

Facing Your False Expectation And Presumption

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus our Lord,

During the past 4 weeks we have left our previous “valley of ministry,” gone again to the “High Places,” and are now back in a new “valley of ministry.” If you’ve read *Hinds’ Feet On High Places*, then our journey will make sense to you. These past weeks have been a *journey of refinement* for us as our Lord has revealed things that would hinder our future labors on His behalf.

Now living in Loon Lake, Washington as of 10/30, we are more able to appreciate the *mutual* changes our Lord has made in us together. It’s a transformation we want to share with you since some of you may be experiencing the same issues He prompted us to repent of.

From the moment the Holy Spirit told to leave our previous valley, we began a process of one step at a time. That meant daily resisting each inclination to conjecture about what would happen next or where our Lord might be leading us. Many possibilities of where we might live or how we might serve Father’s purposes kept crossing our minds. But these potential speculations prompted us both to repent on several occasions of any false expectation or presumption.

During the course of our repentance our Lord also removed from us any and all confidence about the future. It’s amazing to recognize how much satisfaction we humans get in thinking that future events will happen just as we expect or are counting on — false expectation and presumption for sure! We came to realize how tempting it is for our minds to count on certain things occurring in the future. But in our journey our Lord made sure that *nothing* was a sure thing except the next step of His guidance.

This latest trip from the valley to the high places and back to the valley is our tenth journey of refinement and

new avenue of ministry since we began to share the Hebraic foundations. (It's our 20th relocation since we've been married.) And weigh this thought: If you believe that the Christian life is always onward and upward in victorious experiences, you've embraced a lie. The lifelong pilgrimage to your salvation is filled with deep trial-filled valleys as well as glorious high places.

The cyclical nature of your life pilgrimage parallels the life cycle of a vineyard as described by Wayne Jacobsen in his 1997 volume, *In My Father's Vineyard*. Drawing on his experiences of helping tend his parents' vineyard, Wayne compares the various seasons of cultivation, care, and harvest of the grapes to the development of increasing spiritual intimacy with our Lord Jesus and fruitful service in Him. The most important time for the vineyard is winter. That's when the dormant vines are being prepared for the next season of fruitfulness. And, the most important time for us who follow our Lord Jesus is when we leave our familiar valley and are being prepared by Him for our next season of fruitfulness.

What was fruitful during a season of valley service may not be useful in the next season of valley service. So that which was once fruitful but is no longer beneficial must be removed. That pruning can sometimes be a painful process! This is what our Lord Jesus tells each of us to expect:

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in Me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful" (John 15:1,2).

When a marriage or even a home fellowship family is called to leave the valley they're in, their mutual commitment to the sanctifying process of refinement is an absolute requirement. Our own daily prayer walks have been an indispensable part of our journeying side by side

through what our Lord wanted to change in us together. You could say that when it comes to a marriage or a fellowship family, **“No one gets to the High Places unless each of us gets to the High Places.”** We can assure you that your mutual journey will certainly reveal the depth of your commitment to our Lord Jesus *and* to each other as family in Him.

Times of Uncertainty May Arouse False Expectation And Presumption

“Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes” (James 4:14).

Any false expectation and presumption about the future is an affront to the sovereignty of our heavenly Father Who alone has control of the future. Our fear or our over-confidence will deceive us into sinning against Him by presuming that *we* have control over what’s going on around us. Repenting quickly is our primary safeguard from sinning.

Forty years ago we were taught a spiritual lesson about being deceived into having a **wrong focus**. When a lion pride goes on the hunt, an older lion is sent to roar and drive the prey *toward* where the younger, more vigorous lions are waiting in ambush. This simple tactic of “forceful roaring” is one of the primary ways Satan seduces so many Christians into a sin they don’t even recognize. Their wrong focus on what they *fear* might happen drives them into distrusting our heavenly Father and bringing down the Name of our Lord Jesus through their doubting. False expectation and presumption are sins you really need to avoid, and to help those you care about from committing.

In the Older Testament we find Joshua using the same tactic as the lions do (see Joshua 8:3-22). It’s called a “feinting maneuver.” It’s designed to distract or mislead an

enemy by giving the impression that a certain maneuver or event will take place, while in fact another more dire tactic, or even no tactic at all, is the true plan.

In military tactics and in many other types of combat, there are two types of feints: *feint attacks* and *feint retreats*. In the spiritual realm, *feint attacks* keep you focused on the wrong thing even while you are being seduced into sin from a fear-propelled motive. Entertaining fear of the future is one of the most common wrong focuses which obsess Christians. Our Lord warns us: “*Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own*” (Matthew 6:34; see also Luke 12:15-40).

We’ve observed the tactic of *feint retreats* when people haven’t demolished their strongholds with the intent of living righteously in service to our Lord Jesus. They just want to stop the harassing voices in their minds. If that’s the case, after the person has been “delivered”, the assailing demons remain quiet within his or her soul for a time. This “silence” deceives the individual into believing they are free of demonic influence and control. But later, when the time for real damage can be accomplished, the demons roar into action in his or her mind, attacking with a tremendous onslaught that sorely demoralizes the person. In the depths of their profound distress, many Christians even question where God is.

Being Obedience-based Is A Great Safeguard

We know that our Lord had to remove certain things we relied on in our prior valley service that would be sinful or ineffective if we kept doing the same thing in our new valley of service. We’ve had goals, methods of ministry, and even close relationships change during these transformative journeys.

Each trip to the High Places comes at a cost that those who refuse to leave the valley they are in cannot

understand. No, each journey of transformation doesn't necessarily mean a physical move. But it may mean a change in relationships in who will walk alongside you in serving our Lord. Being obedience-based rather than outcome-based is a clear indicator that you are following our Lord Jesus. Remember that you aren't in control of the outcome! Consider how Jesus describes His own: *"Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me"* (Mark 8:34).

We who follow our Lord Jesus do have a cross to bear. Our cross is one of **grace, love, forgiveness, compassion** and **absolute obedience**, no matter what other people do to us or around us. Our Lord seeks a faceless people who are humble, with only the face of Jesus shining through. In times of turmoil and a future in which people are increasingly finding themselves less confident, make sure that people can clearly see Jesus in you.

Mike & Sue

P.S. Here are links to two worship songs that have encouraged us during these past weeks. The first is a version of the song *Hallelujah* which kept us focused on our Lord's sacrifice and victory on our behalf. <https://youtu.be/IF7k8Fy9i18>

The second is a reminder of the personal loving care and concern of our heavenly Father for each of His kids: *He Knows My Name*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXsiWoyjw60>