

At the end of the rope

Life changes for the better when we finally settle down in our hearts to trust Him. When our ability to control our life runs out, and enough of our hopes and dreams are tarnished by our own efforts, and when we've finally had enough of living according to people's expectations, trusting in the Lord can begin. Have you entered in to that "abiding place" of trust in the Lord? It is a blessing to personally experience the words of the hymn that says,

"When we have exhausted our hoard of resources,
Our Father's full giving has only begun."

It never ceases to amaze me that God's grace and mercy appears to begin at the "end of our rope". When hope seems lost, when faith runs low, and when energy drains, there seems to come from God a hand reached out to us. How is it that the beginning of blessing so frequently happens when brokenness comes? Why is it that the supernatural presence of God comes close when the natural world seems to fall apart around us?

I have long suspected that there is a basic reason for this phenomenon, one that is rooted in man's basic problem and God's basic character. If you would give a one word description of man's basic problem, what would it be? My answer would probably be pride. Likewise, if you used one word to describe God's basic nature, what would that be? My answer would be love: God is love. Here then is the quandary: How do you love a proud man? In his pride, he repels love, indeed he cannot even see true love. In his self sufficiency he is like a glass full of water, into which it is impossible to pour anything. He is full of himself.

So, God waits..... He even allows certain influences to come to the proud man, influences that outweigh the man's own abilities and strength — influences that interrupt him, upset him, even exhaust him. Why? Is it because God is difficult to get along with, or unmoved by the man's predicament? On the contrary; God is simply arranging a setting in which He can do what He does best, and what He has all along wanted to do to the man. He wants to love him. A humbled man can receive love.

So, the blessings of God can come in your life even at what may seem to be "the end of the road".

Have you ever experienced the death of a dream, or seen hopes dashed on the rocks of life — that is, life as it is, rather than life as you wish.?

Abraham did. Moses did. Joseph did. Jacob did. David did. Jeremiah did. Jonah did. Peter did. All the disciples did. Paul did.

Jesus went to the grave before His dream (and the Father's dream) could come to pass. Still the Father waits for that dream to be fulfilled.

By the way, do you know what the Father's dream is? A multicultural bride for His Son, a body of people redeemed from every tribe, tongue, people and nation. Has the Father had to delay His dream, and go through many losses on the road to its fulfillment? History says yes; and even today the forces of hell would like to stop that dream. But a death has taken place, and a resurrection that makes it impossible for God's dream to stop. You see, Jesus now has the power of an indestructible life to intercede for that bride until she is ready for the wedding!

Once your dreams go through death, there is hope for a resurrection, and for the power of Christ's indestructible life to invade your dead dreams. Until you go through a death to yourself, the resurrection power can't begin. Without death, there is no resurrection.

Over the years I've been surprised that the days and weeks after major disappointments and losses are not always as terrible as one would expect. In fact, I have found that a new grace can come at such times; a grace to live and have hope and try again. And when this grace does come, it seems to come from a source other than myself; for at such times I feel dead and lifeless and without strength. But the power of resurrection life is deep within. It sometimes comes up inside me with a song, such as "I've got the life of God in me, I've got the life of God in me!" Sometimes the new grace starts in a phone call from a good friend who gets my mind off the past and into the future. Sometimes it comes in a word of Scripture: "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good..." Sometimes it is just an unexplainable joy that bubbles up from what I thought was a dry well inside of me.

There is a price to pay for this, however, and it is best paid during the time of loss or disappointment. That price is this: don't get bitter, and don't think God is doing something bad. Be thankful for life as it is (maybe not so good) and for God as He is (very good). And decide to keep serving God. It is the price Jonah paid to get out of the belly of the whale. In the middle of whale guts, entangled in seaweed, and at death's door, he finally paid the price: "But I will sacrifice to Thee with the voice of thanksgiving. That which I vowed I will pay." Then the whale spit him out into resurrection life!

Once you have offered your sacrifice of thanksgiving, and decided to obey God, then wait.... lift up your head, look at the new day and embrace life as it is! Something good is going to happen to you!

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