

What Happened???



What Happened???! Have you ever asked that of the Lord? You have prayed and prayed. You found scriptures and prayed them. You declared those scriptures over the situation. You just knew within your heart that what you were praying for was God's will in that situation. You just knew that you were on God's side.

So... What happened???!?

There have been many essays, articles and books written on this situation. All of them having different insights which, may or may not be, correct nor incorrect. We all know the typical teachings on prayer - praying His Word; God can answer, "Yes," or He can answer, "No," etc.

We have all had those moments in our lives when we question God and say, "What happened?" Many Christians have been asking that question on the heels of this past 2012 General election in our nation.

I do not pretend to know and have all the answers. What I do know is what the Lord had spoken to me concerning this aspect of my relationship with Him when things do not turn out the way I thought they were going to.

A few years ago, I had experienced a situation that was very, very serious and one that was very close to my heart. It doesn't really matter what the situation was, as it has no bearing on our discussion. Suffice it to say that it was going to be a life changing moment in my life and that my life would never be the same afterward. I was a Christian at that time for almost 30 years. Countless times in my tenure in ministry, had I prayed for and believed with many brothers and sisters who had experienced and went through the same type of situation that I was now finding myself in. I had prayed the scriptures for my situation. I had declared the scriptures over my situation. I had agreed with others concerning the scriptures for my situation. I believed God and His scriptures. I just knew that I was praying His will in this situation and that it was going to work out the way I knew and thought it was to work out. Well, needless to say... it didn't.

I am ashamed to say that my reaction and response to the Lord was something that I am not very proud of as a Christian. I was confused. I was disheartened. Hey, I was angry!! I became a little disillusioned with God - almost to the point of walking away and telling myself that I have been living a lie all these years. Pretty bad, wouldn't you say?

Well, the good news is, is that even though I was acting in the way I was, God never walked away from me. For me, it was a time similar to what we see David experiencing and writing within many of his Psalms. He begins the same way that I was feeling. God, what are you doing? Everything is going against me. Everyone is against me. My child has died. Things are not going the way they should. Things did not turn out the way I thought they were supposed to, etc. Yet somewhere in the middle of those psalms, David states something to the affect - "Yet, will I praise you. Yet, will I trust you." It is as if God had allowed David to yell, scream, rant and rave and get it all out of his system. It was at that point that God said, "Okay. Did you get it all out? Do you feel better that you yelled at me?"

You may be saying at this point that I am totally "off base" with where I am going. However, I believe David was being "real" with God. That is what intimacy in a relationship is all about - being "real" with each other. David was allowed to be himself with His God. God knew what he was going through and it would have been hypocritical for David to put on a false face before an all-knowing God. David was being real before God. Actually, this is what Jesus was referring to when He tells us to worship the Lord in "Spirit and in truth." The word "truth" in that passage of scripture means "true reality." Worship, to be true worship, must be with a real heart. The attitude of our heart needs to be real. Even in these times of difficulty in our relationship with our God.

Now, let's get back to my situation. This was where I was at. God allowed me to "get it all out of my system." It was at that time that he showed up in my most vulnerable time and started to gently speak to me and tell me exactly what I needed to hear at that moment. I came to that "edge of the cliff" in my spiritual life, but by His love He grabbed me just in time - His time, to set my feet back on solid ground.

I have shared with you the above account in my life to take us to the main purpose for me writing this short essay. After that "kairos" moment in my life, the Lord revealed to me through some very well known scriptures where my thinking may have been misplaced.

Let' read Isaiah 55: 8 -11 - *“For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9) For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. 10) For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: 11) So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper [in the thing] whereto I sent it.”*

These are very familiar scriptures to us and one that we all have read and heard many times. However, even though I have heard, read and declared these scriptures countless times I had missed something so very, very simple in these scriptures and especially in verse 11. As the Lord directed me to verse 11, He had literally highlighted and had capitalized a few words which all of a sudden opened my eyes to something that is so vast that it cleared up everything for me. Below is what the Lord, literally showed me as I read verse 11.

Isaiah 55:11 - So shall **MY** word be that goeth forth out of **MY** mouth: it shall not return unto **ME** void, but it shall accomplish that which **I** please, and it shall prosper [in the thing] whereto **I** sent it.

The above expressed and revealed to me an error that many of us have. You see, when many of us pray, we pray and use the scriptures in what **we** think the outcome should be. For example we use the scriptures for healing and we believe God hears His Word and will bring healing. We use the scriptures for supplying our needs and we believe God hears His Word and supplies our need. The scripture is clear in 1John 5:14, 15 - *“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”* Hey, there is no doubt about it - God hears His Word and will answer every one of our petitions as we use His Word in that situation. However, many times when we pray or use the scriptures, we already have a preconceived idea of how it should turn out and how it should come to pass. Many times we call that “praying in faith.” I submit to you, however, is that really faith in the God, who knows all and sees all, or is it faith in ourselves and that we are praying correctly?

