

February 2004: When God Seems Silent

by Aaron Greenway

Can you imagine? Captivity had to have seemed like an eternity. An entire generation would pass away until the temple could be rebuilt. Nehemiah, Ezra, and other prophets gave their last word. And then there would be silence for hundreds of years. Since revelation came only through the prophets, that meant that God had not spoken during that time. What were these people to do?

The silence of God is a mystery. Sometimes, God is silent because people disobey Him. The Israelites were in the desert heading toward the Promised Land, with the cloud by day and the pillar of smoke by night (Exodus 13:22), signifying the presence of the Lord. But later God's presence would be removed because of their sin. But then sometimes, God is silent because we need to depend upon what he has already told us to do. There are some who depend on God telling them something new when they should go back and read the old. The old Scriptures are fresh today.

Going through the spiritual desert is not easy. Going through the fire and the flood is difficult. I know women who have had miscarriages. I know a mother who lost a daughter, one of my best friends, in a tragic car accident. I know singles that have waited faithfully year after year, trusting that God would bring them a spouse, and still keeping themselves pure for their wedding nights. I almost lost both of my parents to a stroke and to cancer. Life can be difficult to figure out sometimes. And

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sometimes, it is so hard to crack open that Bible and draw close to God when we are having a rough time. But God commands us to do so anyway, because we need Him. God said he would always draw near to us as we have drawn near to Him, but He never said we would always feel it (James 4:8). We must always depend on what He has already said.

If we always depend on the “signs and wonders” or the “spiritual highs” we will never spiritually mature. We will never learn what God wanted us to learn. We have to know that God will come through. God will deliver what He has promised. And when the trial has passed and we begin to see God’s hand again, we will say, “It was worth every once of pain. Praise God for the trials!” Take the Apostle James’ word for it, “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience” (James 1:3).

Last night, I went to see Steve Green in concert. He came here to the Dallas area with his crew for an outreach to the Hispanic community. Into the concert we listened as Steve told about his father, a man who once preached the Gospel with power in Argentina, who is now a man suffering from Parkinson’s Disease. He can no longer preach, nor can he speak at all. But one day, they heard something coming from his room. Steve looked in and saw this man praying, and praising God. God will not forsake his people, even when it looks impossible.

An old friend of mine by the name of Eddie once wrote a song “Where There’s a Wall, There’s a Way” that went like this:

*Where there’s a wall, there’s a way.
He won’t forsake His own when obstacles arise.
Where there’s a wall. There’s a way.
I know the Lord will provide.*

Powerful, isn't it? God never forsook Israel. And He will not forsake His church. The salvation He gave you, He will not take it back. It is forever. Your feelings and your circumstances do not dictate reality. God’s Word does.

Brother/Sister, we must cling to Him. Know that God will come through. That is what faith is all about. It is believing God even when it looks impossible for us. It is believing God when we are going through the desert. God is teaching us to depend on Him. He is allowing the drought to happen in our lives so when we come out on the other side, we never deny His faithfulness, His power, and His glory. And He is growing us up spiritually so we can be a blessing to those who come through the desert behind us. What spiritual desert have you gone through?