

Go to a Land I Will Show You

In late 2005, God arranged for the termination of my employment in the fast-paced electronic semiconductor and components industry. During the thirty years leading up to that termination, my family enjoyed “financial stability” and relative comfort associated with an above average income (by U.S. standards). I had been a Christian during this thirty-year period and viewed my job as God’s financial provision for us. It was my understanding that God always desires that we put our trust in Him for all things including things relating to financial provision.

During the next two years, I learned that all of my trust in God for financial provision during the prior thirty years had been only skin deep. In fact, I learned that my attitudes toward my job and financial provision were ungodly. I have since realized that inwardly during those thirty years, I trusted more in my own ability to make a way than I trusted in God to do it. I have always been very “resourceful” and never really knew what it was like to be wanting.

Prior to my termination at my former employer, my wife and I sensed that God was about to bring about sweeping changes in our lives. He had been preparing me for increased work in evangelism and was beginning to expand the influence of my evangelism and teaching ministry. When my job was terminated, we believed it was an answer to our prayers and this understanding has not changed. We were under the impression that this life change ordered by God was all about the evangelistic ministry. While there is no doubt that God had been bringing forth fruit in our lives relating to the ministry He provided us, it is also apparent that God had been doing something very significant within our hearts. He was teaching us to place simple trust in His ability to provide and what it means to wait upon the Lord. In hindsight, God’s leading reminds me of the call of Abraham.

“The LORD had said to Abram, ‘Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you’ ” (Genesis 12:1).

God did not even tell Abraham the name of the land. He merely said, *“Leave your country and go and to the land I will show you.”* The fact that Abraham left the comfort of home and relatives and go with such limited information demonstrates that he believed God had his best interests at heart. He wanted to go wherever God would lead him because he recognized that He is great and wonderful. If Abraham was anything like me, I am confident he went with some fear and trembling not knowing where he would end up. He resigned to trust in God and cast the well being and safety of his family on Him. In many ways, this was like our experience. It is like God said, *“Leave the comfort of your present life and go to a land I will show you.”* And then He adds, *“And by the way, you are going to have to learn to stop trusting in your own ability to provide and trust in Me.”*

As I had written and spoken much during those following two years, this was a difficult learning process for me. There were many ministry “disappointments,” trials relating to our family and much less “financial comfort.” Often I have wondered if I was perceiving God’s direction correctly? Was this really what He wanted? Was I hearing Him correctly?

During that period, I read the story of Abraham again and was struck by something I had not noticed before that made this story all the more relevant to our situation. I read how God soon showed Abraham the land. But when he got there, there was a famine in the land. Can you imagine what must have been going on in the heart and mind of Abraham? God tells him to leave his country and go to a land where He will bless him mightily and bless the nations through him. When he arrives, there is a famine. What was God doing? Why would He bring him to a land when there is a famine? Didn’t God know there was a famine? Isn’t He in control of famines? The next thing Abraham did was go down to Egypt to escape the famine. How discouraging this must have been. He must have been wondering many things about himself and God at this point. Had he perceived God’s direction correctly? Was this really what He wanted? Was he hearing Him correctly?

It seemed like God brought us into a land where there was a famine. I am not referring so much to the financial aspect as I am to all the other areas of life and ministry. It was as if God purposely withheld blessing

in many areas of life and ministry in order to purify us and produce a more substantial trust in Him within our hearts. I had many moments of doubt.

I now wish to state that I am grateful to God for His great mercies and the grace He bestowed upon us. True, the level of financial and emotional stress increased but I see that He caused fruit to grow in my life and ministry. This fruit seemed to be like the variety that grows under the soil. It was not noticeable from above the ground but it was real. He sharpened my understanding of Him and produced increased zeal for His kingdom and insight into His beauty. On the surface, I didn't see much fruit in my children but I believed that God was doing something under the soil in them also that would not have taken place had we stayed in the comfort of our prior lives. Though myriads of people were not flocking to Christ through our ministry, it is clear that God was sharpening the gospel message in His people as a result of this ministry and His Excellencies were increasingly being proclaimed. Though I experienced times of suffering and discomfort, I look back at that time in my life as an exciting walk on the path of righteousness in which God's grand purposes unfolded before my eyes. May He be praised and may He give grace to us to trust Him all the more.