



January 26, 2022

Run with Perseverance

(6) *"This is what the Lord Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. (Haggai 2:6)*

Desperate faith is all about trusting God when the shaking begins and everything crumbles around you. Through the prophet Haggai, God speaks of shaking "heaven and earth, the sea and dry land" (Hag. 2:6-7), and the writer of the book of Hebrews picked up the cataclysmic theme, explaining that this "indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain" (Heb. 12:27). What remains is the kingdom of God that cannot be moved, and by trust, and trust alone, we enter it.

Often God allows us to reach the point of desperation so we can learn how to trust. It is a hard lesson, but an essential one. The life without lack is known by those who have learned how to trust God in the moment of their need. In the moment of need. Not before the moment of need, not after the moment of need when the storm has passed, but in the moment of need. For it is in that moment, when everything else is gone, that you know the reality of God. That moment may be a blood-stained one, as with the faithful martyrs of Hebrews 11 or the stoning of Stephen from Acts 7, but it will also be a God-drenched one.

This may sound outrageous to you, but I think that while these people did not receive deliverance from their sufferings, what they did know, in the very moment of their pain, was the abundant provision of God. They were without lack in that moment. Some of you may say, "You know, if I had known he was going to define lack and sufficiency that way, I wouldn't be reading this devotional right now!" I understand, but a life without lack is all about knowing the unlimited sufficiency of God in the moment of need.

When you're betrayed, abandoned, lied about, and scandalized; when you are sick with a fatal disease; when your finances are going down the drain; that is the moment to trust. And in trusting you will know God. Your point of desperation will likely not involve being sawn in two or wandering about destitute in sheepskins, but it might. Regardless, when you have nowhere else to turn except to God, and you turn to him, your faith of desperation will meet the fullness of God, and you'll taste the life without lack as you discover the depths of the faith of sufficiency.

After Job's three friends gave up on him "because he was righteous in his own eyes" (Job 32:1), a young man named Elihu stepped forward to reprimand them for their ineptitude in answering Job, and to offer his own wisdom. He recognized where Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar were wrong, even though he was not clear on what was correct. Elihu believed Job was mistaken to hold God accountable for what was happening to him.

Reflect: *The truth is God was responsible for it. Job was right. In the final analysis, God is responsible for everything. God in fact led Job into his troubles. Does this thought bother you?*

If so, remember that when Jesus teaches us to pray that God would not "lead us into temptation" (Matt. 6:13). We are to pray that God would not put us to the test and that he would deliver us from bad things. It is a prayer of protection and deliverance from the trials that would overwhelm us. When we do pray like this, most of the time he will do just that - deliver us from evil. But sometimes God does not deliver us immediately. This was true for Job, but he was also on the verge of experiencing something deeper than anything else he had known up to that point.