

The Optimism of Faith

by George Kulp

Faith makes us optimists, and God's promises are our anchor in times of uncertainty and doubt.

Scripture: Genesis 15:16, Numbers 24:3, Proverbs 3:5, Isaiah 26:3, Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 4:18, Hebrews 12:2

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Gods Promises"

Description

George Kulp preaches about the importance of having open eyes and a vision from God, using examples from history and the Bible to illustrate how those who trust in God's promises and keep their eyes fixed on Him will prosper and experience victory. He emphasizes the need for faith, obedience, and belief in God's Word, highlighting how God fulfills His promises and leads His people through challenges to victory. Kulp encourages the congregation to have a vision of God, accept His Word, and trust in His faithfulness, reminding them that God's presence and guidance will lead them to triumph.

Transcript

Gen. 15:16 -- "In the fourth generation they shall come hither again."

The man whose eyes are open hath said: he hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty. -- Num. 24:3, 4

Here was a man who could not get away from delivering the message that God would have him to give. He loved the wages of unrighteousness, but he was facing a situation that God controlled, and God gave him something which gladdens our hearts today. Contrary to the circumstances that followed this man, the man who gets his vision from God and whose eyes are open, will be the man who will prosper. History proves it; the past proves it; the Word of God proves it, and man's present experiences, uniting with the Word of God and with the history of the past, prove it to be true.

Columbus sailed westward, week after week -- home, friends, kings and land left behind -- but he had a vision. Others begged him. to turn back, but he cried, "Sail on." Again they gathered round him, threatened mutiny, but he said, "Give me twenty-four hours more and then if we do not see land we will turn back." This man saw something that they failed to see. They might have seen it on the bosom of the ocean where the branches of trees were floating, and in the air where the birds were flying. He knew the land was not very far off. He was observant; his eyes were open and he cried, "Sail on!" And they reached the land.

A boy sat by the hearth in his mother's home. His mother lifted the teakettle over the fire and bye and bye it began to boil. The steam rushed out of the spout, and the lid of the kettle began to dance up and down. The boy watched it, and learned that there was an expansive power in steam, and out of his observation came the steam engine.

A man saw two pieces of metal lying crosswise on the floor. Some one had thrown the leg of a frog across the two pieces of metal, and he saw the frog's leg twitch. The man's eyes were open, and the result was the battery that was named after him -- Galvani.

Sir R. Brown wanted to know how to swing a bridge across the Niagara River two hundred and fifty feet above the rapids. One day he was out walking and he saw a spider's web attached to a branch and the other end was attached to another branch. His eyes were open, and there he saw and did learn the principle on which he built the Suspension bridge on which you go over the Niagara today.

Newton was lying on the ground and saw an apple fall from a tree. Apples had been falling ever since man knew what apples were. What is there in that? But this man's eyes were open, and he said to himself, "Why did not that apple fall upwards instead of down to the ground?" And he discovered gravitation, because his eyes were open.

If there are any people on top of ground who ought to keep their eyes open it is the children of God. We see farther than others. We have the vision of the unseen. We stand in the midst of the darkness where the thunders are rolling, when the face of black clouds are illuminated by the flashes of lightning; and we know that on the other side the sun is shining and the clouds and storm will soon pass away. We stand on the temporal side of the unseen and we know that beyond it God lives, and His eyes are upon the righteous and His ears are open to their cry. We are in touch with the Omnipotent. We are facing eternity and, because our eyes are open, we march with a swing of victory in our souls, and shout over things the world cannot understand.

Faith makes a man an optimist. The man who believes God cannot be discouraged. He hears the Master talking to him and, as he listens to Him, there comes the comforting words, "I am with thee even to the end." Now, the devil can launch his brigades and his divisions and his legions, but this man sees the other side and shouts the victory. With Mrs. Browning we say,

"Speak to me my Savior, low and sweet,

From out the hallelujahs sweet and low;

Lest I should faint and fall and miss Thee so."

O beloved, He will speak to you; He will speak to you if you are united to Him by faith in His Word. He will speak to you and give you lessons, and give you words, and He will give you visions and make you a victor, and the world cannot understand it.

Here stands the man Abraham with whom our first text is connected. He has no child of his own, and he is the multimillionaire of the East. To whom shall all this wealth go? To his steward? God says to him, "Abraham, thy seed shall possess the land. They may be carried into a strange land, but in four hundred years, in the fourth generation, they shall come hither." Hear it! Jesus said, "Abraham saw my day and was glad." If Abraham could stand there and believe God -- no child, no seed -- but could look down and see the Holy Land inhabited by his seed and they as innumerable as the sand on the seashore, by the

naked word of God -- what ought we to do, nineteen centuries this side of Calvary, nineteen centuries this side of Pentecost? Our faith ought to be enkindled until a blaze of Gospel glory would sweep this old earth and the isles of the sea, until heaven and earth and hell knew there are some folks who are really believing God and are acting as though they were.

