

2014-08-09

Fear & Stupid Decisions #1 (work)

Hi all,

Today I'm going to show how people moved by fear make unwise or stupid decisions even if they don't realize they are being moved by fear, thinking at the time they are doing something right in the Lord.

Jesus said 'wisdom is known/justified by her children', which means a wise decision often isn't seen as wise at the time, but will be confirmed to have been wise by the ramifications and results (children) of the decision. (Matthew 11:19, Luke 7:35)

An idiot of myself?

It was the first time I had ever taken apart a toilet. Chris thought a toy should go for a swim, but it had become lodged on the way down, beyond reach. I remember the Jason's cry from upstairs like it was yesterday: "Mom! Dad! Chris flushed my Lego man down the toilet and now there's water all over the floor!"

In my fiddling I had also jarred something that made it 'run' constantly, and jiggling the handle didn't fix it. So off I went to a hardware store and bought everything in the toilet section that resembled the innards of our toilet, as well as a tool to extract things lodged in a toilet that shouldn't be there in the first place.

I made the boys keep their distance as I laid out all the parts on the bathroom floor like some master mechanic about to assemble a complicated piece of machinery, though I hadn't a clue how they all worked together. "There" I thought, "Now I have enough parts to make a complete idiot of myself."

By process of elimination I figured out what needed to be done, learning the first lesson the wet way - turn off the incoming water supply! But eventually Lego man was saved and we had a working toilet again.

Not knowing what part goes where in decision making

When decisions are laid before us like the dozens of parts to a toilet, we are unsure how they fit together. We pray "Lord help me!" and then march on, putting the pieces together the way we think the pieces of our life should go, only to discover later we made an idiot of ourselves...wisdom, or stupidity, is known by her children. We look back years later wishing we could flush the memory from our minds, and wonder....

Fear is subtle when it comes to decision making. You truly have to know the Father and know His peace in your spirit, as well as know when to use common sense and your own judgement, to make wise decisions. You also have to realize fear is a spirit - an individual spirit who torments you.

So today I present the first of 3 examples that are composites of everyone and specific to no one, seen in one form or another over nearly 40 years walking with the Father and in ministry most of that time.

#1 - Work situation fear

I needed to confront someone at work about their behavior, but didn't want to do it. The fear was I'd be fired as it was my boss' boss. That fear led to thinking about Barb and kids who depended on me as the sole income. That fear led to the boys not being able to stay in the Christian school, and that fear led to me potentially back at the start in some minimum wage position.

And that led to thoughts of selling the house, moving to a cramped apartment...all the worst situations. I began to wonder if it was time for the Lord to open other doors of ministry for me, the standard, "The Lord is moving me on" rationalization/lie/half-truth so many use to cover the truth of their exit from a position.

So I knew first and foremost I had to look to Him to see how I could become more Christ-like in this situation, and what I saw I didn't like - boldness, standing up for what is right no matter the consequences. I **so** wished it meant moving on to another job...that would seem to be the easy way out. I wanted an escape from a bad-tempered boss, not having to grow in Christ by confronting him. But I did, and he appreciated the fact I was one of the few who were not 'yes men' - I gave him straight answers whether he liked it or not.

Centering on the Lord

Over nearly 4 decades I've seen people explaining away their lack of backbone as 'the Lord is moving me on'. Obviously the Lord does often move us on, but I'm talking about people choosing to back away from a situation by getting another job instead of showing the boldness of a David or Ruth and seeing personal growth, and missing seeing His faithfulness on the other side of the situation.

Usually someone comes in my office or calls or emails that their boss or co-worker is horrible, cursing and saying unethical or immoral things, and often the boss or co-worker is mismanaging their position or company...all of which is true as bosses and coworkers who do the above have larger personal issues.

But when I tell people to consider the possibility that the Lord is trying to grow them as a person, that people like Joseph, Daniel, Deborah, Ruth, young Samuel, and David all needed not a way of escape from a situation, but saw the way of escape was THROUGH the situation into greater maturity in the Lord, they turn away.

