

Keep Moving Forward – 10-23-2024

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month – honor those who have been treated; Encourage screening & education of risk factors.

For women in U.S. - most common cancer diagnosis - every 2 mins.

2,790 men in U.S. diagnose/530 die; **Men's Breast Cancer Awareness Week.**

Awareness + compassion. Trigger for many; worst time ... Some/changed better. **Changed focus.** -- Ever notice - what we spend time focusing on grows.

- Dieting? Ads w/ food. Looking for new car? See them everywhere.
- Feel anxious or depressed? Focus on those feelings, feelings worsen.

Truth - God uses difficult times in life to **move us forward.**

Choice: focus on facts - or - focus on His promises.

- Focus on facts – discouraged; focus on promises - encouraged.
 - Focus on God . . . “enough eyes focused on me” **Focus/promises**

5 Promises:

1 - God sustains us.

Psalm 119:116 – “Lord, sustain me as you promised, that I may live! Do not let my hope be crushed.” He physically & mentally strengthens and supports us.

- In our weakness, He is strong.
- “My power is strongest when you are weak.” – **2 Cor. 12:9**

2 – God will lead us in love:

Psalm 32:8-9 – “⁸I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you. ⁹Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.”

- David had to leave the palace before God gave him his own palace.
- God leads us in love . . . has our best interest at heart.
 - God doesn't control us; free will. We choose to follow/ He leads.

3 - God leads us, and doesn't leave.

God led Israel out of slavery - **Exodus 13** says: “²¹By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. ²²**Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people.**”

God is not going to abandon you.

- God said to Joshua, “As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.” **Josh. 1:5**
- King Nebuchadnezzar / Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego - blazing furnace, looked & said: I see **4 men**, & “the fourth is like the Son of God.” – **Dan. 3:25**
- **Jesus – John 14:18**: “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you” . . .
- “I am with you always.”
 - **H.S. is w/ us.** Leading, comforting, teaching ... bringing us/other side!

4 – Stop complaining, move on

Exodus 14 – Pharaoh changed his mind, pursues the Israelites. They’re scared. Terrified, complained to Moses – Why did you bring us to the desert to die?
 --Moses tries to calm ‘em: ¹⁴“The Lord will fight for you; U need only to be still.”

- God had different plan.

*** ¹⁵ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me? **Tell the Israelites to move on.**

- We’re like them; we **get stuck**. Stay & complain. Afraid to go forward.
- We forget - God turns water into walls of a passageway . . .
 - We forget – God does the impossible . . . His ways aren’t our ways.
 - We forget - He uses what scares us to move us forward.

B/c we forget, Jesus told the people to remember . . .

Luke 17 – “³² **Remember Lot’s wife!** ³³ Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it.”

- 3 words . . . what did Lot’s wife do? Lived near **Sodom – city of evil**.
- **Gen. 19** - 2 angels appear to Lot, his wife & 2 daughters; tells them to flee.
 - **Gen. 19** - ¹⁶ When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the Lord was merciful to them.”
 - **God is merciful** – leading us in safety. **Again! Leading in Love**
- **Only 1 instruction** - ¹⁷ one of the angels said, “Flee for your lives! Don’t look back, and don’t stop anywhere in the plain!
 - Just after sunrise, burning sulfur rained down on S&G

Gen. 19 ²⁶ “But Lot’s wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.”

- Torn between what she was leaving and where she was going.
- Looked back for security instead of stepping into the future.
- Prioritized the past over the promise of the future. Past wasn’t even good!
- She tried to hold onto her life, God was giving her a new one.

- She got stuck in a place where she only was meant to pass thru.
- Like Israelites - we **get half way, find it hard**, "If we could just go back"
 - Peter was stuck . . . went back to fishing.
 - Jonah was stuck – wanted to see evil get justice, not mercy.
 - We get Stuck. Unforgiveness. Anger. Grief. Fear.
 - "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past." – **Isaiah 43:18**

5 – God will make a way for us, lead us on.

We are afraid when we go where we've never gone before. Don't know ahead...

Feels like we are blind, unable to see the path.

- God has promised to make the crooked places straight, make the rough places smooth, level the mountains and cut through bars of iron. **Is. 45:2**
- God knows how to shatter glass ceilings . . . shut doors no one can open. . . He knows how to get you to your destiny, places you've never been.
 - **Isa. 42:16** – "I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them."

God's promises are true. Focus on them. Focus on the future.

Announcements: Halloweenie, Oct. 30 Time changes: Sun, Nov. 3