

ORDER OUR STEPS

Anecdote for despair

By Jim Davis

Perhaps you have observed the mime-in-the-box routine and considered his quandary. First he comes into contact with a massive unseen force that stands directly in front of him. The heavily made-up face of the mime displays the normal frustration that all of us feel when we meet such circumstances in life. When it becomes apparent that the force is unmovable he attempts to move to the right and go around the object only to find another invisible wall that is unmovable. After several attempts with the mime straining against the wall he turns in frustration and great anger to move in the opposite direction. As he discovers that it is not possible for him to move forward or to go around the invisible objects in any direction, he turns to go back the way he came. The expression on his face changes from anger to concern when he discovers that there is an invisible force which blocks him from returning the direction he came. He begins to panic and move quickly in every direction only to find that he is in a box. His expression reveals terror when he discovers that he is not only boxed in but that the walls are moving and he is slowly losing more and more space. He raises his hands over his head and discovers that above him there is a wall and it is descending upon him. At some point terror changes to despair as the crushing load extinguishes his existence.

All of us discover that there are forces in life that we cannot control. Many times our circumstances become overwhelming and may lead to great despair. If you are experiencing something like this you should know that you are in good company. Listen to the words of David, the great king of Israel, "I am weary with my sighing; Every night I make my bed swim, I dissolve my couch with my tears. My eye has wasted away with grief; It has become old because of all my adversaries" (Psalm 6). We could pick any of a number of Biblical characters to make the point, but listen to the words of Job, "Why did I not die at birth...For my groaning comes at the sight of my food, and my cries pour out like water. For what I fear comes upon me, and what I dread befalls me. I am not at ease, nor am I quiet, And I am not at rest but turmoil comes" (Job 3:11,24-26).

These men were in such great distress that they were considering death but the good news is that they both were delivered. They both became victorious over their boxes of despair. Both King David and Job are spoken of as being men of great faith.

Perhaps you have been placed in a box of despair. I would like to give you some basic principles from God's word that will not fail you. In fact these truths were characteristic of David, Job, and many other people in the Bible. If you apply them to your personal problems you will find they will give you victory also.

The first principle is that things that are impossible for men are possible with God. One of God's Biblical titles is Savior. He is able to save you from eternal destruction and He is able to deliver you out of humanly impossible circumstances. There are no sins too dark and there are no circumstances so confused from which God cannot save you. He is able to deliver you and more importantly He delights to show that He can do the impossible. Are you a drug addict or alcoholic? God is able to deliver you. Are you ensnared in some deviant behavior or some sexual sin? Are you stuck in a job you can't stand; with responsibilities you can no longer bear? Were you raised in a dysfunctional family? God is able to deliver you!

God wants to deliver you. You may be asking, if that is the case why has He not delivered me already? The Bible says, “a broken and contrite heart O God thou will not despise” (Psalm 51:17). If you will go to the Lord in humility the Bible says that He will help you. Humility means that you do not go to God bargaining with Him to get what you want but you yield your heart and your life into His care. The wonderful lesson to be learned out of our trials is that **we need God**. Often before we experience difficulties we think ourselves in control of our own lives. When we sit on the throne of our own heart and things are going well, we think we have no need for God. But in brokenness we are admitting that we need God to rule our lives.

The second principle is that belief or faith is the conduit through which God does the impossible. Jesus told a grieving father, “all things are possible to him who believes” (Mark 9:23). When Jesus was going to die on the cross at Calvary He acknowledged that all things were possible for His Father and He asked that His circumstances might be changed but He also yielded His will to the Father’s plan (Mark 14:36). This is the requirement for all legitimate belief. It must always acknowledge that God is in control and He may have a different plan than our own and His plan is ultimately better than our own.

A third principle comes from Romans 8:28. “For we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” All things would include the things that you do to yourself as well as the things that others do to you. In our examples above David was suffering in Psalm 6 due to personal sins that he had committed. Job, on the other hand, was suffering not because of personal sin but due to causes outside of his personal responsibility. Both were men that loved God, both were called according to God’s purposes and both had the experience of bad things turning into something good.

If you are facing despair these truths from God’s word will not fail you. In the next few series I would like to consider suffering due to God’s discipline for our personal sins and suffering that is unrelated to our personal actions. We will look at principles from God’s word, which will bring victory to your personal experience.

**“Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.”
Psalm 119:133**