There is a time to leave a situation like that, but my experience has been only after you as the salt, have had time to lay out right and wrong to them so they know what could be done. IF they reject His grace which is through you, then the Lord moves you on for they are rejecting not you, but Him in you.

Many first think 'escape' rather than 'how can I become more like Jesus' in this situation? They would rather uproot their lives, their spouse, their children, their circle of friends looking for a way of escape via another job, trying every way possible to use God as an explanation for giving them a new job, rather than just growing a backbone to stand up and use the authority their position in the firm gives them.

Fear of man is one of the most prevalent fears out there, and the same people who will boast of Christ in them and what amazing things God is doing, posting things in social media or testifying to friends and at church about what God is doing, suddenly lose that boldness when it comes to being the man or woman of God they should be. They think escape instead of standing up to a boss, a co-worker, a peer at work and confronting and/or drawing boundaries as to where they will and will not go.

Dealing with fear BEFORE you pray

Philippians 4:4-6 is one of the few step-by-step instructions in the Word. Paul said "(1) Be careful for nothing, but by (2) prayer and supplication with thanksgiving make your requests make known to God. (3) And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep (hem in, guard) your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

The trouble I was having was that I was carrying the fear all the way through my prayers, and as a result I had no more peace at my 'amen' than I did at the start. So I took Paul's instructions as step 1, then step 2, and then 3, peace will be the result.

I wrestled with fear and worry for 3 weeks, my request waiting like a pressure cooker on the back burner until I dealt with the fear, but I dared not speak my request until I could honestly say I was 'careful for nothing'. I worked through all the possible combinations in my mind like I did when figuring out the pieces to that toilet.

At the end of each road of fear I found Him standing there with a track record in our lives of faithfulness. Once the final road of fear had been mentally traveled, THEN I unleashed my requests on Him with thanksgiving.

And suddenly the peace from Him overwhelmed my spirit...I knew He had heard, knew He had made provision, and knew the pieces to my situation would be put together in His right order...Now I instantly deal with the fear and can pray and receive that peace - but first starting, it was hard!

Freedom from fear allows us the boldness to do what is right no matter the consequences. Sometimes that means confronting someone at work, the lone employee to define right and wrong, moral and immoral, ethical and unethical for them, choosing to be a Daniel or Ruth rather than lie about how the 'Lord opened a new job for me' to everyone.

Sure He did open the job for you, but rest assured, you WILL face that fear of man on down the road, in this job or the next, because He is trying to conform us to Him and won't give up until He completes the work in us. Next week, family relationship situations.

More on fear and decisions next week! Blessings,
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2014-08-16

Fear & Stupid Decisions #2 (family)

Hi all,

Last week I shared how fear makes us think first of escape from an uncomfortable work situation, rather than looking to the Lord to see what He wants to work in us. I also stated these examples are for everyone but specific to no one, a compilation of decades of ministry experience, so too this week.

Ever increasing circles outward

When dealing with a person about an issue the Lord keeps things private between Him and that person, in their heart, as His first effort to reach them about their sin. This can be a short length of time or can go on for years, even decades, as He waits for them to deal with whatever sin they keep returning to.

Only after exhausting all efforts to deal with the person privately will the Lord then make it so a person close to them finds out about the sin - a spouse or friend for example. Let's look at a marriage situation.

Let us say the spouse finds out about the sin; The Lord's intent is that the person will humble themselves to their spouse so they may work together to deal with it, and most often, the issues in their marriage that contributed in part to the sin. That is where you will find the Holy Spirit - right there with husband and wife, keeping the sin still private, as they deal with issues.

Even if the sin is the result of baggage carried into the marriage, the Lord reveals that sin to the spouse so He might effect healing and Christ-like character, resulting in a stronger bond between husband and wife.

