

“EVERY YEAR YOU GROW”

Sunday, February 24, 2008

FROM THE MESSAGE INTERPRETATION

JEREMIAH 32:17-27

Jer 32:17 'Dear GOD, my Master, you created earth and sky by your great power--by merely stretching out your arm! There is nothing you can't do.

Jer 32:18 You're loyal in your steadfast love to thousands upon thousands--but you also make children live with the fallout from their parents' sins. Great and powerful God, named GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies,

Jer 32:19 determined in purpose and relentless in following through, you see everything that men and women do and respond appropriately to the way they live, to the things they do.

Jer 32:20 "You performed signs and wonders in the country of Egypt and continue to do so right into the present, right here in Israel and everywhere else, too. You've made a reputation for yourself that doesn't diminish.

Jer 32:21 You brought your people Israel out of Egypt with signs and wonders--a powerful deliverance!--by merely stretching out your arm.

Jer 32:22 You gave them this land and solemnly promised to their ancestors a bountiful and fertile land.

Jer 32:23 But when they entered the land and took it over, they didn't listen to you. They didn't do what you commanded. They wouldn't listen to a thing you told them. And so you brought this disaster on them.

Jer 32:24 "Oh, look at the siege ramps already set in place to take the city. Killing and starvation and disease are on our doorstep. The Babylonians are attacking! The Word you spoke is coming to pass--it's daily news!

Jer 32:25 And yet you, GOD, the Master, even though it is certain that the city will be turned over to the Babylonians, also told me, Buy the field. Pay for it in cash. And make sure there are witnesses."

Jer 32:26 Then GOD's Message came again to Jeremiah:

Jer 32:27 "Stay alert! I am GOD, the God of everything living. Is there anything I can't do?"

I AM SURE THAT MANY, IF NOT ALL OF YOU, HAVE READ SOME OF C.S. LEWIS'S CHRONICLES OF NARNIA.

WHEN C.S. LEWIS CREATED A CHARACTER TO BE HIS CHRIST FIGURE IN HIS CHRONICLES, HE INTRODUCED ASLAN, THE LION KING OF NARNIA.

COINCIDENTAL? PROBABLY NOT SINCE ONE OF THE GREATEST NAMES FOR JESUS IN THE BIBLE IS THE "LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH".

→(IN TODAYS CLIP, WE ARE INTRODUCED TO THE SACRIFICE THEME.)

IN ANOTHER OF LEWIS'S LATER BOOKS, (Prince Caspian, ch.10, page 380) LUCY IS FINALLY REUNITED WITH THE LION KING.....

ASLAN SAYS, "WELCOME CHILD".

LUCY RESPONDS, “ASLAN, YOU ARE BIGGER”.

ASLAN SAYS, “THAT IS BECAUSE YOU ARE OLDER, LITTLE ONE.”

LUCY SAYS, “OH, NOT BECAUSE YOU ARE BIGGER?”

ASLAN SAYS, “OH, I AM NOT. **BUT EVERY YEAR YOU GROW, YOU WILL FIND ME BIGGER**”.

THAT’S PRETTY POWERFUL STUFF....

PUT IN A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE....

EVERY YEAR WE GROW IN OUR RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST....OR **EVERY GROWTH EXPERIENCE** WE HAVE IN CHRIST....

CHRIST WILL SEEM BIGGER....OR OUR RELATIONSHIP TO HIM WILL BECOME DEEPER AND STRONGER....AND THEREFORE WE SEE CHRIST IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT....WITH MORE CLARITY.

CLEARLY AS WE STUDY THE WORD OF GOD, AND DIGGEST AND REFLECT ON SOME OF THE EXPERIENCES OF THE BIBLICAL PERSONALITIES.....

WE WILL DISCOVER, I BELIEVE, THAT GOD WANTS US TO **GROW**...WITH EVERY FAITH STEP WE MAKE....WHEN WE ARE IN OUR DIFFICULT TIMES AND WE PUT OUR COMPLETE TRUST IN HIM...**WE GROW**....

