

3. Be a FAT Christian

May 12, 2012

One of the trainings you would go through if you join the military is rappelling. Moving from one high elevated position to the lower level at fast speed is sometimes necessary tactically, especially when there are no stairs, elevators, or escalators available. In battlefield, you have to improvise with whatever you have.

The main key of rappelling is that you have to have utmost trust in your rope that it can hold your weight and you have to lean very hard against it even though every fear in you says otherwise. At the starting point, your body has to be perpendicular to the edge where you start to rappel down. The more you lean against the rope, the more control you get to have as you climb down. The biggest obstacle that a beginner has to overcome is that he should not lean toward the cliff, rather lean all of his weight on the rope.

The same goes with our faith in God. When the things in our lives start to fall apart, or the people around us doubt our integrity, or the place where once we thought that it was secure gave in under our feet, that is when we really have to lean hard on the Lord even if every human logic says, "Do something else. You cannot trust this invisible God."

We must trust who God is more than what God can do. He does wonderful things for us out of His grace, mercy, and love while we do many sinful and dumb things out of our sinful nature.

This morning we are going to go over the last portion of chapter 1 of the Book of Job again to learn more from this godly man Job about what to do when calamities hit our lives hard.

A. WORSHIPING GOD IN THE MIDST OF CALAMITIES

Job 1:20 Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped.

In v9 of this chapter, satan accused Job that he only serves God for what he could get out of God. In response to his false accusation, the Lord allowed satan to prove his point by striking Job from just about every direction including taking away his ten children's lives.

Finally, the spotlight of the entire spiritual world focused on Job's reaction to his trials. He passed the first test with a model response. He showed intense grief according to the accepted custom of his day.

I want all of you to pay attention to the seven words at the end of v20:

Job 1:20b he fell to the ground and worshiped.

I am sure that some of you may have experienced an occasion or two when such horrible news hits you so hard that you cannot breathe, or feel like someone just hits you in your gut, and collapse to the ground or at least you feel like doing that.

According to the context of this verse, Job's fall was not an involuntary reflex of despair but a deliberate act of humility before God. Job is not only an ancient biblical hero but also an example for us when we face trials that test the fortitude of each person's faith.

When we believers worship the Lord, other people will listen to what we have to say, especially when they know we are singing praise to God in the midst of difficult circumstances. Anyone can sing when things are going well. But when the bottom drops out, when hardship hits and we keep singing – that is something unique to the Christianity.

In Acts 16, we read that Paul and Silas were thrown in a Philippian prison for preaching the Gospel. But at midnight, they began to sing praises to God. Instead of complaining or calling on God to strike the people dead who had done this to them, they were worshipping. The other prisoners listened, because these two were having a real encounter with God. And when the Philippian jailer saw it for himself, it opened his heart to the truth of the Gospel.

Psalm 42:8 The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, And in the night His song shall be with me-- A prayer to the God of my life.

When you are in pain, the spiritual midnight hour is not an easy time to have a worship service. As one of my spiritual heroes, the great British preacher Charles H. Spurgeon said, "Any fool can sing in the day. It's easy to sing when we can read the notes by daylight. But the skillful singer is the one who can sing when there is not a ray of light to read by. Songs in the night come only from God. They are not in the power of man."

B. BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD

Job 1:21 And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Last week I mentioned that this comment by Job is one of the most magnificent faith filled statements and action in the Bible. Here is the list I compiled:

1) Jesus: Facing the torture and crucifixion

Luke 22:42 saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."

2) Joseph: Facing the ten brothers who sold him as a slave to Egypt

Genesis 50:20 But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.

3) Paul: Facing his physical infirmities

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

4) David: Facing a false accusation by Shimei

2 Samuel 16:9-12 Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Please, let me go over and take off his head!" 10 But the king said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, because the Lord has said to him, 'Curse David.' Who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?'" 11 And David said to Abishai and all his servants, "See how my son who came from my own body seeks my life. How much more now may this Benjamite? Let him alone, and let him curse; for so the Lord has ordered him. 12 It may be that the Lord will look on my affliction, and that the Lord will repay me with good for his cursing this day."

5) **Daniel:** Facing an obvious persecution

Daniel 6:10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

6) **Mary:** Facing a lifelong false shame and insult for being pregnant of Jesus by the Holy Spirit before her wedding

Luke 1:38 Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

We cannot make these kinds of statements unless we have spiritual maturity within. There are no "shortcuts" in the Christian life, and there is no easy way to spiritual victory and maturity. If the perfect Son of God had to hang on a cross before He could sit on the throne in heaven, then we should not expect an easier way of life. Age and time in Christianity do not necessarily make us better. They only do if we continue to follow God in faith.

Someone who is very wise said, "Christians are a lot like tea bags. You don't know what it is made out of, until you put it in hot water."

Spiritual maturity is something we all must have as we grow older in the Lord. It only comes through trials of life, no other ways. We really cannot get it unless we go through it.

Some of you might say, "Uh, I don't mind being spiritually immature." But trust me, God doesn't want you to remain spiritually immature, nor the people around you. Have you ever been in a place, like inside of an airplane 30,000 feet above where you cannot go anywhere else, there is a totally unruly child who screams his head off and acts like a maniac and his parents are doing absolutely nothing? You are thinking, "Why don't we let the child go play outside?"

C. BE A FAT CHRISTIAN

When I found out that I am a diabetic a couple of years ago, I had to attend a diabetic class where they taught us how to calculate how much carbohydrates I take in a day. The nurse who specialized in nutrition told us, "If it tastes good, spit it out." I tell ya, those doctors and nurses have no idea what good tasting foods are. They insist that diabetics should be practically vegetarians and lose weight. In other words, don't be a fat person.

But when it comes to spiritual thing, God says otherwise. He does have His customized and individualized spiritual maturity training programs for everyone of us to make us be FAT Christians – Faithful, Available, and Teachable.

1) Be FAITHFUL

God doesn't ask us to understand His plan for our lives, but He asks us to trust Him no matter what. And He is worthy of our trust and we should remain faithful to the Lord.

Revelation 2:10 Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

2) Be AVAILABLE

While we go through trials, if we remain faithful to the Lord, He will use us to minister to those who are going through similar situations. Be available to the Lord so that He can use you to bless others at the same time He will bless you immensely.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

3) Be TEACHABLE

If we think that we don't deserve any trial that helps us grow spiritually, it is like we are telling God that He doesn't know what He is doing. It shows pride and arrogance in our part. To be teachable, we have to have humility that makes us realize that we do not know everything, and we learn something valuable from others all the time, especially from the Word of God.

1 Peter 5:6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time

D. WHOLENESS AFTER BROKENNESS

Job 1:22 In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.

Listen, man's disappointments are often God's appointments, and the things we believe are tragedies may be the very opportunities through which God chooses to exhibit His love and grace. We can remember a number of mature Christians who have been broken became better and more effective Christians than if they had carried out all their own plans and purposes. For a Christian, wholeness always comes after brokenness.

E. APPLICATIONS

1) The motive for Christian living is not that we might gain something we don't have but that we might live up to what we already have in Christ.

2) We must remember that our God is worthy to be blessed and praise in any and all circumstances of life.

3) For a Christian, wholeness always comes after brokenness.