

Nov 12, 2010

...Praise Him with the timbrel and dance. (Psalm 105:4)

volume 1 • no. 24

My Home Beyond the End ©1985, e.j.ross3

When the cold wind blows in the twilight
mist, and that last faint ember fails,
When my pathway ends at the river's bend,
And I face that final veil...
I will cross the river, borne on love's sweet
wind,
I'll end my race in the Lord's embrace,
In my home beyond the end.

In the golden light of my Savior's love, we
will loose the silver cord;
With my soul in His hands we'll fly home to
the land
Where His glory I'll behold...
I will cross the river, borne on love's sweet
wind,
And end my race in the Lord's embrace,
In my home beyond the end.

•t&dw

Thought of the Week.

“If we are trusting in Christ, we will want Him to rule our lives; we will learn from His teaching; we will give ourselves to Him wholeheartedly. All these things come along with true faith, and others besides. But, though all these things are evidence to us, I must still say that we can normally know within ourselves, by the ordinary [witness] of the Holy Spirit, whether we have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

William Guthrie, The Christian's Great Interest, 1658

•ejr3

Feature Article:

Outrageous Faith

By faith Noah, being warned by God of things not seen as yet, ...prepared an ark. Heb 11:7

By faith Abraham, ...went out, not knowing where he was going. Heb 11:8

By faith Moses [chose] rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. Heb 11:24-26

These all died in faith, not having received the promises; but having seen them afar off, they were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Heb 11:13

How quickly we may come to value temporal things which can be seen above the unseen things of the Spirit, which are eternal (2Cor 4:18)! Yet, faith by nature, is treasuring the unseen things of God to the point that we live our lives in the light of them. In this, the giants among the Old Covenant saints often put us to shame. These all lived and died by faith in the “not yet”. They had not yet seen Christ appear. They had not yet witnessed the accomplishment of His atoning work, or His resurrection and glory. The *source* of their sustenance and encouragement for a life of faith emanated entirely from unseen, un-experienced promises, and the *external* workings of God's grace. Even the witness of the Spirit of Christ in the prophets (1Pet 1:10-11) was a temporal reality for the delivering of God's Word; they did not received the promise of the *indwelling*, abiding witness and work of the Holy Spirit. *Unto them it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven... (1Pet 1:12). They all died persevering in the faith of unseen (and undelivered) promises.* Yet persevere they did! And the witness of their faith was enormous.

Please notice that all these examples of great faith in Hebrews 11 focus on *lone individuals*; individuals who staked their lives, reputations, and well-being on the unseen promises of God. Moved by faith, they stepped out and did something *outrageous*, something *illogical and absurd* in the eyes of the world. Every one of them!

Who builds a boat on dry land with no water in sight, and probably never even having seen rain? Who leaves home and the comforts of the city to wonder in the wilderness in tents, not even knowing where he's going? Who willingly leaves the opulent life of royalty to suffer affliction with slaves? Yet, in each case, **one person**, doing something entirely foolish in the *obedience of faith*, changed the course of history. Furthermore, they did it *for us*, that we might be the recipients of the *Great Promise*, upon whom the ends of the world have come (*1Pet 1:12; 1 Cor 10:11*)!

We, in the present, have been privileged and blessed to live in **both** the “*now*” and the “*not yet*” aspects of Christ's Kingdom. We are blessed to know the *historical facts* of Christ's coming, redeeming work, and His glorious resurrection. By the *indwelling* of the Holy Spirit, many of the New Covenant realities, which the Old Covenant saints only saw and embraced by faith, are now our realities. This *indwelling* is “the earnest of our salvation”, the foretaste of glory, the Lord's “down payment” to us of heaven (*2Cor 1:22*). Christ Himself *in us* is our hope of glory (*Colos 1:27*).

Yet we also, like the saints of old, must look with the eyes of faith to embrace the much greater realities that shall be ours in the Consummation. We must live in the light of those promises to the glory of God, and be willing to step out by faith and do that which is absurd... audacious... impossible! It is in this vain that Jesus said that nothing shall be impossible to those who believe (*Matt 17:20*). But the impossible always begins by a *step of faith*. The priests feet must step into the water before it parts (*Josh 3:13*). If we sit back waiting for God to “part the waters” first, we will sit unto death. The ark would not have been built. Abraham would have died in Ur. Israel would never have gotten out of Egypt. While it is true that God initiated all of these things in that he *revealed His will* to individuals, it was *men of faith* who took the first step toward fulfilling that will. **It is enough if the Lord has spoken. Faith must then step out.**

Our step of faith must also be a *step of obedience*. We follow at the pleasure and command of the Lord, at the prompting of His Spirit and Word, not according to the imaginations of our own heart, or the desires of our own flesh. Many have gone forth saying “God told me” when He did not (*Jer 23:21*). They

have not only made a fool of themselves, but have deterred many others from taking a true step of faith in obedience to the Lord.

Has the Spirit's unction been persistent in prompting you to do something “outrageous”, beyond your abilities, and beyond the “reasonable”? Is it in accordance with His Word? Then start moving out by faith. You will find God faithful beyond measure, and you will greatly glorify Him. Whether you are that one person of faith who will change the course of history, or one who only suffers, wandering about as an outcast (*Heb 11:36-38*), you will become an honored member of that *great cloud of witnesses* who have gone before (*Heb 12:1*), and *of whom the world was not worthy* (*Heb 11:38*). ●ejr3

Are there topics or questions you would like to see addressed in a future T&DW? . Please submit them to pastored@springwoodchapel.com

Walking with Jesus... a devotional minute.

A Time to Keep Silent, and a Time to Speak

See that you say nothing to anyone.. Mark 1:44

Go... and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you. Mark 5:19

Not infrequently does Jesus tell those who have just received, or witnessed, a great miracle to say nothing about it. We are reminded that outward “evidences” alone, or testimonies thereof, cannot *produce* true faith. Neither are they the *objects* of true faith.

Yet, Jesus, at another time, tells the healed demoniac to *tell everyone!* It is certainly good to acknowledge God's great blessings and miracles in our lives, and to glorify Him by telling others about them. In doing so we may possibly open a door unto salvation as we get to share the gospel (good news) of Christ. May the Spirit give us discernment of the time to keep silent and the time to speak (*Eccl 3:7*). ●ejr3

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