HE DOESN’T GET ANY BIGGER...BUT BECAUSE WE DRAW CLOSER TO HIM...HE APPEARS BIGGER!

ONE AUTHOR WROTE (RON HUTCHCRAFT 2/10/04) HE IS ALL THOSE “OMNI’S” WE HEAR ABOUT.....

- GOD IS “**OMNISCIENT**”, THERE IS NOTHING HE DOESN’T KNOW. HE IS **EL ROI**, ALL SEEING AND ALL KNOWING.
 - GOD IS “**OMINIPRESENT**”; HE IS EVERYWHERE.
 - GOD IS “**OMNIPOTENT**”, THERE IS NOTHING HE CANNOT DO.
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CONSIDER THIS? WHY IS IT THAT IN SOME OF THE MOST DIFFICULT TIMES, AND TRIALS WE FACE, ***WE GROW MORE DISTANT TO GOD, THAN MAKE AN EFFORT TO GET CLOSER?***

POSSIBLY THE ANSWER LIES IN ***OUR HUMANNESS***.

REGARDLESS OF THE DIFFICULTY, OR THE SIZE OF THE PROBLEM, WHY IS IT THAT WE MOST OFTEN **TURN WITHIN** TO TRY AND FIND A SOLUTION?

WITHOUT A SHOW OF HANDS-----HOW MANY OF YOU HAVE BEEN, OR ARE CURRENTLY IN THE MIDST OF SOME DIFFICULTY, OR CRISIS?

WHEN THE DIFFICULTY OR CRISIS BEGAN, WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST RESPONSE?

ILLUSTRATION: ONE OF THE HARDEST THINGS FOR CLERGY TO LEARN EARLY IN MINISTRY IS THAT NOT EVERYONE IS GOING TO LIKE YOU, OR AGREE WITH YOU! ***CHURCH HOPPERS*** WILL LEAVE AND GO TO OTHER CHURCHES, AND YOUNG CLERGY TAKE THIS PERSONALLY.

WE TRY TO ADAPT, BY BEING ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE!

ONE OF THE REASONS FOR CLERGY BURN OUT, AND DROP OUT IS A REALITY THAT MOST ALL WILL CERTAINLY COME TO....***THEY CAN'T BE ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE.....***

ONE THING I HAVE LEARNED AFTER 37 YEARS, AND MANY EXPERIENCES IS THIS.....YOUR FIRST RESPONSIBILITY IS TO BE ***FAITHFUL TO THE CALL THAT GOD PUT ON YOU!***

EXAMPLE: IN MY VERY FIRST APPOINTMENT, THERE WAS A PERSON WHO FLAT OUT DIDN'T LIKE ME. SHE WAS DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE, OPENLY AND NOT SO OPENLY, TO CAUSE ME SOME GRIEF.

SHE DIDN'T LIKE ME BECAUSE;

- OF THE WAY I DRESSED.
- MY PRAYERS WERE TOO LONG.
- I PREACHED TOO LONG.
- SHE DIDN'T AGREE WITH MY THEOLOGY.
- MY CHILDREN RAN THROUGH THE CHURCH.
- MY ORDER OF WORSHIP WAS TOO FORMAL.
- I DIDN'T CHOOSE HYMNS THAT PEOPLE KNOW.

WELL, "I" PUT UP WITH THIS AS LONG AS I COULD, THEN "I" FINALLY WENT TO THE PERSON TO TRY AND SETTLE SOME THINGS.

AT WHICH TIME SHE CONTINUED HER TIRADE OF THINGS SHE DIDN'T LIKE. AND ALTHOUGH SHE HAD NEVER OPENLY SAID IT..... SHE SAID, "YOU KNOW I JUST DON'T LIKE YOU!"

AND MY RESPONSE TO HER WAS, "I DON'T LIKE YOU EITHER, INFACIT I FIND YOUR SPIRIT IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH TO BE DISTRUCTIVE AND HURTFUL.....WHY DON'T YOU FIND ANOTHER CHURCH!"

