



Abraham – A Man of the Presence

Hello everyone. Welcome to “Notes from the Presence.” Today, I thought I would start by posting a familiar bible passage out of Romans. These verses have a lot packed into them. I have read them over countless times in my life and I have heard possibly hundreds of sermons based on them. However, today, I noticed something interesting in this scripture passage, something I had not seen before.

Romans 4:16-18 For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, (as it is written, “A father of many nations have I made you”) in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, “So shall your descendants be.”

The above passage launches out talking about faith, grace, and the promises of God. The first few words describe how faith activates grace. When we believe, faith releases a divine substance called grace. Grace is an empowering agent in our lives. It is the ability given us by God to do the impossible. It is at it's very best when we are at our weakest (a condition in which God receives all the glory). Promises are brought into our lives by this chain reaction - faith in accordance with grace. Here is another scripture verse illustrating this divine interaction.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.

Here, once again, we see a familiar scenario. Evidently the process of our salvation goes something like this: first we believe requiring faith, and then this faith releases grace, the

empowerment of God into our lives to instantly transform us into a new creation - one translation calls it a brand new prototype never before seen. The salvation we are given is a gift of God, or in other words, a promise.

The "Romans" verses then go on to describe how Abraham, who is the father of faith and the father of all who live in faith, believed God for a son - Isaac. First, God gave him a word of promise: "a father of many nations have I made you." Then, Abraham believed God for the promise - in hope, and against all hope. Eventually, Abraham's believing produced a result so dramatic that both his body clock, and that of his wife, Sarah, were reversed and they became pregnant and bore a son in their old age.

Like I mentioned at the beginning of this blog, these verses are incredibly powerful. They contain critical revelation on the way in which faith, grace, hope, and the promises of God interact and they have inspired countless thousands of sermons and God stories through the centuries. But, as incredible as this whole scenario is, there is one detail I have missed up to this point in reading them - possibly thousands of times. Take a look at the middle section of this scripture passage:

*"in the **presence** of Him whom he (Abraham) believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. In hope against hope he (Abraham) believed"*

I guess I had never considered the fact that Abraham was a man of the presence before. These verses indicate that he exercised his believing faith in the environment of the presence of God - in the presence Abraham believed, in hope and against hope. I am imagining Abraham giving thanks and praise for his son (yet unborn or not even yet conceived), and possibly rejoicing in the fact that he was going to be a father of many nations according to the word that God had given him. In these moments, the presence of God would descend on him as it always does when we come and express our thanks, praise, and affection for our Father God. In this environment of presence, Abraham would become aware by revelation that his God was a God who calls into being those things that don't exist. It would then give a divine boost to his hope and consolidate his believing. I actually believe that God's presence is the essence of the power of grace. Grace is really the power of God contained in His presence - it is what God releases to bring about His promises in our lives. For this reason, the presence of God overshadowed Abraham and Sarah just like with Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Isaac was conceived.

Through experience in recent years, I have become aware that the presence of God is a massive incubating ground for the promises of God in my own life. In the presence,

dreams are conceived, they grow, they are changed, matured, tried, and purified, and they are also born. I have become aware that faith is amplified in the presence of God and that the throne of grace (the place where grace is found) is in His presence. I have also found great hope in His presence, and in His presence there is fullness of joy. All of this awareness has come through waiting, listening, coming close to my Father, and worship. I have also experienced many times the power released when I have spoken His word in the presence of the glory. It seems like when I revert to formula and agenda, I can quote scripture until my voice is hoarse and get nowhere. However, one word spoken in the presence (a place where I must come without agenda and in the context of relationship) can change everything in a moment. It seems like the presence of God is like a divine amplifier - it turns up the volume in infinite proportions.

I am definitely going to take this new revelation nugget out of Romans 4 and spend some time meditating on it in order to see where it might take me in the weeks to come. Kind of cool - don't you think ... there is always something refreshing in even the most familiar places of God's word. In fact, we often miss their divine coolness due to familiarity. Thank you Holy Spirit for bringing new life to this portion of scripture for me today. You are amazing!!

Thanks for reading. Jesus is real and He is the Son of God - born of promise.