Man had God's own Word. Years roll on. Here is Isaac; here are the twelve patriarchs; here are their descendants, here they are down in Egypt. They are multiplied, increasing and mighty. Egypt's noblemen are afraid. A king arises who knows not Joseph. The task master is set over them, the lash in his hand. They are to make bricks and to make them without straw. They are to rise with the morning light and work until the sun goes down; but hear it, they have the promise, "that in the fourth generation God will bring them out, hither to their own land." Taskmaster, lay on the lash; kill all the babies; but though you rise in the majesty of your strength and scorn these slaves, they have the promise of {he covenant-keeping God, and every time the sun goes down Israel may say, "We are getting nearer the time when we will walk out." Every time they put their feet down they put them on the promises of God, and when they go out they go rich with the spoil of the Egyptians, and richer yet with the promise of the land that flows with milk and honey.

The God who promised that He would take you through, no matter what may befall, is the same today, He will see you through until your soul shall be gladdened one day in the city where the sun never goes down. If I had my choice, I would rather be the son of a poor Christian man, rich with the promises of God, than to be the son of any millionaire on earth who did not know God. I would rather lean on God's Word than on any man's money.

They had their eyes open on God's Word. "In the fourth generation they shall come hither." Just before Joseph died, he said, "Do not bury me here in this land, for God will visit thee, and we shall move out to the land He hath promised." And they embalmed his body, and laid him aside. I can imagine that every time an Israelite saw the embalmed body he said, "We are going out." Say, if dead dried bones can encourage folks, then bless God, I am encouraged by the Word of the living God. Hallelujah. I have the best of the Israelite; I am looking to the Son of the living God. My eyes are open and they are fixed on Him.

The head of a Bible School went out one day and his enemies got after him (the devil does not like Bible Schools), but he did not tremble any. One of his students who was with him trembled, and the Head of the School pitied him and he prayed, "Lord, open the eyes of this young man." And his eyes were opened and he saw that the hilltops all around were covered with horsemen of fire and chariots of fire. Some folks could not get their eyes open, except to see the Syrians, the chariots of the enemy; but the man who has his eyes open is so enraptured by the vision that he will not see anything but victory. Are your eyes open? . Anoint thine eyes with eye salve that thou mayest see.

Some folks are so narrow in their vision that one man can fill their horizon; but when you get your feet on the promises, and your soul filled with the Holy Ghost, you get a horizon so big that nobody can fill it but the Son of God; and He will fill it, and He does fill it. Hallelujah! There never was a man so big and apparently so necessary to the church of the living God but when that person is taken away God has some one to fill his place. I am very much in sympathy with the woman who went to the funeral of a man who had been a splendid character, and as the minister was descanting upon the merits of the departed, he said, "We never shall see his like again." And a pious old sister said, "Thank God, that is a lie." God will always have someone who has the vision, and who believes His Word and lives it.

You may have the Spirit of Jesus. Some people have Jesus with them and they worry, but they need not. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." I have read of some folks who had Jesus with them in the past. One day He was preaching one of those wonderful discourses of His, when the people stayed so long and were so far from home and had nothing to eat, and they grew hungry and weary. Jesus had compassion on them, and said to one of His students, "Give ye them to eat." They said, "Master, how shall WE feed so many?" That was their mistake -- they left Jesus out. "What have you?" "Why, Lord, there is a little boy here who has a few loaves and two fishes, but what are they among so many? That boy has been here before and he knew you would preach long, so he brought his lunch; he was so determined he would stay and hear to the end." And Jesus said, "Bring that boy to me." And the little fellow handed over all he had to Jesus -- not a whimper, either; he was glad to do it, -- and oh, how it did multiply and grow in those dear hands until five thousand were fed besides the women and the children! I really think there must have been about fifteen or twenty thousand there, for where you find one man at church today you will find three women.

Oh, do keep your eyes on Jesus! There was a woman one time who scraped the bottom of the flour barrel. She wondered and said, "This is the last. Elijah will have to go and board somewhere else." But every time she scraped the bottom of the barrel, God heard it, and the flour increased, and the old prophet stayed there two years and a half. The men, the women, the boys and girls, who are in touch with God can stay where they ought to be until God opens other doors and says, "go." Some time ago I got down on my marrow bones and asked God to make all my plans and, Glory to God, He does it! Glory to God! How my soul is blessed as I sit at this typewriter and take off these sermons, when I remember how God has opened doors too many for me to enter! When God redeems a man and gives him the Holy Ghost, He will plan for him, and all the devils in hell or out of it cannot smash those plans until God's purpose is accomplished. All things work together, not will work, but "work" now, for good to them that love God. I have a Quaker friend, a preacher brother, with whom I delight to work in a meeting. He never writes a report; he never publishes a slate; but all the time he is busy, going to every point of the compass, as God opens the way. And he gets blessed, and is a blessing to others. Praise the Lord! My God shall supply all your needs. Do you believe that? I do. Some one says, "Till I get in a storm." That reminds me of an old lady who was telling of a time when her horse ran away, and how frightful it was. She was asked if she trusted in God. She said she did until the harness broke, then she held on like a beaver. "Paul, all the angels of heaven leaned over the battlements of the skies as you testified in Jerusalem, and I heard every word that you said." "As thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." His enemies sought to kill him but I think Paul was much encouraged and said, "They cannot do it. I have an appointment to witness at Rome." He starts out under guard, and is on a vessel fourteen days and nights and in the midst of Euroclydon. The masts go by the board, and they throw over some of the cargo, and undergird the ship with ropes. I hear the sailors say, "We are going to the bottom; we never were in a storm like this before." But Paul says, "I have an appointment from God to go to Rome, and we shall all get to land. You had better eat something, for you have been some time without meat." I see him again. They are through the surf, and there is rain. They gather chips to make a fire. Paul is that kind of a preacher, that he will not let others do all the work; he gathers some wood, too, and a snake comes out, and bites him on the arm. The heathen say, "This fellow is a murderer, who has escaped the sea, but vengeance will not let him live;" but Paul is due in Rome and he shakes the viper off and feels no harm.

