

Re-reminded

Nothing, absolutely nothing is impossible with God. There was a dead child, a dead marriage, a dead husband and a dead testimony. Could anything be more desperate? She had been a temptress and he a retched leech. The consequences of their sin went on to reek violation and violence for years and nearly destroyed the kingdom. But though it is easy to use David's affair with Bathsheba to exhort upon sin, we will instead take a look at a sometimes overlooked aspect of it – the 're-ability' of our God. By this, I mean the power to re-deem, reconcile, re-store, re-establish, re-appear and re-ward. And I'll rehearse this tragedy as well as two other stories from scripture to make my point.

First, we jump back in time to find a miserable, scared, no, freaked-out young man cowering in a dark pit screaming vainly for help. To his brothers, Joseph was a jerk. They were uncontrollably jealous of his cozy, highly preferential relationship with Jacob, their dad. You know the story – they first thought to kill him but then sold him into slavery. Afterward, with hearts of stone, they convinced their pop that Joe was laid-out by a lion, torn to shreds. Now, either they hated their father as much as they did Joseph or they had no idea how this news would devastate him. It did. The deception bought far more suffering to Jacob than servitude did to Joseph. Later, Judah would confess that any more bad news like this would simply kill his dad.

A 'dead' son, a treacherous and wayward brood of children, then came a terrible famine – with not even a wife to console him. Could things get worse for Jacob? Yes. You remember – he seemingly lost another son to the dungeons of Egypt and feared even greater retribution from Pharaoh's ruthless governor for the apparent theft of grain. Considering that he could also very well lose his youngest boy Benjamin to this angry ruler and scanning the horizon of his life, he cried, "All these things are against me!" Indeed, it was a sad re-port.

Now, let's consider King David. You recall how he ceased from fighting with his army and was found wandering idly on his lofty rooftop. There he espied an attractive lady bathing in clear view. Bathsheba, we understand from the grammar used in the story was not an unwilling woman. However, as we have already mentioned, the end result was a litany of destroyed lives. David took his faithful servant Uriah's wife and had him murdered. Consequently, God took the resultant baby home to paradise. Could it get any worse for David? Yes. Although He forgave David, the Lord sent a judgment upon his household. The king experienced the incestuous rape of his own daughter, the murder of his son Amnon, the treachery and death of his son Absalom, the utter animosity of his dearest counselor Ahithophel, the rape of his concubines before all Israel and civil war.

Next, flash-forward to the scene of a stoning. Here, an angelic disciple died honorably while an angry obsessed man looked on, kicking

against the 'pricks' of conviction in his own heart. This latter man, Saul continued with a crazed persecution of every Christian he could find, searching them out and imprisoning them. His misguided zealotry destroyed the lives of many, many people all whose crimes consisted only of loving Jesus Christ. Then, he was graciously and miraculously converted to the faith he attempted to crush.

It was natural for him to think he was the perfect man to reach his countrymen with the gospel; after all, he had been the disciple of Gamaliel, a Pharisee of Pharisees, a well-known part of the religious club of his day. But likely for this very reason, he was all the more bitterly hated by the Jews as a traitor. They beat him, stoned him and plotted to kill him. The very people for whom he loved enough to sacrifice his own soul if it were possible wanted to damn his soul with hateful vengeance. Could it get any worse? Yes. Primarily incited by the Jews, Paul endured imprisonment, scourgings, starvation, the loss of friends, freedom, and loved ones.

Patriarchs in peril, a king in compromise, an apostle in persecution – all came to places of trying discouragement and defeat – or so it would seem. These weren't simply trivial inconveniences or minor setbacks. They were far beyond all human ability to deal with, to control or to change for the better. And that's exactly what God took advantage of – what He used. This is where He displayed with a grandeur that awes the saved His 're-ability'.

Contrary to Jacob's expectation, his beloved son was alive and contrary to the brothers fears, Joseph not only reconciled with them but saved them out of their distress. The 'angry ruthless' governor was in fact an angel of mercy and God's instrument to redeem the young nation. It had been God's plan all along.

Bathsheba lost her baby but went on to have two other sons, both of whom were important to God's plan. Solomon became the next king, the wisest, wealthiest man to live on the planet, an author of two books of scripture and a part of the Messianic line. Nathan, his brother, was also a part of the Messianic line. You see, the legal or royal line flowed through Solomon and his descendants but was broken several generations later by the Lord's curse upon Jeconiah (Jer 22:28-30). Joseph, the adoptive dad of Jesus was from that line as recorded in Matt 1. The blood line so to speak, however, came through Mary who, wouldn't you know it, was a descendant of Bathsheba's boy Nathan as recorded in Luke 3. The Messianic line was ultimately restored or re-established through the very woman who participated in the sin that nearly destroyed it.

Paul was tenaciously set upon saving the Jews. In this he failed miserably, but in this he was also re-directed. The persecution God permitted in his life was a complementary force that propelled Paul to reach the Gentiles. As a result, the gentile nations were reconciled to God through Christ and even now await His re-

appearing and reward. Again, all a part of God's divine plan.

God's re-ability is illustrated in these examples but is by no means constrained to them. Everyone of you has either been brought to times insufficiency or will be. It's there that your own abilities are revealed to be next-to-nil. You look around at what's going down and find yourself going down along with it. Whether it's been done unto you or you've 'done unto' someone else – you may someday wonder what possible good could ever come from the mess you're in. You may even scoff at the scripture that says all things work together for good to them that believe. You may seem to have no hope, no light left in your torch, no grand purpose in life.

Re-consider just Who your God is. Re-new your mind, your thoughts toward Him. Re-frain from doubt and despair. Re-peat the first works of your faith. Re-trace the steps you walked with Christ when you walked in peaceful trust. These are your re-sponses to Him – your 're-abilities' so to speak.

You may or may not witness the end of God's plan and how He finally brings the good He has promised to bring – at least in this life. Jacob and the boys, David and Bathsheba, Paul – they all saw part of the plan and were undoubtedly greatly encouraged by God's graciousness. But they didn't see the fullness of it in their lifetimes. That's why it's so important that you hold on and keep running the race. Heavenly mindedness includes a non-myopic view of the Lord's work. It often stretches beyond the horizon, even beyond the

imagination. It's a marathon, not a sprint. But God is absolutely faithful and will indeed bring the good He has planned – the repentance, the reconciliation, the restoration, the revival, the resurrection, the reunion, the reward. As Twila Paris sang...

*Courier valiant, bearing the flame
Messenger noble, sent in His name
Faster and harder, run through the night
Desperate relay, carry the light
Carry the light*

*Runner
When the road is long
Feel like giving in
But you're hanging on
Oh, runner
When the race is won
You will run into His arms*

*Obstacle ancient, chilling the way
Enemy wakened, stoking the fray
Still be determined, fearless and true
Lift high the standard, carry it through
Carry it through*

*Mindful of many waiting to run
Destined to finish what you've begun
Millions before you cheering you on
Godspeed, dear runner
Carry it home
Carry it home*

*Runner
When the road is long
Feel like giving in
But you're hanging on
Oh, runner
When the race is won
You will run into His arms*