This same process is used by the Lord of 2 close friends - enlarging the circle discreetly, so the person can deal with the issue in the comfort of knowing the Lord entrusted a good friend.

It's all right there but you never thought of this passage in that way

We see this process in Matthew 18:15-20 where the subject of going after the lost sheep is started in v11, and continues with Jesus' teaching of how to help a person who has trespassed (v15). The lost sheep knows of his sin so that is the Lord dealing privately with him. Then Jesus says 1 person who knows of the sin goes to him to try to reconcile, and if rejected then 1 or 2 more who are now aware of his sin go to him, and if all 2 or 3 of them are rejected they tell it to leadership.

If the person rejects a leader(s) attempt to help, Jesus said to treat him with love as you would an unsaved person - not ostracized as erroneously taught by so many pastors, but loved as Jesus stated, treating them with the same love you've have for a sinner. (Matthew 5:43-45; 18:17)

For the purpose of reconciliation the original 2 or 3 gather in prayer to agree for their lost sheep friend, and the Lord is in the midst of their prayer to work repentance, healing, and restoration. (I have a couple of series on forgiveness that details this if you'd like to learn more, also Sermon on the Mount 2 covers some of this)

Back to the Lord and their heart

First a person is dealt with in their heart, privately between them and the Lord. Then if they refuse to deal with it the Lord allows a spouse or close friend to find out about it. If they still won't deal with it, the Lord will move the circle outward to a 3rd party, like a pastor, counselor - the Lord's intent there is to bring help through a respected 3rd party, still keeping the issue private, but using that 3rd party to help this person, or in marriage, this couple, and bring healing.

If the person still won't deal with the issue, their refusal may then be made public by the Lord's doing. In scripture we see this in Kings Saul and David, Annanias & Sapphira, and the man who had a sexual relationship with his step-mother from I Corinthians 5, among others.

In more recent times very public failures of well known ministers have made headlines, and in each case the Lord had followed the same pattern of dealing with sin - private dealings, then outward to spouse, then outward to ministry peers, then the public was made aware, finally (hopefully) forcing them to deal with the issues.

The Father is much larger than most Christians' view, for He works this process with people saved and unsaved alike that He may do good to them and in the hope of bringing wholeness to them: The couple down the street who divorces after it was discovered she had an affair with her boss is merely the result of her not dealing with hidden desires she harbored for years, but wouldn't deal with - in God or not.

Another couple you know where one spouse has taken their savings to feed their gambling habit so they are losing their house, and on it goes. In all these things, saved and unsaved, the Lord first attempts to get a person to deal with an issue privately, and if not, then with a spouse, and if not, with a 3rd party, and if not, then publicly...

He said, she said, someone is afraid to say

Let us say one spouse finds porn on the other's computer. Up to that point the Lord would have been working in the heart of the person to get them to stop viewing porn sites, but they haven't heeded His dealings. This lust issue was probably carried into the marriage, but now the Lord has brought a spouse into their life to help them deal with it. So at some point when not dealt with privately, the Lord allows the spouse to find out.

Fear will cause the spouse who discovers the sin to think all the worst about confronting their spouse - Will they leave me? Will they hit me? Will our friends find out? How can I trust them again? Fear also rises in the spouse who was discovered. Do they react in anger or humility? Repent or justify themselves? Now that my secret is out will my spouse stay with me? With friends it often means the end of a friendship, for that is easier for the person in sin than dealing with the hurt and pain with their friend(s).

Usually the hardest thing to do is God, the easy way out is usually the devil. Where there is comfort there is rarely growth, and where there is growth there is rarely comfort. Being a disciple and growing Christ-like is a series of hard decisions that go against the fear that says run away and start over. A person is actually in idolatry when they decide to not deal with the issue: They put the idol of self above growing in Christ.

Fear presents the worst case scenario to both spouses. In friends, fear causes offense, anger, an unwillingness to be vulnerable (again) to that friend, piling hurt upon older, upon still older hurt.