When God gives you a through ticket to Rome, He will see that you get there. I do not know where God wants you, but I do know this, He will get you there if you are faithful to Him. Do not doubt God's Word. Here is the Word to which you may anchor. They could not kill Jesus; they tried to, but they failed until "the

hour" had come. He surrendered His right to live. They killed all the children under two years in His native town, but God saw to it that the Son was safe. Why? He had an appointment to the CROSS. His parents take Him down into Egypt until all that sought His life were dead; then He comes back, and in due time -- God's time -- He takes up His ministry. They would stone Him, but He passes through them, on His way to the appointment on the Hill. It may be that you have an appointment to a cross, but remember, on the other side of that cross there is a crown. I like that hymn, "He's taking me through, however I'm tried; His tender care is never denied." If you will go with Him, He will open your eyes and you will have the plan to work to, and God to work with you.

God gives present victory to all those who will trust and believe and obey. The Epistle to the Philippians was written under circumstances which to some, perhaps to many, it would have been hard to write as did Paul. Only three miles from the headsman's block, but it is joy unspeakable and full of glory. Do you know where John got that wonderful revelation that is the last' of the record that God gives to men? Out there on the Isle of Patmos to which he had been banished by the cruel edict of Rome's emperor. There Jesus talks to him, and he sees things no other ever saw before, but that you and I shall see if we are faithful.

John Bunyan wrote Pilgrim's Progress in Bedford Jail. He was there twelve years. He might have gone out a free man if he would have given his promise not to preach any more, but this he would not do. He had a blind daughter who would visit him in his loneliness. The jailer said to him one day, "You may go and see your wife," and Bunyan went home. After a little he said, "Wife, God tells me to go back to jail. I do not know why, but I am going." And when he got back the jailer said, "Why did you come back?" He replied, "God told me to." Soon after he got back the town authorities came to see if the jailer was faithful. When they were gone, the jailer said to Bunyan, "You can come and go whenever you want to. I know you are all right, and you know better than I do." Beloved, if God wants you in jail, you are out of place outside of it. If God wants you in the way that leads to the cross, you are wrong anywhere else. Do you know where Rutherford was when he wrote those precious letters that you find today in "The Garden of Spices?" He was in jail; and when he wrote his letters to his friends, he would head them not from the jail, but from "God's Palace in Aberdeen." He declared at one time that the stones in the walls glistened like sapphires because of God's presence.

"Prisons will palaces prove,

If Jesus will dwell with us there."

One day a smart little boy -- and you know there is nothing so smart as a little boy, unless it is a little girl -- said to his sister, "Can you spell water with three letters?" Of course she could not. Then he spelled it for her, i-c-e. When one gets where he can see God, he will find that every promise in the Bible is spelled v-i-c-t-o-r-y, -- victory over sin, over the world, the flesh, and the devil. "Oh, Brother Kulp, I have tried everything and I am defeated." Quit "trying everything," and believe God. Faith is the victory.

There was a meeting held some time ago, and a lady belonging to the M. E. Church South came to the altar, and got the blessing, and acted as though she did. Her sister was also seeking the blessing, and she went to her and said, "Get to where you can do nothing else, and let God do the rest." God did it. When Israel came to the Red Sea, there were mountains on either side, and Pharaoh's army in the rear. They said, "What shall we do? We are all dead men." Moses said, "Stand still, and see the salvation of God; for the Egyptians whom ye see this day, ye shall see no more forever." Stand still and let God work. He is working now. Trust Him and know for yourself.

I heard them sing, "Jesus is a Friend of mine," and when they sang that my heart almost broke, for I remembered the time when I was not His, though He was still my Friend, and I wounded Him many a time. But He is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, and I know it now. I want to ask you, How many have a vision of God? How many accept of His Word, are getting promises cashed? You know beyond the shadow of a doubt that you are the Lord's, and the Holy Ghost abides, you being a temple of the King? We often sing, "I walk and I talk with the King." Is that your own precious experience now?

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