

Real Life Stories *An Inconvenient Obedience*

May 12, 2019



It's been a while since I've written anything. We've had a crazy few months! Thomas became very sick and we ended up in hospital twice, first with a severe viral infection and stomach bug which led to a bacterial infection. He's doing well now, and we are thankful for the prayers of all our friends, family and church. We are also very thankful for the health care he received, God has provided every step of the way.

It sounds so simple when I put it like that, but navigating each step is quite a difficult and scary process....the path God gives us is not always easy and the obstacles seem insurmountable at times.

As I was in the hospital with Thomas—a total of 10 days—I felt overwhelmingly homesick, wanting familiar friends, family, and doctors. Navigating new hospitals, new payment methods, new pharmacy processes, even the bedside approach of Kenyan doctors, is inconvenient and rattling. I kept thinking this would be so much easier and convenient at home. It's easy to think to oneself in tough times, “Why me Lord, why did you want me here, with all our complicated health issues, how can I be a help on the mission field? How can I serve you and the people we live with when all my time and mental energy is taken up with looking after my kids and taking them to the next checkup or doing another breathing treatment?”

It's not so much a complaint as a query, I hope!

But obedience is rarely easy or convenient, sometimes it even appears illogical. While I sat there in the hospital, I had a lot of time to think, and I began in my mind to scroll through a list of Bible characters, all who were asked to step out in faith to do seemingly illogical things.

Abraham was told to leave his home with no clear destination in mind; he was later asked to take his only son—the son who was the promise of a new nation—and sacrifice him on an altar.

Moses' mother, raising a family in some of the darkest days of the history of the Israelites, gave birth to a son under the threat of infanticide. In an act of faith in God, she gave her son to the river ... literally sent him down the river in a basket to the providence of God! Years later, Moses, after fleeing Egypt for his life, was told to return there, not as the apologetic son of the Pharaoh, but as an advocate for his people, the slaves. He was a Prince of Egypt, but identified himself with slaves!

I thought of Elijah also, who was told to go ask for food from a destitute widow suffering in a famine. It seemed unfair and unfeeling, but the widow of Zarephath obeyed, she shared her portion of food with Elijah, while her

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own son was in need. I wonder what was going on in her mind as she baked that cake: “what will the neighbors think, feeding this man when there is so little even for my own child?”

Her bold act of faith defies logic, but her obedience led to never-ending provision throughout the rest of the famine. I ask myself what would have been the logical outcome if she had said no. . . . if she had followed her own human reason instead of divine request? Faith enabled her to live out the daily miracle of provision direct from God her maker.

Esther’s story is similar. Her older cousin decided she should sign up for a beauty pageant in a foreign land in order to marry a foreign king! She agreed, not knowing what was ahead. She left the security of all that was culturally familiar to go to a secular household—because she believed she was called for a purpose at that particular time. Mind you she got a pretty good spa package in the deal—eighteen months of pampering and beauty products to prepare for her interview with the Persian King. Her obedience to God’s plan led to the saving of her people within the Persian empire.

I thought of the disciples also, who left their careers to follow Jesus and Paul who was willing to go up to Jerusalem and leave the outcome to the providence of God.

So, as I mused on these, and many others in biblical history, I began to understand that I don’t have to understand. Illogical steps of faith are a common denominator among Christians, the defining hallmark of our calling. Perhaps Christianity does not appear strange enough to the world because we follow human logic rather than exercise faith.

When Jesus calls us to Himself, he is calling us to a yoke that is light, and easy to bear. If it feels heavy, we are probably trying to bear it ourselves. It may not be logical, but it ought to be light.

If I’m honest, I struggle at times to shift the weight off my own weak shoulders to his mighty shoulders. But I’m learning, just as the saints of old learned through their sufferings.

I’m also learning that obedience is more about what God wants to do in us and for us, rather than what he wants us to do for him.

“Obedience is the atmosphere of God’s revealing.”
Lilias Trotter, (19th-century missionary to Algeria)

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Hi, I’m Grace. I am married to Aaron and we have five kids. Four of our children have chronic illness, two with Type 1 Diabetes and two with Cystic Fibrosis. We are also a missionary family, recently moved to Africa, where my husband teaches at a small Bible college in rural Kenya. We live on a compound with a medical clinic, an orphanage with one hundred and thirty children, and a baby rescue unit.

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