What fear says

Fear presents all the horrible things that keeps a person awake at night. Often fear tries to keep a person in indecision, for as James said, a double minded person won't (be able to) receive anything from the Lord. Fear also causes a person to make decisions that are fear based, cloaked in spirituality: The Lord is moving us on. The Lord is moving us out of this church. The Lord opened another job in another state for us.

These explanations of sudden changes in a family or marriage are often a cover for the couple having failed to deal with sin over the course of years. But decisions made based on fear are rarely the Lord's perfect will. Most often they merely delay the inevitable day when the couple will come face to face with a major decision - deal with it or not, stay in the marriage or not. Seek professional help or not. The Lord won't let go, they will come down that same road again, maybe 1, 5, or 10 years from now - but He will bring them to it again.

The things fear won't remind you of include the Lord's track record of grace and provision at every point in your life. The Lord's great love and mercy and timing He has always shown you in the past.

The Lord's promises which are not affected in the least by fear and things that catch you by surprise. We must be the ones to discipline our imaginations to think on the Lord's proven record in our lives and not to think on fearful things about the future, or how we might get hurt again. As Corrie ten Boom so famously said, "Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God."

We cannot lose sight of the fact the whole reason the Lord allowed the sin to be made known is that the person and their loved ones may deal with that sin, find repentance and rebuilding of the relationship, finding greater strength in Him.

We've just scratched the surface of fear in decisions, until next week then, blessings,
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2014-08-23

Fear & Stupid Decisions #3 (Family/Money 1)

Hi all,

I've been talking about how fear causes us to make decisions we wouldn't have made otherwise, and often those fears are masked by spirituality. Today family & money issues part 1.

But first, have you ever had this conversation...

As you read this we've spent the last 2 weeks tearing apart Chris' bedroom, the existing bathroom, and my office in preparation of the making of his handicapped equipped bed and bathroom. With the work we've done already our house looks like a warehouse for a moving company with all the boxes stacked around.

But you become numb after awhile about where things should go and just start moving in auto-pilot. And this is how Barb and I came to the conversation below as we stood in my office staring at 12 boxes stacked almost ceiling high:

"OK John, I'm ready for you to move these boxes now." Me: "Where to?" "Our bedroom of course, I told you already." "Where?" (With a husbandly twist of my face to emphasize my 'no way am I going to do that' look). "In the bedroom!" "But where? There's no room, you see my problem." "No, I don't, just listen to me and move them." "Where? I already have to walk a path as narrow as an Olympic gymnast on the Balance Beam just to get to my underwear drawer." "You'll figure it out, just move them." "No, you go and look at our bedroom and tell me where you think they'll fit."

(A short pause while she goes and then returns) "You're right." (Oh how I love to hear those words coming from my wife's lips) "OK, we'll put them in the living room in front of the wood stove for now, then we'll make room in your workshop and move them there." (Hopes dashed, visions of my tools disappearing beneath cardboard and plastic sacks until next spring's thaw flash in my mind)

Well, I did move the boxes to in front of the wood stove temporarily, and I sacrificed my workshop still more, but to her credit she did an amazing job of sorting and stacking and arranging things to make room as I carried all those boxes out to the workshop.

But making decisions can be like that, and for our purposes imagine each option above has a fear attached to it, making us start to go in one direction, be confronted with fear, back away, try another direction and then be confronted with another fear. What to do? Where to turn? Fear of missing God is on the one hand and the fear of making a huge mistake of the devil's doing is on the other hand.

About fear

There is natural fear - don't step in front of a bus. And there is natural fear that has a spirit attached to it that entices the person to develop still greater fears. Don't step in front of the bus, then stay away from bus stops because they scare me, then don't go to bus terminals and trains stations because they scare me more because they are bigger and with more strangers, then any group of people make me scared, then I need to never go outside my door again because I am afraid of people - it all started with fear of a single bus.

Hebrews 2:15 speaking of the work of Jesus, says, "Who did...deliver them who all their lifetime were subject to bondage through the fear of death."

