

WHEN IT FEELS LIKE THE PROMISE WAS A LIE

For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

Habakkuk 2:3

"The patience of the saints proves the power of divine grace." - Charles Spurgeon

The Pattern: God makes a promise, speaks the word, and says "It is done" – then all hell breaks out against the promise, and against the one to whom it was made. Have you ever seen this in your life? Perhaps that's where you are right now – God has made you a promise, but it's failing to come to pass. And in the process, your faith feels tried, tested, and at times even torn down.

Scripture illustrates this, and Joseph's life is perhaps the best example. He had amazing promises from God, and they were absolutely sure and true. But as Joseph's life went on, the fulfillment of those promises looked doubtful, improbable, and then absolutely impossible. *Joseph needed the promise to maintain hope through all he would suffer... but he also needed the suffering to prepare him for the promise's fulfillment.* Psalm 105:19 says, *"Until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the LORD tested him."* There are times when you wish God had never spoken, never imparted vision, never given hope... because the awareness of the unfulfilled promises can open our hearts to disappointment and even disillusionment with God. It can feel like the promise was a lie. We see this illustrated in the lives of the 3 most significant men in the Old Testament: David, Abraham, and Moses.

THE KING WHO LIVED IN A CAVE

Certainly David understood disappointment with God! He had a sure word from the Lord, given through Samuel the priest: he would be the king of Israel. But the next 13 years were anything but kingly – he dodged spears, lived in caves, roamed the wilderness, resorted to the Philistines, and was always on the run, chased like a hunted animal. David did not always feel like God's promise was true: *"And in my dismay I said, 'All men are liars.'"* (Psalm 116:11) He had his bouts with doubts, his times of wrestling and wondering. But in the end, **God's word proved true**, and He fulfilled His every promise to David – God's will, God's timing, in God's way.

It is safe to assume that the level of opposition, trial and testing David endured was commensurate with the greatness of his calling. There's a valuable truth here: *the longer God takes in preparing you for His purpose, the greater the purpose for which He's preparing you.* Like Joseph, David needed all

the heartache to prepare him for the throne. And the result? He became the greatest earthly king ever, and is remembered in Scripture (both OT & NT) as *"a man after God's own heart"* (Acts 13:22).

WHEN THE FATHER OF NATIONS HAD NO CHILDREN

God promised Abraham a son – not just any son, but the seed of the covenant. The Messiah Himself would come through this lineage of Jewish blood. Only one problem: Sarai was barren, and Abraham was no spring chicken.

Abraham's promise from God took over 25 years to be fulfilled. Sometimes when we've waited a long time for God with no visible results, we decide it's time to help Him out a little. That's what Abraham did, and the result was "plan B." God in His mercy blessed Ishmael, but he would not be accepted as the son of the covenant. *God's plans must be carried out God's ways; we only mess things up when we try to assist.*

We see that this tried and tested man became *"The father of all who believe"* (Rom. 4:11), perhaps the greatest earthly example of faith & obedience in the whole Bible. He believed God against all odds, against all reason, and Scripture bestowed upon him the title of distinction and honor, *"The friend of God"* (James 2:23). Not "A" friend of God, but "THE" friend of God. Incredible!

HE WALKED LIKE AN EGYPTIAN

Moses had a mighty calling on his life to redeem God's people from the oppression and slavery of Egypt, and he decided it was high time to rise up and do something about it! That's a real temptation when you know some of what God has called you to – it's easy to "jump the gun." So he killed one Egyptian and was sentenced to 40 years hard time on the backside of the desert in Midian.

Can you imagine... **40 YEARS** of tending someone else's flocks, just scratching out an existence, hoping that Pharaoh never finds out where you went, and that you ran far enough away.

What about the calling? What about the miraculous story of his birth, being saved by Pharaoh's daughter, brought up as royalty, being prepared for greatness and leadership?

Dead – all dead! Every shred of dream, calling, and divine purpose was utterly dead in Moses' life. Now he was simply a shepherd for hire, owing his daily sustenance to his father-in-law Jethro.

And then one day, after 40 years of seemingly wasted time, 40 years of breaking and humbling – one day God breaks into the story. "Take off your shoes, Moses..." God was watching and waiting, preparing His vessel in the most unlikely of settings. *The path to the promise will seldom make sense to our natural minds, but rest assured: there's no wasted time in the will of God.* Just keep trusting, keep seeking Him, and keep doing the work He's given you to do today.

So after a long silence, God speaks; and Moses becomes God's man on the earth, the mouthpiece of YHWH, a one-man threat to the most powerful nation on earth, revered by Jews & Egyptians alike.

But there's another side to what Moses became that is even better: he became *"the most humble man on the face of the earth"* (Numbers 12:3), forever honored as *"the servant of God"* (Rev. 15:3). Again, that's not just "A" servant, but "THE" servant of God. What an honor!

THE BIG THREE

So there they are, three men with incredible promises from God: to be the father of many nations, the deliverer for God's covenant nation, and the king who would foreshadow the Messiah Himself. And each of them had to suffer intolerably long delays of God's promises being fulfilled; so long, in fact, that the promises looked not just "delayed" but "DEAD."

But look at how God remembers them:

ABRAHAM, THE FRIEND OF GOD

MOSES, THE SERVANT OF GOD

DAVID, THE MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

So how will God remember you or me? May He call us faithful and faith-filled, patient and persevering, humble and pure, bold and zealous for His glory. May the way we live, love, and wait on Him bring Him glory both now and forever more... Amen!

"The master works of God are those men who stand in the midst of difficulties, steadfast, immovable...He who would glorify his God must set his account upon meeting with many trials. No man can be illustrious before the Lord unless his conflicts be many. If, then, yours be a much-trying path, rejoice in it, because you will the better show forth the all-sufficient grace of God." - Charles Spurgeon

May the Lord's presence be your portion as you wait on Him to fulfill His every promise in your life (see Hebrews 6:12).

In Christ's love,

Pastor Matthew Casey

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