

Life's most important decision

Some people consider the hour of physical birth, when we begin to breathe and live and function as unique people within the human race, as the most important moment in life. Others mark their marriage as the most meaningful lifetime decision. But many, many have testified to the great importance of their spiritual decision—the act of faith whereby they committed themselves and their entire futures to God.

Undoubtedly (as I said) Abraham's single, most important moment was when God unexpectedly and dramatically revealed Himself to him and called him to be a pilgrim. So it was that, when he was called, Abraham by faith obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.

We have all wondered at times about the method or methods God may have used to get through to Abraham. Do you suppose that Abraham had his own quiet times and considered the possibility of an unseen domain beyond the world he knew? Although Abraham did not have the privileges in the grace of God that we have, I am sure he was not afraid to think for himself—perhaps even about the mysteries of creation and life.

We do not know how much preparation Abraham had to make within his own soul to be ready for a direct revelation from God. I for one am perfectly satisfied to leave that theological question to the Calvinists and the Arminians!

In my own contemplation's, though, I have found great comfort in the doctrine of prevenient grace. Prevenient grace, simply stated, is the belief that before a sinful man or woman can seek God, God must first have sought the man or woman.

God has told us in many ways that He is a person. In making Himself known to us, He uses the familiar pattern of personality. He is able to communicate with us through the channels of our minds, our wills and our emotions.

If we hold to our belief that men and women were originally created in the image of God, we also must believe that there are sides within our beings a capacity to know God. That is why Jesus spoke to Nicodemus about an invisible but transforming new birth from above!

The response must be ours

We are humans, and we confess that we do not know all of God's ways. We do not know the steps of searching and seeking that brought about the actual friendship between God and Abraham. Perhaps we can glimpse a clue in the confession of Augustine: "Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it repose in Thee!"

We discern that a loving Personality dominates the Bible, walking among the trees in the Garden of Eden and breathing fragrance over every scene. Always a living Person is present, speaking, pleading, loving and manifesting Himself whenever and wherever His people are responsive and receptive.

If God had not in His own way first moved toward Abraham, Abraham would never have moved toward God. I do believe that! I also believe, however, that if Abraham had been insensitive, he would never have heard God's voice calling him. That was indeed the critical moment in the life of Abraham. Abraham was a man. It is well known that many men have set their jaws and stubbornly clenched their fists as they confidently assured themselves, "I am self-sufficient! I will not bow to this business of religion!"

If Abraham had rejected God's overtures, he would have returned to making bigger and better idols for men and women intent on choosing their own brand of deity. And you can mark this down, too: If Abraham had refused the calling of God, the whole history of the world would have been vastly different, and different for the worse.

The Bible record of God's calling people is varied, yet always consistent. Moses was alone with his sheep in the desert when God sent, "I have heard the cry of my people. I want you to go to Pharaoh and say, 'Let my people go.'" Moses tried to squirm out of that call. But the hand of God had been laid on him and he could not escape.

Jacob also was alone in the wilderness. He was running away from a bad situation at home. He had a night vision of heavenly angels ascending and descending, and there God spoke to him. God called him. And through that call Jacob the cheat became Israel, a prince with God.

We need to get quiet

The gospel invitation is offered to one and all, but many are too preoccupied to hear or heed. They never allow God's call to become a reason for decision. Their relationship with God never becomes a personal encounter. As a result, they live out their entire lives insisting that they never heard any call from God.

The answer to that is plain. God has been trying to get through to them, but their line is always busy! They are engrossed in a host of worldly pursuits.

In our activistic, achievement-oriented era, there is a prevailing notion that no person really amounts to anything if he or she cannot be described as a "go-getter." The go-getter is the person who never allows himself or herself to be quiet or still—not even for a minute. He or she is our ever-ready nominee to get things done. Given time, he or she will turn the world up side down.

But it is surely necessary for us to have times when we stop what we are doing and think for a season. I try to practice the art of quietness often, for there is not a person alive who can meditate while involved in the non-stop, hundred-mile-an-hour pace of the ambitious go-getter.

The Quakers had many fine ideas about life, and there is a story from them that illustrates the point I am trying to make. It concerns a conversation between Samuel Taylor Coleridge and a Quaker woman he had met. Maybe Coleridge was boasting a bit, but he told the woman how he had arranged the use of time so he would have no wasted hours. He said he memorized Greek while dressing and during breakfast. He went on with his list of other mental activities—making notes, reading, writing, formulating thought and ideas—until bedtime.

The Quaker listened unimpressed. When Coleridge was finished with his explanation, she asked him a simple, searching question: "My friend, when dost thee think?"

God is having a difficult time getting through to us because we are a fast-paced generation. We seem to have no time for contemplation. We have no time to answer God when He calls.