Notice that the fear of death makes people subject to bondage. The Greek word 'bondage' is 'douleia', from 'deo' meaning 'to bind' and is used primarily to mean 'the conditions of being a slave' (Vine).

Fear of death keeps people living as slaves to fears. How?

Fear tree

Think of a tree with a root system, unseen, below ground - that root system is sin. The trunk is fear of death and carries 'nutrients' from the root of sin through the fear of death to the fruit. The fruit of this tree is all the fears out there, like a fear of spiders, fear of small spaces, fear of heights, fear of dogs, fear of going outside, fear of people, fear of snakes, fear of different races than you, fear of hospitals, fear of cancer - any fear you can think is the fruit of the tree nourished by fear of death which is fed by sin.

You can trace that fear of spiders back to the fear of death: A spider might bite you and poison you, which means a hospital, which means maybe that flesh eating bacteria, which means you could lose a limb or die.

Fear of flying in a plane? It isn't fear of flying, it is fear of dying in a plane crash. Fear of dogs? One might bite you, it hurts...it may mean a doctor, pain, a hospital, what if it has rabies, you could die from that.

We have been delivered from the fear of death so we are not subject to the bondage of fears.

So when a spirit of fear presents itself to your emotions, it is a direct attack on the work of Jesus in your life - and being a spirit, it is your will against his. You have to learn to exert your will against fear like you would push back if someone was trying to push you off a cliff. And that doesn't mean pray, for Jesus said to cast them out with a command using His name. Take authority over your fearful imaginations, make yourself think on the Lord, worship, praise.

We deal with fear of death by grounding ourselves in the fact we are already in eternity, already citizens of heaven. But getting that spiritual truth into our lives and hearts as a reality, takes effort to settle it once and for all - no matter what happens, I am going to heaven, therefore I am not afraid of anything, because the worst that could happen is I'd be with Jesus.

Personal responsibility

Let us use the example of someone you've opened your home to for a season - an adult child, sibling, friend, or anyone else you are opening your home to. Let us say they are into various sins - maybe drugs, wrong relationships, and little work.

The fear is what will happen to them if you don't provide for them? They'd be on the street. They'd be in a shelter somewhere? But Lord, what to do about them? If I kick them out it will be my fault if they die, but I can't afford to have them here and they disrupt my life.

The fact is however, we parents raise our children to become self-sufficient. Any person able of body and mind should be taking care of themselves. There is a time and place to receive someone in your home to help them get on their feet - don't get me wrong - but Jesus did say only give 1 extra coat, not your whole closet, and to walk just 1 extra mile, not a marathon with them.

If you obey fear some will bring themselves to financial and emotional hurt by not making them grow up. If they aren't paying their own way after you've walked that extra mile and given them that 1 extra coat, then you switch from the giver of grace to the enabler of sin, by enabling their dependence on you instead of God.

Masked in Christian 'love', you may be actually keeping that person from growing up as a person and a person in the Lord. As I said last week, usually when we are comfortable there isn't a lot of growth, and when we grow there often isn't a lot of comfort. Sometimes you have to ignore the fears and make them uncomfortable so they will grow - and tell a person who you've walked that extra mile with them and given them the shirt off your back, and now it is time for them to walk on their own and earn their own clothes.

The answer

The answer is to go through fear - and let - maybe 'make' is a better word - that person stand on their own 2 feet. At the very least they can pay their proportion of the rent, utilities, and their own gas money while with you - make a plan, hold them to it. Something like 'By week 2 you will have a job, by week 4 you will have your first paycheck and I get 1/2 to reimburse me for your room and board.

Yes, you may have to help them until they get paid - but if after awhile they either don't have a job or aren't up and out of the house by 8am treating finding a job as if that were a job, and not coming home from filling out applications until after 5pm each night, you have to draw the line.

