

Waiting, the Ultimate Test!

Joseph Herrin (6-5-2000)

This test has been the most excruciating of all. I have been tempted repeatedly to throw in the towel. At times, only a tremendous fear of missing the will of God and being disqualified to be a partaker of the things reserved for overcomers has kept me to the course. As one of God's prophetesses has recently stated, "Only those who finish the course receive the prize. Don't quit half way through the race."

The test I am speaking of is waiting. I am now in the eighth month of waiting. The trial has been severe because God has selected a path for me that would bring me into opposition with all around me. Christian brothers and sisters have judged me to be in great disobedience. I have been characterized as arrogant and prideful and wicked. My own family has judged me to be deluded and some have even questioned whether or not I was ever truly saved.

Does this worry you? Do you wonder why so many would judge a Christian brother to be in such gross disobedience? Are you affected by the preponderance of negative opinion? Certainly so many could not be wrong, could they?

Consider Joshua and Caleb returning with 10 other spies to look over the land of their promised inheritance. The land was a veritable fortress. There were walled cities and warriors of great size in the land. Joshua and Caleb did not deny this. They believed, however, that their God was bigger than these obstacles and that the giants before them would simply become their prey.

Not so, the other 10 spies. They judged by appearance. They looked at themselves and were made weak. In their own strength they perceived that they would fail and their own strength was all they had. They had not learned how to exhibit confidence in an almighty God. The rest of Israel gave way to the same fears.

Some have estimated that Israel consisted of nearly 3 million people at this time. Joshua and Caleb stood against the opinion of 3 million of their brothers and sisters. What arrogance, what pride for these two to believe that they were right when so many said that they were dead wrong. In fact, those who said they were wrong wished them to be dead. It is said that they spoke of stoning them. I have been stoned with the rocks of accusation and insult. It hurts. Some of the bruises don't go away very quickly. Some are deep bruises.

Consider David when he was yet a youth. He is sent to the site of battle to carry food to his brothers and to bring back news of their welfare to his father. He finds all of the army of Israel hiding behind rocks as the champion of the Philistines comes out daily to challenge and taunt them. David hears that King

Saul has offered a reward to any Israelite warrior who will challenge Goliath and slay him. He even has offered one of his daughters as part of the reward. David hears of this and is incredulous.

David is not intimidated. He hears the taunt of Goliath and is filled with indignation. "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine who defies the armies of the LIVING GOD?" David cannot believe that such a reward has been offered to kill him. This idolater has defied the true God. His protection has been removed. He will become a prey to a warrior of the true and living God.

David's oldest brother Eliab overhears David as he talks to the soldiers about the reward offered to kill Goliath. David's words are bold and Eliab becomes angry. Eliab felt justified to hide behind the rocks every day. Goliath is huge. David's fearless words sting and Eliab begins to accuse David of evil.

1 Samuel 17:28

Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger burned against David and he said, "Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your insolence and the wickedness of your heart; for you have come down in order to see the battle."
(NAS)

After all, who did David think he was. The entire army of Israel was cowed before Goliath. David was surely just exhibiting arrogance and pride. He was deluded to think that he could slay Goliath. He was but a youth. The opinion of all Israel was against him. Why did he think he was right?

No, being in the minority doesn't mean you are in the right, but being in the majority doesn't either. One must look at the issues involved. One must see what emotions and physical and spiritual forces are shaping opinion. Fear and a desire for self-preservation were very evident in the majority in both cases mentioned. Courage and confidence in God was present in the minority.

What do you suppose the percentages are today? Do the majority of Christians express confidence in God? Are they stepping courageously out in faith, entrusting themselves to an almighty and loving God? No, most are rather choosing to play it safe. They are given to pursuing the "prudent" path. What then do you suppose their response will be to a brother or sister who wants to face the giant?

It is hard, however, to face such opposition from brothers and sisters and family over a prolonged period of time. It wears at one. It is easy to give into despair when you have taken a stand that requires courage and confidence and then God delays in bringing about your vindication. Even Abraham had difficulty

in waiting. At times it seems that desperation assails you. It is best not to make decisions in these moments. Stand firm. Wait. The answer is coming.

Isaiah 40:31

Yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.

(NAS)

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, give me the strength to endure the test. Give me the fortitude to finish the race. Though I stumble, give me the courage and resolve to get up again and return to the race. Consider my frame, that I am but dust. However, I desire to be courageous dust. I desire to be bold dust. I desire to be dust that brings glory to You. Breathe Your breath upon me and cause me to stand. Cause your resurrection life to renew me and bring forth fresh vitality. My eyes are upon You, Father. You are my shield and my buckler. You are my strong tower and my fortress. Cover me over with the pinions of your wings. Hide me from the power of the evil one. Do not let my enemies triumph over me. My eyes are on You. My eyes are on You. Lift up my head once more and set my feet upon the solid Rock.

Amen