When the important matters of the soul are at stake, the most useful thing we can do is to do nothing, even if only for a short time. There are times when we can go the fastest by not going a tall. We can go farthest by standing still for a while.

Then, too, we can talk the loudest by not saying a word. We will not be taking the Lord by surprise; He will speak His message.

Abraham was listening

Abraham was listening. He was probably alone some where when God spoke to him. In our day, we are so socially minded that we cannot endure being alone. People say they are in misery if they are alone.

I knew of a young man who was hospitalized and forced to lie quietly for a time. He implored his father, "Dad, bring my record player or something to keep me busy. Otherwise I just have to lie here and think." Then he added his own commentary on the nature of his personal life, "And it is hell to think."

If we do not give God a listening ear, we will miss His best for our lives. He wants to bring us into the right place, the best place for His will in us to be accomplished.

For Abraham, Ur of the Chaldees was not the right place. The eternal God had plans for something far better. In order for Abraham to be known as "the friend of God" and "the father of the faithful," he had to go out from the place that held him. Either he would act in faith, going against the voice of reason, or he would respond, "I can be satisfied to think that all gods and all religions and all worship are pretty much alike and all lead to the same conclusion!"

Abraham made his choice, and by faith he demonstrated that there is a difference in following a God and Creator who lives eternally.

The world around us wants to put us in the same restrictive strait jacket that would have kept Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees. "We will talk to you about religion" is the seemingly kindly offer people give us today. But then they add the disclaimer: "Just do not make religion personal."

"Christianity is all right," they assure us, "if you are willing to be tolerant and not try to make something exclusive of your Christian faith." Most people seem to have come to terms with an acceptance of religion if it does not have the cross of Christ within it.

But as soon as you begin to quote the words of Jesus and the Scriptures that declare there is only one mediator between God and mankind, as soon as you insist that Christ has given us the only way to God through His death and atonement, you are dead!

"That is bigoted, narrow dogmatism," they shout. "No more dialogue with you! You have no place on a panel where we are cooperatively interested in intellectual ferment!"

I lived on the farm long enough to know what happens when things are allowed to ferment. If that is what the modern intellectuals are trying to achieve, I am glad I have never had time to take part in their religious panel discussions! They have predetermined to agree only upon religious tenets that bring no offense to anyone.

But when God calls out men and women, their faith will be an offense to the world. It was so in Abraham's day, and it is so in our day.

God calls us out and into

But there is in Abraham's life another profound truth about the call of God. God does not just call us out, period. He is completely faithful to call us into something better!

I do not consider that Christian believers are fully on the right track when they proclaim, "We are separated! We have come out! We are paying the price! We are trying to endure! Pray for us that we can stick it out to the end!"

In his faith, Abraham was against idolatry and idol-making, but that was not his crusade. Because of his faith, God led him into a promised land, into possessions and into the lineage that brought forth the Messiah. The call of God is always to something better. Keep that in mind.

God calls us into the joys and reality of eternal life. He calls us into purity of life and spirit, so that we may acceptably walk with Him. He calls us into a life of service and usefulness that brings glory to Himself as our God. He calls us into the sweetest fellowship possible on this earth—the fellowship of the family of God!

I hope I never hear any Christian bragging even a little bit about what he or she gave up and how much it cost him or her to answer the call of God. Anything that we were or any abilities that we possessed were as nothing compared to what God has called us into as His believing children.

Why is it so difficult in our churches for us to be honest about our lives and our condition as sinners alienated from God? We did not give up anything when God in His love and mercy called us unto Himself and into the blessings of grace and forgiveness and peace.

I have been asked more than once what I gave up when I was converted and became a believing child of God. I was a young man, and I well remember that I gave up the hot and smelly rubber factory. I was making tires for an hourly wage, and I gave that up to follow Christ's call into Christian ministry and service.

As a youth I was scared of life and I was scared of death—and I gave that up. I was miserable and glum and unfulfilled—and I gave that up. I had selfish earthly and material ambitions which I could never have achieved—and I gave them up.

That forms the outline of the worthless things that I gave up. And I soon discovered that in Jesus Christ, God had given me everything that is worthwhile.

God gives us far more

If God takes away from us the old, wrinkled, beat-up dollar bill we have clutched so desperately, it is only because He wants to exchange it for the whole Federal mint, the entire treasury! He is saying to us, "I have in store for you all these sources of heaven. Help yourself!"

If Abraham had ever grumbled to the Lord about leaving the beggarly idols of Ur, God would have let him go back. We are free to do the will of God, but God never makes us His unwilling prisoners. God called Abraham out, God gave him the promised land and God said, "Abraham, from among your posterity will come the Messiah in the fullness of time!"

This is the gracious reason why we should tell people everywhere to hear and heed the call of God—so He can lead them into everything that is good and blessed and worthwhile.