Fear will use you - a demon of fear will use you - to keep them babies, dependent and immature. Going through the fear to stop enabling laziness or addictions is hard, you feel horrible, but it must be done.

You see, God gives us opportunities, but we have to decide to take them. Fear prevents us from presenting God's opportunities for growth and provision to a person we are temporarily helping. You are actually standing in God's way, fighting against Him the whole time, while wondering where His answer is. We are often both the answer and the problem.

Well, we will pick it up at this point next week...hope this was a blessing, until then, Blessings!

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2014-08-30

Fear & Stupid Decisions #4 (Fear/money)

Hi all,

When Chris had given up the will to live, being in a group home 2 hours from us, we knew we had to move closer to him so he could see us weekly instead of the once a month we were then able to do. If he saw us weekly we knew he would regain the will to live, and mom's home cooking would put back that 35 pounds he had lost when he lost the will to live.

Lesson 1 - Circumstances required us to act

The fear was he would die 2 hours away from us. Do we bring him home to die? They wanted to discharge him to a nursing home to die. How could we do anything in ministry and care for him, both full time jobs. Faith does not ignore facts, it realizes faith can change facts. But it still deals with facts. Abraham and Sarah knew in the natural how old they were, yet with a revelation from the Lord, they knew facts were about to change. We had to face facts; Chris had lost the will to live and was dying. We had to act and act now.

Lesson 2 - We had to think through the fear

We knew we had to do our part to think through the situation before going to the Father. For years I've made the practice of following the instructions of Philippians 4:6, first, Be careful for nothing, THEN make your requests to God with thanksgiving, THEN peace will come to you and guard your mind and heart. I often wrestle with thinking things through, dealing with fear, worry, emotions in my mind and only once settled, THEN do I make my requests in prayer. This may take a second or it may take 2 months before I pray.

But we had to work through the care, the fear, the worry - what to do? We were 50 years old, didn't want to rent as at our age we needed to build equity. We had some cash to put down on a house, but it was the summer of 2008 when the economy and stock market crashed, along with numerous banks, AIG, GM, Chrysler and Wall Street companies, and mortgages were impossible to get during that 1 month period we had to act. Each broker's reply of 'we aren't making any decisions right now' was crushing.

Lesson 3 - After doing our part, mentally going through options, THEN we prayed

OK Father, we said...we can't do a bank mortgage, that means the seller has to carry a note. The town where Chris' group home is, is rather poor and it would not be wise to buy a house there as once we had it, it would be near impossible to sell later. A house between Tulsa and his group home makes sense, but we don't want a condo or neighborhood tract house. It needs to be in the country, handicapped capable, owner carry, within 30 minute drive of Chris' group home.

Lesson 4 - Ask the Father for revelation of His will

With those natural decisions made and the fear dealt with, we were able to pray those exact things. Immediately in prayer I saw a map of northeast Oklahoma, with a map of Grand Lake, and an oval highlighted on the west shore, northwest part of the lake. Then it zeroed in on a spot in the oval, and I saw a white house surrounded by trees, a wheelchair ramp to the front door, a gentle sloping yard, and then it zeroed in more to inside, and I saw a corner room that was Barb's own room, and a handicapped equipped bathroom. Then it disappeared.

Lesson 4a - Continue to do what is right in the natural, facing the fear

I told Barb about it, and told her I was going to drive around the area a couple days to search out everything EXCEPT what the Father showed me. I drove all around Grand Lake of anything within 45 minutes of Chris, focusing on a radius of just 30 minutes away...I saw either very expensive homes for sale with realtors, or shacks for sale by owners, and those were few and far between. Everything was over \$200,000 which was above our \$500/month budget.

Lesson 5 - Act on the revelation - that action, faith, is your heart's response

On day 3 I told her having eliminated everything in the natural, which I needed to do for my own peace of mind to know I had done all in the natural I could, I purposely went to the area I'd been avoiding - the place the Father showed me in the vision. There I followed a line on the GPS to a small neighborhood of small homes and manufactured homes, and right at the dead end of the neighborhood road was the house I saw in the vision with a 'for sale by owner' sign in the front yard.

