

Bimonthly Encouragement to Sudanese Christian Workers

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No.3 November 2009.

Keeping God at the centre of your thoughts.

In times of change, when choices have to be made, it is very easy to lose focus for your life. Pressure is brought to bear on you by the country's media and even by your own friends and family.

"Where should we live?" "Should we register to vote or not?" "Must we accept this marginalisation?" "Is it right to fight for our rights, including taking up arms?" "Can I choose against the wishes of my parents?"

It is very good for the Christian to think carefully about God and to remember that Christians are called to live godly, Jesus Christ-honouring lives. This remains true whatever else is going on around us.

I guess all of us have sat on a wobbly chair or at a rocking table. Either the legs or the flooring are not level. The experience is not as secure as it should be. Let me suggest four truths that will help keep our hearts, and therefore our lives, on a firm footing. They will bring stability for us, even in changing times.

1. God Himself does not change.

What God was in the beginning of time – and even before that – He always will be. His person does not alter. His character remains the same. His ability to do *anything* in line with His will cannot be questioned. And God's purpose remains true even when our circumstances may try to tell us otherwise. Remember *everything* that God reveals Himself to be. We may sometimes be let down by our friends. God will never let us down – and if we think He has, we must think again!

Think about Isaiah 40:25; Isaiah 41:20; Isaiah 46:9-10.

2. God is not on the side of any one particular tribe or political party.

God is without partiality and favouritism. He is always standing with the righteous. He wants truth in our inward and outward beings. His summarised commandments still apply. We are to love God wholeheartedly *and* to love our neighbours – even our traditional enemies – as much as we love ourselves. Joshua had to learn that God was not there to fight Joshua's battles for him. It was the other way around. Joshua had to learn the real battle was God's fight! "God is not a mercenary who is summoned to fight battles on behalf of others. God is the eternal commander-in-chief in all battles against the forces of evil".¹

Think about Joshua 5:13-15; Mark 12:28-31; Romans 8:28-31.

¹ David Oginde, Africa Bible Commentary, (Word Alive publishers: Nairobi) 2006, p.270.

3. God is able and God is trustworthy.

If we believe this third statement, the challenge to us is to let God work in His own way and at His own time. God will either bring changes to our situations in life, which we may desire. Or, He may give us a change of heart and mind, so that we begin to want something different to what we wanted before. As Christians we must learn spiritual warfare, including using prayer as our greatest weapon for change. Prayer in this way, will often make changes in *both* ourselves and our circumstances.

- As we have just seen, **Joshua** learned that having God as Leader meant that God took complete charge – even over the human commander.
- **Jacob** discovered this as he wrestled with God before he “struggled with God and with men and overcame”, Genesis 32:22-32.
- **Moses** let God change his mind about what he should do, Exodus 3:1-4:17.
- It was only when **Isaiah** really saw God on the throne that his own life and calling were revolutionised, Isaiah 6:1-11.
- **Job’s** experience of suffering led him to know God and himself differently, especially deeply in their relationship to each other, Job 42:1-6.
- **Jeremiah** was promised a tough time, but there would be ultimate victory in God’s own good time. Jeremiah must remain faithful to God through everything, Jeremiah 1:1-19.
- **Daniel** saw the Ancient of Days in all His splendour and Jesus, the Son of Man, given all authority to rule the earth, Daniel 7:8-14.

Think about these Scriptures with Ephesians 3:20-21.

Then, think about your particular situations of struggle.

And after you have thought, WORSHIP your great God!

4. God has an eternal purpose that goes well beyond this earth.

Always remember that God is in heaven! Whilst that may seem obvious, too many Christians are much too tied up in this world’s affairs. We look *in the wrong place* for God’s answers to our prayers!

The “Faithful and True Word of God” of Revelation 19:11-16 is this same One who was met by the godly leaders mentioned above.

He is also YOUR God!

When the **apostle John** saw Him he “fell at His feet as though dead”, *before being commissioned to his God-given task*, Revelation 1:17-18.

Our **Lord Jesus Christ**, as man on this earth, always knew (and did) exactly what His Father in heaven wanted, John 6:35-40.

What else should we do, but copy Jesus?

A prayer: “Now we know a little more about Who You are, Lord God, may Your kingdom come; and may Your will be done in Sudan today, as it is in heaven”. “Here I am. Use me as *You will*”.

Pastor Colin Salter. (Please share these thoughts with others and refer them to my website for more study resources!).