Notice, in Isaiah 55:11. It is all about God. He is speaking and He is telling us that it is all about what **MY** (God's) word that goes forth out of **MY** (God's) mouth. It is sent forth by God and it will accomplish what He wants it to accomplish - not what we want or think should take place. You see all we are called to do is speak forth and declare His Word. As we do, His Word will accomplish what **He** wants it to accomplish. Sometimes, that may not be in conjunction with what we are thinking that it should accomplish. Here in lies the problem for us. Whether we realize it or not, we begin to “play God” and use the Word for what we desire and think should take place.

Trust me. I know what many of you are thinking at this point. I understand all that we have been taught concerning this area. All I am suggesting is a thought for us to ponder on as we pray and seek after God.

Isaiah 46: 9, 10 - *“Remember the former things of old: for I [am] God, and [there is] none else; [I am] God, and [there is] none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times [the things] that are not [yet] done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:”*

The above scripture states it quite well. God ***IS*** God, period!!!! He is sovereign. He knows the end from the beginning. He knows how it will turn out even before we pray. His wisdom (“*My counsel*”) shall stand. Things will work out for ***HIS*** purposes and His pleasure.

Many times when we pray we are like Peter after he made that wonderful statement concerning who Jesus was. Jesus Himself commended him on what he declared. Jesus then proceeded to tell his disciples what was going to happen to Him in Jerusalem. Peter then decides to tell Jesus what to do next. Peter, in his “own infinite wisdom” decided that he knew better than the plan of God for the salvation, not only of Peter, himself, but for the whole world, and that he needed to tell Jesus how to do it. (Matthew 16:21, 22) As we know, Peter was disappointed at how things turned out in Jerusalem. However, He got the full picture of what he did not know and what God knew (the end from the beginning) three days later on that Resurrection Sunday. AMEN!!!

In these times it is imperative that we trust God in all aspects of our lives - personally, for our families, for our nation and for this world. God has a plan and it ***shall*** come to pass whether we agree on how it should come to pass or not; whether we think it should be one way or another. It does not matter. Ultimately, it will be the way God has determined and preordained for it to come to pass. As I had mentioned previously, recently, our nation had a General Election where it did not turn out as many Christians had expected. I have received reports of devastated, disillusioned and discouraged Christians. I have received reports of churches being harshly divided between congregational members because they “picked sides.”

The question concerning whose side are we on, should be answered with the same response as the Angel of the Lord answered Joshua’s question to Him as to who side the Angel of the Lord was on. To paraphrase, the Angel of the Lord’s response was that He was on no one’s side, but rather He was on the Lord’s side and was for whatever God had set forth to accomplish. (Joshua 5:13, 14). That is the thought process that every Christian should have - Lord, let your will be done - not mine. Our mindset should be - God, allow whatever happens in our lives, our families, our nation and this world, be for the sole purpose of bringing forth your Kingdom, your plan of Salvation to the Jew and the Gentile, alike. Let the events unfold as you desire for the purpose of ushering in the second coming of our Lord and Savior - Jesus Christ.

Jesus was our example in this as we see Him in the garden of Gethsemane. He was struggling with this same thing. Yet, He understood that God’s plan was God’s will and that it will come to pass and be accomplished. God, the Father saw the end from the beginning. Jesus, Himself knew the end from the beginning. He knew the end result was going to be that He was going to end up at the right hand of the Father. That ended up being His ultimate purpose and vision for what He was about to go through. He knew that His Father had everything under control. Even though it would not, and did not, seem that way at the time.

We need to come to the realization that God is smarter than us. We need to realize that we do not know everything and nor does anyone see the whole picture. He allows us to receive glimpses of some of that "picture." However, only God knows how everything will play out because He already has it planned out from the beginning of time as we know it. The question for each of us is this - "Do we really trust Him no matter how things turn out?" "Do we continue to trust Him when the situation that we have been praying, believing for and declaring the scriptures over, ends up differently than what we thought it should?" Hmmm...

Isaiah 46: 13 states, *"I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory."* God's ultimate plan and purposes are for the salvation of His people. His salvation will not tarry. Jesus is coming soon. Everything that takes place in our spheres of influence - personally, professionally, in our families and in our nation - are being brought about for the purpose of ushering in the second coming of our Lord and Savior, the One whom we love - Jesus!!!

I will leave you with the following scriptures that sum it all up.

Proverbs 3:5-8 - *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.*

Malachi 3:13-18 (Amplified Version) - *Your words have been strong and hard against Me, says the Lord. Yet you say, What have we spoken against You?*

¹⁴ *You have said, It is useless to serve God, and what profit is it if we keep His ordinances and walk gloomily and as if in mourning apparel before the Lord of hosts?*

¹⁵ *And now we consider the proud and arrogant to be happy and favored; evildoers are exalted and prosper; yes, and when they test God, they escape [unpunished].*

¹⁶ *Then those who feared the Lord talked often one to another; and the Lord listened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him of those who revered and worshipfully feared the Lord and who thought on His name.*

¹⁷ *And they shall be Mine, says the Lord of hosts, in that day when I publicly recognize and openly declare them to be My jewels (My special possession, My peculiar treasure). And I will spare them, as a man spares his own son who serves him.*

¹⁸ *Then shall you return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him who serves God and him who does not serve Him.*