I immediately called, but had to leave a message. It turned out the owner had just put that sign in the yard before they left for an out of state trip for a week. When I didn't get an immediate call back the mind started swirling. Once we made contact, they rejected our offer. I told Barb I knew what I saw, I know the Father's

voice, and I still had peace even though our offer, which was a price the Father told me to offer, was rejected.

Lesson 6 - Stay on the revelation, hover over it, keep it in your heart and go about your business.

Can you imagine the opportunity for fear? Once we learned with a sudden realization one day, that Chris had given up the will to live, I or we had been making twice a week visits to him to get him up, fed, and out, which helped on a temporary basis to give him hope. The group home's plans to discharge him were put on hold. But now that our offer was rejected while I was certain I had heard from the Father, what were we to do? I told Barb we will wait and let the Father deal with the situation, for it was His problem since He was the one who showed me the vision.

We were changing planes in Dallas when the call came - the sellers, Baptist Pastors, changed their minds, feeling impressed of the Lord to accept our offer though they had been offered tens of thousands more - but they wanted to be obedient and also wanted it to go to someone in ministry.

Lesson 7 - God shows the completed, mature answer/work

We've been here now 6 years, and only now is the house starting to resemble what I saw in the vision. It did have a wheelchair ramp to the front door already - the seller's mother was in a wheelchair so they built it for her use. But only now with the addition of Chris's handicapped equipped bedroom and bathroom, will Barb also get a corner room for her office - in knocking out the south wall by necessity it meant creating a space for another room adjacent to Chris'.

When the Lord appeared to the then Saul of Tarsus on his way to Damascus, the Lord told Paul (through Ananias*) he would share the Lord before kings - that didn't happen for decades because the Lord usually shows us what can be, the mature and completed work. That is why I saw our house fully equipped - I never thought of it until it became clear we had to make changes to his care, then Barb reminded me of the vision - and we are amazed. (*Acts 9:10-17)

According to your faith be it unto you

Barb and I could have resigned ourselves to Chris dying. When the group home administrator told me they needed to discharge him to a nursing home to die, we could have said 'yes'. We could have mourned the soon passing of our son, watching him waste away, and all the while asking the Lord 'Why?'. We would have done that because in the natural there were no solutions.

We could have said we could not rearrange our whole lives and the church body & leadership in Tulsa for our son, and let him go. But instead, we looked to the Father for a solution, and I stood there with the administrator begging for time, laying out to her how 1 or both of us would come up at least 2x a week to restore his hope, and if they didn't see a change in Chris within 2 weeks then we'd agree.

In I Kings 17:9 during a famine, the Lord tells Elijah to go to a certain woman in Zarephath; "I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain you." Elijah knew heavenly provision had been commanded, but the widow chose fear, for when Elijah came to her she told him she was preparing her last meal and then they were going to die. She turned however, and gave up fear and hopelessness, choosing to believe Elijah, and as a result lived on continually multiplying flour and oil for the duration.

We cannot blame her for she was looking at the natural world; Famine, 1 meal left, and already near death. But once she laid aside fear and started thinking 'outside the box', towards the heavenly solution Elijah presented, she saw a miracle in spite of the circumstances that plagued the whole nation. Provision was there IF she refused fear, if she looked to heaven for a solution she had never considered.

My hope is that in reading my story and this series, is that you will see the many opportunities we have for heavenly provision in our lives and those we love or care for. Though it may mean great difficulty and change even to the lives of those you love - yet it is your provision. Fear presents 1 story and it can be according to that fear or those circumstances. But for those willing to reject fear - I mean truly reject it by taking time to deal with it until you get revelation from heaven, and NOT carry it through your prayers to the 'Amen' - there is supernatural provision and growth as a person, and as a person in Christ.

New subject next week, until then, blessings,

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