

## *When God himself is the brick wall*

A few years ago, I sensed that God would let many of his people “run against the wall” like in Hosea 2:6. *Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her path.* I struggled in my spirit about this word and finally concluded that this cannot be. This is definitively for those who run after other gods such as materialism, narcissism, greed etc. Does not God love his children and is gracious and compassionate? Surely He understands the times we live in and is merciful. However, as days rolled by, more and more stories came to my attention that showed the same pattern: I observed how many people of God, his loving children and his servant-ministers, simply ran against a wall. There were more and more dryness and boredom and less and less fruitfulness.

Churches suddenly disappeared, leaving behind burnt-out pastors and frustrated congregations. Some mission organizations streamlined their admin costs and some even had to shut down their whole mission, in spite of their passion and vision. Missionaries went back home and looked for jobs in secular companies in order to make it financially. Many of God’s servants felt let down by God’s people, and many of God’s people were simply struggling to cope with the bad economy. Relationships between friends and families were tested and ended up in a fiery furnace. Marriages were challenged, families tried to have peace during days and months of turmoil. Faith in God was pruned; hearts weighed; love grew cold. Some scratched their heads not knowing what was going on, others had times of fasting and repentance. Some, looking for answers, even dared to go down to hell and back with warfare prayers. Many sought after a strangely silent God in different ways and days passed by, months passed by, even years passed by – with no specific answer from him – only general whispers. Some fell away from grace, some worked out their own escape, others went for sabbaticals until the fat years would someday show up, and some others couldn’t afford any of these and stayed away from spotlights and suffered silently.

I felt like standing directly at the wall, watching the number of those increase that ran straight into it. Deep in my heart, I knew that this is the hand of the Lord. When more and more people came to share their desperate “wall” stories with us, all we could do is just listen and cry with them. Some of the stories are so unbelievable that no word could bring any comfort to their situations. Many of these people have turned their back on the world to become friends of God. They have given up their homes, their families, their comfort, all for the sake of God and his work. And now they felt that God was letting them down, without answers. Many simply came to the end of their ropes and said:

***“I am dead already, how much more do I have to die?”***

If this is your question as well, hold on. Let me share with you some of the answers that I received.

- God wants a quantum shift, not just cosmetic change. God can’t achieve what he wants to see happen if things will simply continue as they are now. He has been speaking clearly about *change* to His people, but sometimes all we have done is to move the piano from the right side of the pulpit to the left and pretend that we have changed. The “wall” is one of the last emergency brakes that is left for God to shock us out of our slumber. Otherwise, we will continue doing for the next 20 years the very same thing that we have been doing for the last 20 years.

- It is one minute to twelve. The things of God have reached a point of utter urgency, and time is running out. There is still much to do to preach the gospel of the Kingdom before the End is to come.
- Like in Acts 17:30, *"God has overlooked our ignorance, but He is now commanding everyone everywhere to repent"* – which is to align ourselves with the will of the King and the principles of his Kingdom. God has stopped asking and begging; He is now *compelling* people to obedience. An army that goes to war must obey the general's command. That is why there is a period of disciplining before aiming the weapons, where our will is broken, our egos have to die, and we simply have to learn to submit. Only after a soldier has passed this phase, the general calls him, *'son'!*

You may ask: can a loving God do this to his beloved children? Yes, he absolutely can, when it is worth the cause. Hebrews 12 says, *"My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."* Therefore, expect and allow yourselves to be disciplined like the five wise virgins. They took extra time to find extra jars to fill extra oil in case things go not as planned.

- If you – your ego, your plans, your visions, your religious routines - are still far too alive, here is the quick and safest way ahead: ask God to kill you, so that you can say, like Paul in Gal 2: *"I am dead, now Christ lives in me."* If you are in the process of dying, don't complain - die thoroughly. If you are dead, keep decaying until the bones are exposed to dry up in the heat. Die until the jackals have ripped every piece of flesh from you and expose your bones to the scorching sun. Die until you have lost all human help and hope, Plan B's, family and friends, wealth and health. Die until you are dry. Die until God would ask, *"can these bones live?"*

Because only dried up bones can be revived again.

- Many of God's people have landed in the valley that Ezekiel speaks about in chapter 37. Lonely bones that once gave structure and a framework for the body of Christ, bones that were able to carry the weight of the body lie there exposed, desiccated by the heat and disconnected from one another. God can only raise an army out of thoroughly dead, decayed and dried up bones that have no sign of the old flesh attached to it. These bones don't hang on to their ego, have no copyright, such bones have nothing to lose. But watch it: when such pathetic bones begin to rattle and start coming together, we will see a spectacle that the entire creation has been waiting for in rapt anticipation: an army no longer split into thousands of fractions, denominations and human organizations, but an obedient body under the headship of Christ the King, that will readily and daringly go to extend the Kingdom of God under the command of the Lord of hosts.

Do you hear it as well? (Isa 13:4) *Listen, the noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people, a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together! The Lord of hosts musters the army for battle.*