We are called to share these matters of truth and life with a wider circle than we sometimes care to admit. On occasion someone has advised me not to accept preaching engagements with non-fundamentalist groups. A so-called liberal church invited me to speak for nearly a week at a Bible conference in Minnesota. They wanted to hear Bible exposition on the baptism of the Holy Spirit. When this was announced, I soon had a letter from a Christian brother warning me against going. "Don't you know that they are just using you?" he asked.

My reply was that I expected God to use me, for I intended to glorify Him—Father, Son and Holy Spirit! I intended to tell that conference of ministers and lay people what God the Holy Spirit can do in the lives of those who will answer His call.

Let me repeat: God wants to call us out into a more abundant and fruitful Christian life than we have ever known!

The late evangelist "Uncle Bud" Robinson well summarized all I have said. "Abraham went out not knowing where he was going, "Uncle Bud said, "but he knew Who he was going with!"

Abraham was interested in a dwelling place that would never decay. He looked forward in faith to a city with eternal foundations, whose builder and maker is God. It is important to us that our Lord Jesus Christ confirmed Abraham's choice when He told the Jews, "Abraham saw my day, and was glad!"

Abraham in faith dedicated himself to eternal things. No writer needs to spend time making a case for that. The long, glory-studded history of faithful Abraham is its own justification.

In simplest terms, God blesses anyone and everyone who will believe and trust and obey. And He speaks to everyone of us with a heavenly call.

If we are genuinely and irrevocably committed to our Lord Jesus Christ, if we are willing to follow Him at any cost, we dare to pray, "Oh God, make me like Abraham in faith and obedience, with spiritual vision of the eternity to come!"

A Fight Always Follows Illumination

Hebrews 10:32

Have you ever received a word from the Lord that gave you the exact direction you needed? If so, let me guess what happened next. Suddenly—BOOM! It seemed like all hell broke loose! The craziest circumstances erupted, seeming to directly challenge and assault that word you had just received from God!

If I've just described what you've gone through or what you are going through right now, be encouraged! You must be right on track! A spiritual fight usually does occur when you've been specially illuminated to the plan God has for your life.

In Hebrews 10:32, the Bible says, "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions...." Today I want us to look at three key words in this verse: "great," "fight," and "afflictions." These words describe what you and I might experience after the Lord has given us a word of instruction to illuminate us regarding His plan for our lives.

First, let's look at the word "great." In Greek, it's the word mega, and it describes something very big. For instance, the word mega is where we get the word megaphone, an instrument for making a very big noise. This word mega is used by people when they speak of mega-bills, mega-problems, mega-work, and so on. By using this word, the writer of Hebrews tells us that spiritual conflicts accompanying a word of divine direction are normally not small—they're usually mega! They're BIG!

The second word I want you to see is the word "fight." It comes from the Greek word athlesia and refers to a committed athlete. This undoubtedly tells you that when you receive a word from the Lord, it may throw you into one of the greatest challenges of your entire life! You'll feel like you've just entered the ring and are competing for the prize!

Finally, we come to the third word, "afflictions." It is the Greek word pathema and usually refers to mental pressure or to suffering that affects the mind. This isn't talking about mental sickness; rather, it points to a war in your soul or an attack on your mind.

You can be sure that if you take a stance of faith in response to a word you received from God, every possible negative thought will come against your mind. Not only will the devil try to use people and circumstances to thwart the plan, but he will also affect your mind with all kinds of negative thoughts and accusations. He'll do everything he can to talk you out of doing what God has called you to do.

Don't be surprised by this! You must remember that Jesus experienced this type of attack as He hung on the Cross. As He selflessly laid down His own life on the Cross, the soldiers and other criminals hurled their horrible, slanderous statements at Him. But Jesus pushed aside all the assaults that came against His soul and endured, committing His life and destiny into the Father's hands.

So if you have received a word from God for your life, let me ask you:

Did you go through a mega-ordeal yourself after you were illuminated to God's plan?

Did you feel you were thrown into a fight that came to challenge what God had told you?

Did you find that the devil tried to assault your mind and emotions with lies, accusations, and fears?

If you have been in this place I'm talking about—or if this is exactly where you are right now—then be encouraged! This is probably your clearest signal that you've received a real word from the Lord. You must be right on track, because the devil is terribly concerned about what will happen if you act on what God has revealed to you.

Don't back down. Don't surrender to the enemy's vicious lies in your mind, his attacks against your body, his challenges to your finances, or his assaults on your relationships. Regardless of how much resistance he tries to bring against you, don't you dare back up on that word God gave you!

If you hadn't received a true word from the Lord, there would be nothing for the devil to challenge! The fight you face is the greatest evidence you're right on track! Just hang on, and don't give up! You're clearly headed in the right direction!

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

(Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 514-517)

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