

FAITH THAT IS UNSHAKABLE--RESILIENT AND JOYFUL

Inspirational and Motivational
Genesis 12; Romans 4:5:12

Faith does not deny reality, logic or reason. Faith **believes with certainty** all of God's Promises to be **in Christ Jesus yes, and in Him, amen**, to the Glory of God through us (2 Corinthians 1:20).

"...but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. As it is written: "I have made you as a father of many nations," He is our father in the sight of God in whom he believed. The God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are, not as though they were. Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed..." (Romans 4:16-18).

Application:

The same God (Hebrews 13:8) that called Abraham to His mission, vision and the promise for a place to stand, a people to shape and prosperity to share, is the same God that called you and me to His mission, vision and promise. The promise to us today is that God, through His Holy Spirit, will accomplish His ministry purpose through us. The Holy Spirit is literally the agent, having taken up residence within us, who will carry that through. Picture the Holy Spirit (who is God, the third person of the Holy Trinity) as the "CEO of evangelism and ministry." He will deliver through you and me.

For example, God has clearly called Koinonia House® National Ministries (KHNM) to equip and assist the body of Christ to meet Christian neighbors at the prison gate every day somewhere in America. He implements this work through His people at KHNM, via the Meet Me at the Gate™ initiative, which He instituted.

God is asking you and me today, through His calling in your life and through His calling to us at KHNM, to practice--***practice makes permanent***--the same faith of Abraham and Sarah to deliver His promise. How does He do that? Remember what I said above; He delivers it in you and me through His Holy Spirit. At KHNM, it is our aim to create a culture of joyful unity, a culture of love that is positioned at the Cross. In doing this, KHNM supports its mission statement and fulfills the objectives of the Meet Me at the Gate™ initiative.

For a Christian, faith is a real person who is the 'real deal'. This person is Jesus Christ who said: *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die"* (John 11:25-26). Notice that Jesus said that Christians never die; Christians **cross-over** to their permanent home (John 14:1-5).

Jesus preached to Martha in the midst of her ***"temporary pain and lack of faith and understanding"*** like many in the body of Christ suffer from today. Christians suffer from this temporary pain because of a very limited view of **who** Jesus Christ is, **what** He came to do, and **why** he did it. Furthermore, we fail to see the immense gravity of our sin, which separates us from the love of God and steals our joy.

Jesus asked Martha, *"...do you believe this?"* It is our duty as heralds (proclaimers) of the Gospel to present the Good News of Jesus Christ **properly** (without divorcing **any** of the components of the Gospel, especially the Cross). It is with loving passion for the souls of people that Christians present the Gospel; and the blessing to them is seeing the power of the awesome love and forgiveness of those repentant before a loving, triune God. It is His resurrecting power and faithfulness to His promises that encourages and motivates the heart of Christians. Remember, in spite of Martha and Mary blaming Jesus for Lazarus' death, He still raised Lazarus from the dead instantly that they might taste, believe and experience the awesome power of God and that God, in Christ, would be glorified (John 11:21-44) Aleluya!

Jesus is very God and very Man--and has clearly demonstrated that His Word and all of His claims are absolutely true. Jesus Christ has proven without a doubt that He is worthy of our constant **attitude and posture of worship** (Matthew 28:7). He is 100% reliable and 100% sufficient to meet every one of our needs and solve every one of our problems (Hebrews 7:26). In Christ, anyone anywhere (even inside a prison's death row) can experience total and guaranteed satisfaction (John 6:35) of a secure future. When the Christian is satisfied in Jesus, he/she can experience and taste the milk and honey of heaven even now!!

*"...but he (Jesus Christ) became a priest with an oath when God said to him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind. 'You are a priest forever.'" Because of this oath Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant...but because Jesus lives forever, He has a permanent priesthood. "Therefore He (Christ) is able to save completely those who come to God through Him because he always lives to intercede for them." (Hebrews 7:21-25). This passage of Scripture is intended for you to get out of your chair and start jumping for Joy because not only are you fully secured right now, **but for eternity!** He will not let you go (John 6:39-40).*

Jesus is the embodiment of Truth. He is indeed **the only Way, the only Truth, and the only Life** (John 14:6). In Him and through Him, you and I (God's most precious creation) can enjoy a full and harmonious relationship with God our loving Father, through the radical, redemptive work of the Cross (achieved through His only son Jesus). Jesus did this redemptive work for you and me because He is motivated by His love for the Father and His love for us. He endured the cross in total humility and uncompromising obedience to His Father because of *His unshakable, resilient and joyful faith* (100% Trust) in His Father's promises. Jesus' faith was fully rooted and anchored on a righteous relationship of promises that have never and will never fail. Jesus is the author and giver of faith! God's promises never fail (Joshua 23:13-14!!). Jesus knew that His Father God, through the Holy Spirit, was going to raise Him from the dead (Matthew 28:7).

