

Christians Don't Quit

by Michael W. Lee

As we wind out of the Christmas season and into a new year, many people have been assessing where they are in various aspects of their lives such as their marriages and occupations. I have been part of several conversations where adults are frustrated, confused, and discouraged with their circumstances.

Recently, I was reading a devotional book I have from a good old friend by the name of William Jay, who died back in 1853. Jay wrote about some of Elijah's life (1 Kings 18 and 19), and I'd like to share some of those thoughts with you.

If you think that you are in a tough spot with a particular situation in your life, take a look at Elijah. Elijah had just finished destroying the prophets of the false god Baal when he went on to predict that rain would finally fall after three years of drought. You'd think that King Ahab, who had just witnessed this fantastic miracle of God sending fire down, would have trembled and at least offered to give Elijah a ride back to town but, no, Elijah hoofed it back to town on his own. Even though God's representative deserved some respect, Ahab gave him nothing.

Upon arriving back at town after a miraculous victory, Elijah may have thought that things would get a whole lot better for him and the country. Well, things are usually more complicated than we would like them to be and, in this case, it was the wife of the King who was calling the shots (politics, politics), and she was determined to have Elijah killed. The situation had gone from bad to worse rather than from bad to better.

If this were a Hollywood movie, Elijah might say, "go ahead and give it your best shot," but instead his response was more like real life- more like how I might respond and, I daresay, more like most Christians. How quickly we forget what God has powerfully done in our lives, even the day before we encounter trials!

But as Jay says, "where is the faith that never staggers through unbelief"? We are just men and women and we cannot stand and fight any longer than God holds us nor walk any further than God leads us. One minute we have the faith of a lion, the next the roar of a mouse.

Elijah bolted for safety and, after a day's journey, sat down under a tree and asked God to take him out. Have you been there before? Have you ever come to the point where you think that you are in the wrong place at the wrong time, that you are not the person who was supposed to be placed in this job or this marriage? Have you ever been so tired of trying to make things work, so confused, so prone to despair that you turn to God and just say, I want out of this job, this marriage, or even this life?

But God does not make mistakes. His purpose for you is often beyond what you can see at the time, so you must be ready to stay or go, even if it includes suffering.

As with Elijah, God knows exactly what we are and what we can handle. So God sends an angel to feed Elijah and give him time to rest. But then, it is time to get back on his feet and do the next thing that God has put before him. He doesn't send Elijah back into service without using all of this to prepare him—he is fed and sustained in a miraculous way.

This is the life of every Christian. Ephesians 6 makes it very clear that each and every day we are in a pitched battle called spiritual warfare. If you don't realize it, you are asleep at the wheel. Nevertheless, the battle is raging. Like Elijah, our attitudes about life will go from "things are great" to almost total despair depending on our level of trust in God has told us.

If we believe what God says in the Bible, we will not grow weary because He is a gracious God and we know that He does all things well. Difficult and

**“PRAY THAT
GOD WILL GIVE
US THE GRACE TO
TRUST HIM,
BELIEVE HIM
AND PERSEVERE
IN ALL OF OUR
CIRCUMSTANCES.”**

even seemingly unbearable circumstances are not out of His control and, in fact, the Bible tells us that He uses suffering to mold us into the likeness of Christ.

If I believe the Bible, I will know that He loves me, and even though I can't see how my situation will end happily or soon, I know that He knows my entire makeup—physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, and He will not break the bruised reed.

There is no reason for me to quit. If I trust Him, I will not have to agonize to figure it all out. He not only knows but also has the power to do whatever is necessary for my good and His glory. He will do it all at exactly the right time and nothing or anyone can stop Him from doing it.

As parents, we need to teach this message to our children today. There is so much quitting when we don't get our way. We are all so prone to take the easy way out. Like Elijah, we are all so quick to run from difficult situations.

Christians don't quit! Yet without God helping us, we will all run for the hills! Let's pray that God will give us the grace to trust Him, believe Him, and persevere in all of our circumstances. ■

Michael W. Lee is Superintendent at Cherokee Christian Academy and High School in Woodstock, Georgia.