WELL, THAT OPENED THE FLOOD GATES.

OF COURSE THE NEWS THROUGHOUT THE CHURCH WAS THAT I TOLD HER TO LEAVE THE CHURCH... WHICH I DID.

WELL, WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS SCENARIO?

DID YOU HEAR HOW MANY TIMES I SAID, “I” DID THIS, OR THAT?

TO BRING A CONCLUSION TO THIS STORY..... IT GOT A LITTLE WORSE BEFORE IT GOT BETTER.....

AND WHEN SHE DIDN'T LEAVE THE CHURCH, AS I HAD HOPED.....***I WENT TO THE LORD IN PRAYER.....***

THEN I ASKED A FEMALE LEADER OF THE CHURCH TO GO WITH ME, AND WE WENT TO VISIT THIS PERSON....***WE OPENED WITH PRAYER.....***AND BEFORE THE AFTERNOON WAS OVER....WE WERE HUGGING EACH OTHER.

AND GUESS WHAT? SHE NEVER LEFT THE CHURCH AND BECAME ONE OF MY STRONGEST SUPPORTERS.

I WONDER WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF I HAD FIRST GONE TO THE LORD IN PRAYER?

IT WAS A LEARNING LESSON I HAVE CARRIED WITH ME NOW FOR THE ENTIRETY OF MY MINISTRY.

THERE IS A WORD FROM TODAY'S SCRIPTURE THAT ALL OF US SHOULD PAY ATTENTION TO;

Jer 32:27 “Stay alert! I am GOD, the God of everything living. Is there anything I can't do?

THINK ABOUT IT; WHEN YOUR PROBLEM SUDDENLY GETS MORE DIFFICULT, DOES IT GET MORE DIFFICULT FOR GOD?

MAYBE YOU ARE HAVING PROBLEMS;

- FINANCIALLY.
- MEDICALLY.
- WITH YOUR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS.
- AT WORK.
- IN YOUR FAMILY.
- WITH YOUR CHILDREN.

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BUT WHEN I TRY TO SOLVE ALL THE PROBLEMS ***BY MYSELF***, I MAY FIND A TEMPORARY RESPIT, OR I MAY FIND THE PROBLEM JUST CONTINUES TO GET BIGGER.

IN THE JAMERSON, FAUSSET, BROWN COMMENTARY, THE AUTHORS SAY;
“THROUGH OUR SELF CENTEREDNESS, AND SELF RIGHTEOUSNESS, GOD WILL ALLOW US TO DISCOVER, TO SEE, THAT WE BY OURSELVES ARE INCAPABLE OF GREATNESS”.

HOW MANY OF YOU KNOW THAT NAMES OF;

- JOSHEB-BASSHEBETH.
- ELEZAR, SON OF DODAI.
- SHAMMAH, SON OF AGEE.

THESE ARE THREE OF DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN, WHO BECAUSE OF THEIR FAITH, FOUGHT AGAINST INSURMOUNTABLE ODDS AND CAME OUT VICTORIOUS.
(2 SAMUEL 23:8-12)

THERE IS A LESSON FOR ALL OF US FOUND IN TODAY'S SCRIPTURE.....

“FAITH IS THE KEY THAT UNLOCKS ALL THE GREAT THINGS GOD HAS FOR YOU.” WHETHER IT IS IN THIS BRIEF EARTHLY EXPERIENCE WE SHARE.....OR IN THE SPAN OF ETERNITY.

WHEN YOU LEARN TO PUT YOUR FAITH TO ACTION, AND BEGIN TO TRUST IN THE PROMISES OF GOD.....

YOU GROW!

WHEN YOU GROW, GOD SEEMS BIGGER **BECAUSE YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO HIM IS BECOMING CLOSER.**

BUT THE REALITY IS THIS.....GOD HASN'T GOTTEN ANY BIGGER.....

WE HAVE!

IF YOU WANT TO SEE THE GREATNESS OF GOD.....YOU HAVE TO WALK DAILY WITH HIM.....AND TRUST HIM.

LET'S PRAY.