

SHINE Devotional

Week 20 – Lesson 1



Believe God Impossible Promises

Scripture reading Acts 7:2-3

“...The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.”

Abraham was a man who believed God’s impossible promises. He lived in the pagan city of Ur. The city was filled with false worship and any type of sin was readily available. God appeared to Abraham, called him from that city, and told him to go to a new city that He would show him. Abraham was seventy-five years old when this call came into his life and yet, there is no indication that he hesitated at all. God told him He was going to make a great nation out of him. He told Abraham that his name would be changed and that he would be the father of many nations. Eventually, Abraham traveled over 1,000 miles to a land that he would never personally own. Abraham was not a perfect man, but he was obedient, and God blessed him. God warned him that things would be tough, but he would have an eternal blessing. Abraham believed God for this impossible promise. I often imagine what it would have been like for Abraham to tell his wife that they were about to move. As a woman, she would have wanted to know the details, but he had no details to give her. He could only say that he knew that God wanted him to leave, and so they needed to pack up and go. Abraham packed up his father and his wife and moved to Haran. Then from there he moved to the land we now know as the nation of Israel. Abraham followed God’s directions. He did what God told him to do. He walked by faith and he became the father of the faithful. Through him the nation of Israel was born. Through him came Judah, then David, and eventually the Messiah. God made promises to Abraham and fulfilled every promise he ever made.

I encourage you to believe God. God led Abraham to a place that was not easy. God used him and blessed his belief. Believe that God has a plan for you. Don’t let the present circumstance get you down. Trust God to lead and direct you. Follow His guidance. He has a plan for you, just like he had a plan for Abraham. If you believe God and follow Him, you will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 20 – Lesson 2

Faithfully Serve Others



Scripture reading Acts 7:9-17

“And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him...”

This passage in Acts gives us a brief history of the life of Joseph. Joseph was hated and abused by his brothers, sold into slavery, falsely accused of immoral and inappropriate behavior, and unjustly imprisoned. Yet, through all of this he remained a faithful servant of God. He started out by serving his father. Because of his obedience and service to his father, he got thrown in a pit and he was sold as a slave to Potiphar. Because of his faithful service to Potiphar, he was elevated to the head servant of his home. This caused an immoral woman to admire and want him physically. His determination to be moral and faithful to God, got him thrown into jail. In jail, he faithfully served the jail keeper. Because of his faithful service, he was elevated to assistant to the captain of the guard. Later was able to minister to a prisoner, who had been unjustly confined, who later told Pharaoh about him. He was brought before Pharaoh and elevated to second in command of all Egypt. There he had the privilege of serving his family and his father once again.

Joseph’s story is the story of a faithful servant. God has not called you to be famous. He has not called you to be wealthy. He has called you to serve. Jesus said *“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many”* (Matthew 20:28). Jesus came to serve, not to be served. He is our example. When you learn you are here to serve and you develop that servant’s heart, than you will SHINE.

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Week 20 – Lesson 3



Faithfully Proclaim God's Truth

Scripture reading Acts 7:20-35

"This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush."

Moses proclaimed God's truth in the midst of opposition. The life story of Moses is amazing. Moses was supposed to be aborted, killed as an infant, because the law of the land demanded it. Because his parents chose to protect him, he wound up being adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, and through these circumstances, was raised in two different cultures. He knew he was Israeli, yet, he was raised as an Egyptian. He had a very diverse upbringing. Later when he tried to deliver his people from bondage, he was rejected by his biological family and found himself exiled from his adopted family. God appeared unto him in a burning bush and sent him back to the place that had rejected and exiled him to preach an unpopular message declaring God's judgement and His deliverance. Moses wound up leading an angry, complaining mass of Israelites to victory. He then spent forty years in the desert with this group of ungrateful, murmuring people. Today he is esteemed as the great law giver and one of the greatest leaders our world has ever seen. Why? Because he was willing to obey God and proclaim His truth in the midst of opposition.

