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God is good, and He longs to do good to those He loves, and He works all things together for their good (Romans 8:28). Thus one of the great challenges of solution-focused faith is to believe in the goodness of God, although we live in the midst of a sinful and wicked world, and to believe that we can actually experience this goodness and be rewarded by God. Solution-focused faith believes that God is good and will work out a good and perfect and practical solution.

Hebrews 11:6 MKJV But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Psalms 27:13-14 MKJV I would have fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of Jehovah in the land of the living. (14) Hope in Jehovah; be of good courage, and He shall make your heart strong; yea, hope in Jehovah.

Psalms 13:6 MKJV I will sing to Jehovah, because He has rewarded me.

Psalms 142:7 MKJV Bring my soul out of prison that I may praise Your name; the righteous shall gather around me; for You shall reward me.

There are those that sneer at the idea of God rewarding people, they say: "O you should not believe because of the reward, that is so primitive, true faith just believes in the abstract virtues of God." True faith does nothing of the kind! True faith must believe that: "He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)"

There are three notable instances of faith being commended in the Scriptures - Abraham, the centurion, and the Syrophenician/Canaanite woman:

The faith that justified Abraham was not abstract belief in the virtues of a philosophical God! The faith that made Abraham famous was faith that Isaac would be born to an old couple despite their infirmity (Romans 4:19-21) and later on the faith that Isaac could be raised even from the dead (Hebrews 11:17-19) !

And when the centurion was commended for his faith it was faith that his servant could be healed by a word from Jesus (Matthew 8:5-13).

The Syrophenician/Canaanite woman was commended for her great faith in Jesus, because she believed Jesus could and would deliver her daughter from a demon (Matthew 15:22-28).

My first attempt to believe God for specific things was shortly before I went into bible college, it was a Monday early in 1980 and I asked God for a Young's Concordance, a New Bible Dictionary and a pair of brown shoes, by the end of the day I had been given all three and none of the people who gave knew anything about my needs or my prayer. I soon learned the art of "living by faith" and seeing God's provision in highly specific matters. Now hardly a day goes by without some small tangible answer to the prayer of faith. In fact I think it is better to have a real faith in a good God who provides parking spaces than a purely philosophical faith in abstractions that maintains the world is, for all practical purposes, untouched by God.

If you go to the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11 they are all "looking to the reward" and believing God for quite real tangible things such as victories in battle, the resurrection of Isaac, deliverance from Egypt, the future of the sons of Jacob, the resurrection of the tortured martyrs, and citizenship in the future city of God. They all believed that the invisible and intangible would one day become the clearly visible and the very tangible. When we pray "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" we are asking for invisible things such as the Kingdom and the will of God to become tangibly present "on earth".

Faith believes that God's goodness is a present reality that orders our days and our lives. Faith believes that God's goodness can undo the Devil's badness and restore the years the locusts have eaten (Joel 2:25,26). Faith believes that even our sin and folly cannot be so powerful to completely prevent us receiving some of God's goodness for He sends His rain on the just and the unjust. (Matthew 5:45)

In fact it can be said that God is absolutely determined that we will experience His goodness – from beautiful sunsets, to cool breezes, to falling in love, to being saved, to being filled with the Holy Ghost. God wants to demonstrate His goodness to us over and over again in bountiful and generous ways. Jesus never knocked back anyone who was determined to experience the goodness of God for themselves. In fact the determination of the Canaanite woman to experience grace is what Jesus praised her for (as he also praises the persistent widow in Luke 18 and many others like lepers and blind men who insisted on experiencing God's goodness here and now.)

Faith in the goodness of God, experienced in the land of the living and also in Heaven, is absolutely fundamental to true Christian faith. If God is good all the time, then He is being good to me right now as I sit at this computer. Now experiencing that goodness requires faith. It is always faith that brings the goodness of God down to earth. It was faith that led to the birth of Isaac, the New Testament healings, and the miracles and revivals of Acts.

Faith is the persistent, “stupid”, stubborn opening of our hearts to the goodness of God despite all the contrary evidence that would make us cynical, defensive and unbelieving. Faith is asking for Jesus to provide wine at the wedding of Cana then just doing what He says and seeing the bountiful provision, faith is believing five loaves and two fishes can feed a multitude and then opening to God so he can participate in the act.

We have to believe that our God is bursting to demonstrate His goodness in the midst of our daily routine. Faith is simply opening up to this reality.

Though from time to time evil may blight a year or more of our lives we are never finished completely, slowly but surely God’s goodness will triumph, and our days will become filled with joy. No disaster can separate us from the love of God and His goodness to us. Even the martyrs find God’s goodness to them in the end and we are thus “more than conquerors”. (Romans 8)

I have recently read of the horrors of the siege of Jerusalem in AD 70 and how dreadful the “siege and sack” was in the ancient world, but even in such awful situations God’s goodness is not absent: “Psalms 31:21 MKJV Blessed is Jehovah; for He has worked His mercy wondrously in a besieged city.” No matter how “besieged” your life may be, God can still bring His wondrous goodness into it.

On a practical note we need to insist on the goodness of God, just as Job did, just as the Canaanite woman did, just as blind Bartimaeus did and just as so many others who have been blessed by God have done. The Psalms are a continual record of David going before God for justice, mercy, forgiveness, deliverance and the experience of His goodness. David did not take God’s goodness as automatically granted, he made it a matter of prayer.

In Christ we can come to the throne of grace for help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16) and we should do so placing our burdens on Him for He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). We need to go before God, in an attitude of trusting faith, and ask that His goodness, and His blessings will be poured into our lives at our points of need.

Psalms 31:19 MKJV How great is Your goodness, which You have laid up for those who fear You; You have worked for those who trust in You before the sons of men!

Psalms 37:3-5 MKJV Trust in Jehovah, and do good; you shall dwell in the land, and you shall be fed on truth. (4) Delight yourself also in Jehovah, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. (5) Roll your way on Jehovah; trust also in Him, and He will work.

Blessings,

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