I like what Pastor Jim Cymbala said; **"Jesus is in the business of recuperating stolen property"**. Jesus knew the huge cost and painful suffering He had to endure to **buy us back** because of our real sin that separated us from God our Father. We, through Adam and Eve, basically jumped God's loving fence of righteousness and allowed for the Devil to steal the joy and life out of humanity!! However, our God always had His loving and forgiving eyes on us (Genesis 3:15ff). His plan of redemption was always in his heart because of His unconditional love for us.

Jesus, in his office as priest, not only presented to God the Father the perfect, permanent and singularly acceptable sacrifice; He Himself became that perfect, permanent and the **only** acceptable sacrifice that quenched the wrath of God forever. Remember the Old Testament story of father Abraham with his son Isaac and the point of sacrifice he reached of his only son? The picture of Abraham and Isaac was realized and fully played out with God the Father and God the Son Jesus Christ! However, Isaac did not die on the altar. A merciful and loving God (who keeps His promises) delivered Isaac. Instead, Jesus Christ died on the cross. His body was broken and beaten and His sinless blood was shed. God the Father did not deliver His only Son. Instead, that loving and merciful God loved us again and brought His only Son to bear the immense human suffering and pain of the sin of all of humanity. The Son came to bear our death on the cross. The sinless Jesus became sin for us that we may be fully justified before a Holy God through faith alone, Christ alone and grace alone (Romans 6:8:11). Christ Jesus is our one-time deliverance. **Therefore worship and serve God with careful obedience out of gratitude and duty** (John 16:21).

Gordon MacDonald in his book titled A Resilient Life stated, "The alternative to resilience is quitting." Jesus Christ is Creator, redeemer, fully God and performer of miracles. He became fully human in everything except that He did not sin even when greatly tempted by the devil (Matthew 4) by the big three sins (materialism, power and self-satisfaction). He did not quit on us when things got really tough. When Jesus' own disciples could not even keep watch and pray with Him and His soul was overwhelmed with sorrow, He did not quit. When Peter betrayed him, He did not give up. Even when He was spat upon, beaten, scourged and fully humiliated, He did not quit. Instead,

Jesus remained joyful and full of faith in God's Promises (Matthew 26:36-41). It is important to note that even in His deep sorrow, Jesus was never in despair.

Jesus Christ endured all of this, even knowing His Father was pleased to Crush Him for our sake (Matthew 27:46) and He did not come down from the Cross. That is the level of unshakable faith and the kind of love that Christians need to have.

Using Abraham as an example again, it is this level of faith he displayed (Genesis 12:1-4 & Romans 4:16-25) when God called him to leave all that he was familiar with and get out of his country. He had to trust God's promise by faith, of a legacy and heritage through land and a great nation and a great name. It was at this time (Genesis 17) God changed his name from Abram to Abraham, which means 'Father of a Multitude'.

In Genesis 12, Abram had no son--only a grave and one tent. He was old and his wife Sarah's womb was dead. *"Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what He had promised"* (Romans 4:20-21). So Abraham trusted God for a place to stand, people to shape and prosperity to share.

We all know by feasting in God's Word in Genesis chapters 12 through 25, that Abraham faced lots of tests - some he failed, opposition from his own family (Lot), he became fearful--self-centered and lied (about his own wife). Still, he was considered righteous by God because of his faith, not his works (the law did not come until 430 years later through Moses). *This is why it was credited to him (Abraham) as righteousness* (Romans 4:22). *Abraham had a kind of faith that produces a hope that does not disappoint* (Romans 5:5).

Abraham believed and trusted God to be 100% reliable in keeping His promise to him. Abraham did not know **how** God was going to deliver on His Promise - especially the Land and Great Nations - but he knew that God would deliver because He had the power to do so and because He said He would. Abraham had God's blessings. Even after he received his **son of promise, Isaac** (which means 'laughter') and God asked him to sacrifice the boy, Abraham knew by faith that God was going to deliver Isaac because of His promise.

To bring this full circle, the Same God (Hebrews 13:8) that called Abraham to His mission, vision and the promise for a place to stand, people to shape and prosperity to share is the same God that has called you and me to His mission, vision and promise to make His delivery through you and me. Practice the faith of Abraham (**practice makes permanent**). Be assured that **God will never break His Promises**.

So 'put your hands to the plow' with much joy and an unshakable, resilient faith, which brings God glory. Joy, you know, is the trademark of the Christian. Remember to love any neighbor that God chooses to send your way in His absolute sovereignty. Our duty and calling is to **have the doors of our hearts wide open, with God's capacity, to receive and embrace every and any neighbor that God chooses to send to us**, including those coming out of prison. Our labor of love to any neighbor will cause a redemptive revolution in the Body of Christ - **aleluya!**

Be ready and totally committed to be the keeper and caster of God's given mission to you and to accomplish it with joy in total humility before God and before those God has called to labor side by side with you. Your faith will become unshakable and resilient as you see God keeping His promises through you. God is the true Promise Keeper!

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*Written by Manny Mill, Executive Director
Koinonia House® National Ministries
www.koinoniahouse.org*