

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God*

IN CHRIST JESUS.

(Philippians 3.13-14 NASB)

#02-08141

NOVEMBER 19, 2008

FAITH IN THE FAITHFUL ONE [TRUSTING FAITH]

And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. (Revelation 19.11 NASB)

“Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments.... (Deuteronomy 7.9 NASB)

Five years ago my wife and I found ourselves in a situation that we never expected during our thirty years of marriage. She was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer and the prognosis was not very good. There is much that we could share about this experience that neither of us regrets, for we saw the mighty love, grace, and healing of God throughout the ten months that followed until we knew without doubt that she had been healed by the Lord. All the glory goes to God!

This October was five years from the date of her first diagnosis. *Five* is the number of grace and we can testify to the grace of God. This year she visited the doctor for the last time, since we were moving to another state. He told us that he would take credit for “curing” her colon cancer but that he could not figure out her liver. You see, she had colon cancer that had spread to the liver, which was quite involved. Within a year, all her liver function tests were normal and continue to be so to this day. He was obviously puzzled by this development because we now realize that he never thought he could “cure” the liver. Rather than give glory to God for healing her, this doctor chose to write off the liver as if it never had cancer in the first place. We know better, for the Lord gave us assurance early on that He was bringing healing. We give Him alone all the glory for this miracle.

Now, I share this story to lead into what is on my heart regarding faith. When my wife was first diagnosed I did not know how to pray. We knew of at least fifteen Christians who had died from cancer in a relatively short period of time. Some of them testified that the Lord told them they were going to be healed, but they still died. So, when we received the news of her illness and the odds of her survival, which were very low, I must confess that I could not directly pray for healing. Simply, I had no assurance that the Lord would heal her. I knew that He could heal her, but the question was whether He would. All I could do was cry out to Him in the best way I knew at the time. I must state, however, that the grace and peace of God were on both of us in a mighty powerful way.

I don't recall how the prayer came about, but one day I found myself praying this: **“Lord, Thy will, will be done, and to You will go all the glory!”** This was not a prayer asking for healing; it was a prayer acknowledging that His will would be done in life or in death. If she lived, it would be His will; if she died, it would be His will; either way would be for His glory. Some people might think that this is not faith; it is like hedging a bet to make sure you are covered no matter the outcome. It might appear that way, but it was nothing of the sort. This I know: This prayer came from the spirit of God. However, in spite of this, over the years, I have wondered (perhaps, doubted) if this prayer was really a prayer of faith. After all, I hear many people state that **you** must have faith that you will be healed if you expect any healing. It is as if we have to have some level or measure of faith; otherwise, God will not heal. In other words, it is all dependent on us, not on God. But is this true?

Interestingly, on October 18, 2008, at 9 pm, I was reading a book by Robert Whitlow titled *Life Support* and was caught by one sentence (page 125): **“Faith and the presence of Jesus is the recipe for miracles.”** This got me thinking. Is this statement true? I have no doubt that the presence of Jesus is a mighty powerful healing agent. But, what kind of faith is required? Is it a measure of faith? Is it a demand of faith, that is, name it and claim it?

Well, as I contemplated this matter, the Lord spoke to my heart and gave me the answer to the question that had been in my heart for the last five years. He spoke almost as if He were sitting next to me: **“You had faith in Me that I would do the right thing.”** All I could say was, “Wow!”

The prayer that the spirit of God had given me over five years ago was indeed a prayer of faith. It was not an **outcome** or a **demand faith**, which seems to be what most people pray, but a **trusting faith**. To be sure you do not miss what He spoke to me, let me paraphrase the heart of what He spoke. It is as if He said: “Your prayer that My will would be done in Jeannette’s life was truly faith, for you were placing your trust in Me that I knew what was best for her and you at this critical time in your life. You were not focused on yourself or the outcome but rather on Me.”

Dear beloved ones in Christ, this is trusting faith. It is not about how much faith we have or whether we work up faith to some head of steam, just like that little train that tried to climb the mountain all the time saying, “I think can. I think I can.” This is not faith. And I must state that if this is the kind of faith you exercise, at some point, you will become discouraged over your lack.

The faith that the Lord is looking for is the faith that trusts in Him, not in ourselves, not even in our so-called faith. Faith is trusting in the Faithful One. **Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD and whose trust is the LORD** (Jeremiah 17.7 NASB). [See issue #02-08123, September 30, 2008.] Jesus is **the Author and Perfecter of Faith** (Hebrews 12.2). The fact of the matter is that, in the first place, it is not our faith but His faith. Consider Paul’s view: **I live by the faith of the Son of God** (Galatians 2.20 KJV). Faith is not even ours; it is His faith, and our lives are hidden with Him (Colossians 3.3), the Faithful One.

He knows what is best, so we give ourselves to Him and trust Him to work out what is needed in our lives. If you think that you can somehow work up a head of steam, so to speak, to get the Lord to do your bidding, then I must contend that this is not faith at all. It is trying to coerce the Lord to give you what you want. Unfortunately, there are huge segments of Christianity that preach this sort of faith. To me, it is a form of **humanism** because it is telling the Lord that you (man) have the wisdom and knowledge to know what it is best in every situation. So, many find themselves in a troubling predicament and they try to work their way out of it by exercising “faith” that demands God to resolve the matter as they desire, not as He sees fit. I hear it said quite frequently: “Place a demand!”

Scripture is filled with verses that speak of the faithfulness of God and are an encouragement to all who put their trust in the Lord. The Lord Jesus is called **Faithful and True**. He is true to you and true to His word. He is faithful to all who call upon Him.

God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (1 Corinthians 1.9 NASB)

Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass. (1 Thessalonians 5.24 NASB)

But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. (2 Thessalonians 3.3 NASB)

Let us trust in the One who knows what is best to lead us through these days and who knows how to prepare us for His coming kingdom. To Him be all the glory!