

“Smoke & Mirrors – Part 3”

Pastor Al Brice | Sunday, December 15, 2019

“Faith Works by Love”

Matthew 14:27-31 NKJV: ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” ²⁸ And Peter answered Him and said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.” ²⁹ So He said, “Come.” And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, “Lord, save me!” ³¹ And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?”

When the storms of life, bad reports, disappointments or crisis situations come into our lives, many times unexpectedly, it can produce fear, broken and wounded hearts, temporary setbacks, anger and frustration. We find ourselves riddled with puzzling questions of, “Why”, “If only”, “How could this happen”, and, “God, how could You let this happen? Where are You!!” Peter could say, “Lord, why would You send us into this storm?”, or religion would say, “Why did You send this storm? Are You mad at us? Don’t You care??”

Here are some very important truths that you must saturate yourself with before you start questioning and accusing God:

1. Regardless of the circumstances, He is going to encourage you:

Matthew 14:27 NKJV: ²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.”

Hebrews 13:5b-6 Amplified Bible: for He has said, “I WILL NEVER [under any circumstances] DESERT YOU [nor give you up nor leave you without support, nor will I in any degree leave you helpless], NOR WILL I FORSAKE or LET YOU DOWN or RELAX MY HOLD ON YOU [assuredly not]!” ⁶ So we take comfort and are encouraged and confidently say,

“THE LORD IS MY HELPER [in time of need], I WILL NOT BE AFRAID.
WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?”

2. And, He will call you to “walk by and through every trial and test with faith.”

Matthew 14:28-29 NKJV: ²⁸ And Peter answered Him and said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.” ²⁹ So He said, “Come.” And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:7 NKJV: ⁷ For we walk by faith, not by sight. (The definition of ‘sight’ is: “referring to the visible appearance of things which are set in contrast to that which directs faith.”)

Do not give in to your present circumstances. Do not give up your hope. Set your focus on God’s Word. Speak it out loud. Faith will arise. You must rebuke the spirit of fear and doubt and replace the thoughts of doubt by speaking God’s Word, His Promises.

See the present from the perspective of the future looking forward by seeing yourself victorious!!!

Jeremiah 29:11 (NKJV Strong's): ¹¹ For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace (**Shalom**: 'Peace, health, prosperity, favor, and friendship) and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.'

As you fill your heart and renew your mind to what God has said and promised, it will begin to come out of your mouth, and your tongue will proclaim your expected outcome!!

Job 22:28 NKJV: ²⁸ You will also declare a thing, And it will be established for you; So light will shine on your ways.

2 Corinthians 4:13 NKJV: ¹³ And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak...

3. Never allow yourself to question God's love for you. Ever. The moment you do, you're heading for defeat and destruction. God's love for you must be the predominating and prevailing element in your life, conduct, and experience.

Why? **Galatians 5:6b:** "Faith working through love."

Ephesians 3:17-19 NKJV: ¹⁷ that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height— ¹⁹ to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

* **Rooted and grounded** represents being like strong a tree, with depth, strength, life, vitality, energy, growth, fruit, permanence and durability.

Isaiah 61:3 NKJV:

³ To console those who mourn in Zion,
To give them beauty for ashes,
The oil of joy for mourning,
The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;
That they may be called trees of righteousness,
The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified."

Psalm 1:3 NKJV:

³ He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.

I'm like a tree, a tree of righteousness, planted by the rivers of the water of His love, rooted and grounded in the soil of His love, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever I do, in accordance with God's Word, shall prosper!!! I'm no victim, but I'm victorious and I live with vision. The force of the love of God inside of me propels me forward because love never fails.

I'm not a failure. I'm an achiever and overcomer. I'm not an orphan anymore. I am a child of the living God, adopted through Jesus into His Family. I'm not a pauper anymore. God has given me everything that pertains to life and godliness. I'm not just surviving; I'm thriving and prospering in His love. I refuse to live in disappointment because I'm anointed, called, and appointed by God. I'm not pathetic; I'm prophetic and I prophesy the Word of God to my circumstances.

I'm not moved by the mountains in my life because according to **Mark 11:23**, I speak to the mountains in the Name of Jesus and they must move out of my way. I'm not identified by the hell I'm going through, but by the cross of Jesus that I went through that defeated Hell and Death. I'm not identified by the number of "likes" on Facebook or Instagram because I'm liked by the King of kings and the Lord of lords, Jesus Christ, Who likes me and calls me His friend. Our identity is not based upon Microsoft, Google, Apple, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Republican, Democrat, Hollywood, Starbucks, or what we wear or drive. We are the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ; the light and salt of the world and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against us!!!!

Romans 8:31-32 NKJV: ³¹What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? ³²He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

We are rooted and grounded in His love. We are fruitful trees, bringing glory and honor to His Name!!