

Daily Devotional, August 26, 2020 God's Promises Never Fail

“See, the enemy is puffed up; his desires are not upright—but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness. Habakkuk 2:4 (NIV)

It is easy to believe that God loves us when things are going really well in life. At those times when it seems as if God is smiling upon us, it can seem like we're walking one foot above the ground, or as if we're operating on high octane rocket fuel. Whenever we experience blissful times of prayer and fellowship with the Lord, it may seem as if the world passes us by unnoticed, without a care in the world, because we are feeding on God's good favor. Most of the time, we do not experience this as often as we would like—if at all! The normal experience of the follower of Christ is one of struggle, and our struggles take on various forms.

We may struggle with our flesh, due to our sin or our frailty. We struggle because our enemy is on the prowl, seeking to undo us. More often than not, we struggle when it seems as if God's Spirit has drawn away from us, and the only thing that we sense in those moments is God's frown. It is here that we must hang on all the more tightly to the Lord, and not let go. We cling to Christ even more when we struggle. Many a Christian will say that they have grown more in their relationship with Christ during times of hardship and suffering, than in those periods when all was well in their lives.

The question is, will you give up on God because you feel as if God is no longer smiling on you? If you sometimes contemplate cashing in your spiritual chips because your struggles have become too frequent and far too many, is it possible that maybe you have placed the bulk of your faith on sensing God's smile—of craving God's favor? This is not the true basis of faith. Our faith is not grounded in God's smile or favor, but on God's promise.

It is true that there seem to be times when God's smile cannot be sensed, as if it has disappeared behind a grey cloud. The one thing that we can remain confident in is that God's promise does not. The smile of God is sheer temporary sunshine, but His promise is His eternal covenant with us. If you believe the promises God has made in Christ, then they are just as true in those moments when you feel God's smile as those moments when you feel God's frown. God's promises are every bit as true in the midst of the darkest night as they are in the brightness of the sunniest day! Even in those days when things are most challenging for us—and we all have our stormy periods—God's promises are certain and unailing in every circumstance of life.

What is the foundation on which God's promises are built? The basis of God's promises is His love. Even more to the point, the foundation of God's promises is His love given to us in Christ. Our foundation is not our pleasure of God, but rather His promises—promises to which God is always faithful. We may struggle in life. We may feel as if we are discarded, but we can still look to the Lord in every confidence.

We are at times prone to having fair-weather faith. It is the faith of recliners and slippers. For some, our reality is more bleak, however, and it doesn't take much for us to wonder, "Does God really love me? Would He allow this circumstance in my life, this pain, this sorrow, this suffering in my life and still be a loving God?" I am convinced that It is better that we trust a God who seems to sometimes frown, than to trust ourselves. The Lord has never forsaken us. He sends burdens giftwrapped in love, for our growth. In Matthew 11:30 He tells us: "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light". We are thus taught to trust Him.

Times of conflict will not be easy, but our struggle leads to a deeper faith. Do you think the three young men who walked into Nebuchadnezzar's furnace had that as their first trial? It was a great victory when they overcame the flames, but we must know that they had been tested and tried repeatedly before they underwent this one unbelievable test.

We all know pain, but those troubles are preparing us for something greater. They are all according to the Lord's perfect plan, and they are a part of our growth in grace, both for ourselves and for the grace we

display for one another. Let us trust God. God will return His smile, and even God's frowns are really smiles, because they are all sent to us in love.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I am tired, and I am worn out. I feel pressure from all of these circumstances surrounding me. I am unsure of how this can or will work out for my good, but I say no to discouragement and despair because of the promise you have made through Jesus.

I feel like everything, and everyone is coming against me, but Father, I thank you that I never stand alone. Thank you for being with me through it all, both as my friend and as my advocate. Thank you for picking me up every time life and its hard times knock me down. I will rest assured in You and Your finished work at the cross. Amen.