Weekly Devotional 07/13/20 The Exercise of Faith

*“1Now the LORD had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, From your family And from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3  I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed’” (Genesis 12:1-3 NKJV).*

Following the great flood of Genesis 9, God scattered the descendants of Noah, having confused their tongues (languages), to various parts of the then known world. This was before He chose Abram to represent Him to the rest of mankind. We learn from Joshua 24:2 that Abram’s father Terah, as well as all descendants of Adam served other gods and there were none that served true God.  However, we learn from the above passage that God called Abram out of that idolatry to worship and serve Him. We are not told how God called Abram, only that He did. God’s call was an efficacious call, that is, it had the power to accomplish what was intended. God overcame the spiritual darkness of Abram convincing and convicting him that He was the only true God.

Abram, for his part, responded in faith believing what God said. This was an important turning point in Moses’ account of God’s work among mankind. Abram’s call and obedience separated him from the whole Adamic race. The writer of the book of Hebrews tells us that “8By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going.  9By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise” (Hebrews 11:8-9 NKJV).

Abram’s faith in what God said was so powerful that it caused him to leave all that was familiar to him, the security of his father’s family, acquaintances, land, and position and to go to a land that was unknown to him; to live among strangers where all the prestige of his former way of life would be lost. Where did such faith come from? We get a clue from Hebrews 12:2, where the writer tells us that Jesus Christ (God the Son) is the author and finisher of faith. God was the originator of Abram’s faith and He was the finisher of Abram’s faith.

Our brother, the writer of Hebrews, tells of many others who by faith did that which is not understandable apart from this God given faith (please read Hebrews 11:4-39). As he encouraged his readers to live by faith and not by sight he wrote, *“1 since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,  2looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1-2  NKJV ).* We on this side of the cross have a great cloud of witnesses.

None of us know what lies ahead of us, today, tomorrow, next week, next month or this coming year and we should understand that many of the things that will be-set us may not be pleasant, but we are to endure them. We are to walk by faith believing that *“28 All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.  29For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.  30Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified” (Romans 8:28-30).*

In closing, please consider a poem written by Minnie Louise Haskins (1875-1957) entitled “The Gate of the Year” which well addresses the exercise of faith.

“And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:
‘Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.’
And he replied: ‘Go out into the darkness and put your hand

into the Hand of God.

That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.’
So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God, trod gladly into the night.
And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day in the lone East.”

It is not certain if Ms. Haskins was a born again Christian or not, but the poem calls for trust in God, to walk by faith, and not by sight. May this be true of you and me this year.

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