In your world, you are called by God to represent and proclaim His truth. When you do, you will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 20 – Lesson 4



Living to Please the Lord

Scripture reading Acts 7:45-47

“Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus [Joshua] into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built him an house.”

Through the prophet Samuel, God described David, the son of Jesse, who would be king in Israel as *“a man after His own heart”* (1 Samuel 13:14). That means that David lived to please the Lord. His purpose was not to gain wealth or fame. His purpose was not to please those around him. His purpose was to do the will of the Lord so that God would be pleased with him. As a servant of God, he fought the enemies of God to protect God’s people, as we see in the story of David and Goliath. Because God’s power was evident in his life, he was despised by those who lived to please other people. Thus, Saul persecuted him soon after he was anointed king. He lived both as a fugitive, and in exile from his own country. He was perpetually opposed, yet, because of his faithfulness to God, he became king of Israel. He was used of God to write the Psalms. He desired to build a house for God, and through his son that desire was fulfilled. One day the son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ, will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords from that temple in Jerusalem. David was an imperfect man, but because he had a heart to please God, God protected him and used him for His glory. The testimony of David still shines today because he lived to please God.

When you determine to live your life to please the Lord Jesus Christ, then you too, will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 20 – Lesson 5



Preaching to a Hardened Crowd

Scripture reading Acts 7:51-53

“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.”

Stephen was called on by God to preach to a crowd whose heart was hard. This crowd claimed to represent God as the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Stephen was called to tell them the truth. He referred to them as *“stiff necked”*. Though they wore the sign of the covenant, their hearts and ears were hardened. He told them in his message that they resisted the Holy Spirit of God. When God convicted them of sin, they denied that conviction. John says, *“If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us”* (1 John 1:10). This is what people do when they resist the Holy Spirit of God. Not only did they resist the Holy Spirit directly, they also rejected the prophets and persecuted them. *“Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?”* (Acts 7:52). When they heard the Word of God and were convicted by it, they chose to attack the messenger rather than admit that the message was from God. The third thing they did was receive the law and yet choose to disobey it. They claimed to be the ones who possessed the law of God, yet over and over they chose to disobey God rather than do what He wanted them to do. When they heard Stephen’s message, they were convicted in their hearts of their sin, but they did not want to hear it. They did not want to be reminded just like their fathers had rejected the prophets they had rejected and killed the Son of God! The amazing part of this story is that as they were casting stones at him, he declared that he saw Jesus at the right hand of God. Jesus was present with him, but he did not ask Jesus to protect him or to destroy them. He prayed that God would forgive them. Stephen not only preached to an angry crowd, but he displayed the love of Christ to the hostile audience. He died praying for their forgiveness.

When you learn to love your enemies and share his truth in kindness even when they are hostile, you, as a believer, will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 20 – Lesson 6



Remember Your Heritage

Scripture reading Acts 7:59-60

“And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”

You and I as believers have a great spiritual heritage. Our forefathers, though not perfect, were people of faith and strong conviction who tried to live morally. Abraham believed God’s impossible promises. Because of this God has used his story and his family over the centuries to bring eternal life to an innumerable number of people. Joseph was a faithful servant in circumstances that were extremely difficult, and because of his servant’s heart, God used him in his day, and he has impacted generation after generation. Moses proclaimed God’s truth in the midst of continual opposition from both God’s enemies and His. Yet, he remained faithful to that which God had called him. David did not ask to be anointed king, yet, he accepted that calling and served the Lord his entire life. Stephen’s calling was to stand for truth, not knowing that it would be his privilege to reflect Christ in his death. Did any of these men make mistakes? Certainly, they did. When they did, they confessed their sin to God, allowed God to cleanse them, and they moved forward. *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* (1 John 1:9).

The work of God is always perpetuated through those who surrender to His will and serve Him where He plants them. This is your spiritual heritage as a Christian. In this generation, God has called you to SHINE for Him. Things will not be easy, but God does have a plan for your life. When you surrender to His will and determine to honor Him as your spiritual forefathers did, you, as a believer, will SHINE.