

Dear Friend,

Last month's letter included teaching about our heavenly Father, which the Bible calls the "God of hope." If you did not receive that letter, you can access it at the website by going to:

<http://www.garycarpenter.org/letters/1-GD2107.pdf>

Rom 15:13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

You can always tell if people have been spending time with the God of hope. How can you tell? Because they will be filled with joy and peace in believing, by the power of the Holy Ghost! It does not mean their circumstances are perfect. It means no matter what their circumstances are, good or bad, they are still abounding with joy and peace in believing.

If I find myself worrying and fretful, depressed and sad, it is a reminder to me that I need to spend time with my heavenly Father, the God of hope! God's Word is full of hope. If you spend time in His Word, and also spend time in prayer and worship, you will find HOPE building within you. The Word of God in our printed Bible is black type on white paper, but it somehow, miraculously, paints new images of hope on the canvass of our heart.

A perfect example is when Jesus began preaching His message to the people of Israel. He was preaching, "The kingdom of God is at hand." But what did that mean? Here is the first message He taught in His hometown of Nazareth, after overcoming the devil in the wilderness:

Luk 4:18-19 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, (19) To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

While in prayer years ago, the Holy Spirit taught me more about this message Jesus taught: *The first message that Jesus taught after overcoming the enemy in the wilderness was to announce that He had been anointed to proclaim, "The Acceptable Year Of The Lord." With those words hope was immediately imparted to the spirit of every person in the sound of His voice. For they all knew that those words meant He was announcing and proclaiming, "The Year of Jubilee." Instantly, within them, hope was painted on the canvas of their heart for they knew that the year of Jubilee meant, "All debts are cancelled, and every man is restored to his original inheritance." Hope was the first thing Jesus imparted with His words. The first lifeline He cast to the people was hope.*

With those words He was proclaiming, "What has been is not what shall be. The acceptable year of the Lord has arrived. All debts are cancelled. Man is restored to the original intent and purpose of the Father. Every man is restored to his inheritance." Hope was instantly imparted to them, though many never acquired faith to appropriate the bounty that He had proclaimed.

It is one thing to read lessons like this about the God of hope. I have found precious few over the years who ever actively engage the power of the Holy Ghost to bring the manifestation of hope into this natural realm. In last month's letter we examined how Abraham and Sarah allowed God's Word to paint a new hope on the canvass of their hearts, and then how they incorporated faith by only saying about themselves what God's Word said about them. Faith possesses what hope sees. Said another way, faith can never possess what hope cannot see.

Heb 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Believing begins with a choice. Abraham had to make a choice to focus on the stars at night instead of the empty crib in the tent. Abraham had to make a choice not to consider the natural circumstances of his hundred year old body and the deadness of Sarah's womb. Abraham had to make a choice to believe that God would do what He had promised. Faith is an active thing. Faith possesses what is first seen by hope.

I often use this example from our own lives. We have three daughters. They were born two years apart, meaning, they were all three teenagers at the same time. Sadly, they all three chose to rebel at the same time. They were doing worldly, sinful things, and we were so worried at first. We had images in our mind of them being in car wrecks, or being physically abused, and many other such things.

The enemy kept defeating us with this logic, "They are choosing sin. You did not raise them like this. They know better, but they are choosing me anyway. I have a right to them. They are my legal captives because of their own free will choice."

We did not know how to combat that logic at first. We didn't raise them like that. They did know better. They were choosing the world of sin by their own free will choice. They were lawful captives of the enemy. We were drowning in hopelessness. Thank God we knew a little bit about our Father, the God of Hope. We spent many hours in prayer and in the Word and we found this:

Isa 49:24-25 Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? (25) But thus saith the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.

YES ... the lawful captive can be delivered. The captives of the mighty will be delivered. God will contend with the devil and God HIMSELF will save our children!

We had a new hope. There was suddenly a different image on the canvass of our heart. God was going to war for our children. There was no doubt ... our children were going to be delivered and saved. The God of Hope had come to our rescue.

But hope without faith is powerless. We knew we had to activate faith the same way God activated faith in Abraham and Sarah. WE HAD TO SAY ONLY WHAT GOD SAID ABOUT OUR CHILDREN. It was hard at first, but it became easy over time. If anybody asked us about our daughters, we would say things like, “Our daughters are the handmaidens of the Lord. They prophesy and cast out devils. They lay hands on the sick and they recover. They shine as lights of righteousness in this dark world. They serve the Lord their God and Him only do they serve ...”

On and on and on ... we would talk like that ... as long as you were willing to listen. In the natural, nothing had changed. They were still sinning in the world. But we were saying only God’s will for our daughters. We were seeing the end result and we were speaking the end result, just like God instructed Abraham and Sarah to do. We had peace and joy, right in the worst of the battle. The circumstances did not make us happy at the time, but the circumstances could not overcome that deep-seated peace and joy that comes by the power of the Holy Ghost. The God of hope had rescued us.

How did it turn out? It wasn’t overnight, but eventually all three of our daughters repented and began serving the Lord, and they are still serving the Lord to this day. Hallelujah. We are so thankful for our Father, the God of hope!

Get into the Word of God. Spend time in worship and prayer. As you spend time with the God of hope, you will become full of peace and joy and believing, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Your friend and co-laborer,

Gary