

**General Topics :: I HEARD it on the GRAPEVINE - secondhand truth encourages hope****I HEARD it on the GRAPEVINE - secondhand truth encourages hope, on: 2005/6/26 12:27**

In Miracles which follow the Plow, we are encouraged to share our own testimonies, prayer requests and answers to prayer.

But, there is a rich vein of encouragement to be had from sharing with each other, true testimony of similar instances, which we have heard reported by the person who experienced them.

One cannot live off these alone, but, they can help us understand the nature of faith and the Nature of God's dealings with man, so as to steady our inner wobbles, especially when we have been called to ordinariness, or a seeming season of spiritual drought, in matters of belief. While these are, in fact, the times when our roots reach out, instinctively, deeper to receive from the Lord, there may be little sign of life on the outward tree, yet we faint not.

Re: I HEARD it on the GRAPEVINE - secondhand truth encourages hope, on: 2005/6/26 13:44

A minister shared this little moment of triumph in the Lord, at a schools conference I attended one weekend. The enduring message of his story, you must judge for yourself, but it has done something for me which remains unparalleled.

What passed for a road in those days in Thailand, might cross open country, field and pick up the occasional track. His carload of young Christians was taking the gospel to an outlying area and had been travelling for several hours, when now in jungle, (not too far from their intended destination), they found a fallen tree across their path. Perhaps less obvious, was his sense of being observed for a *Christian* response to this situation, which helped him choose his words and overt reaction with care.

Having done all the natural things, like getting out, trying to get round the massive trunk on foot and determining there was no way the thing could be moved, there were only two choices - go home, or pray. *Obviously* ;-) they prayed. They asked God to move this enormous obstacle, so they could continue their journey. Then, they waited to find out what God would do.

News of the predicament reached the village. Soon, they received visitors at their car-side camp. They spent the night there. They spent the next night there; all the time wondering how long they could wait, before they had to decide to stop waiting.

In telling this story, the minister gave nothing away of any sense of assurance that God *would* act. One had the sense he had prayed very humbly, not in desperation, but, needing to be surprised at a human level, while anxious for the glory of God at a spiritual level.

On the third day, noise was heard in the far distance through the trees, too far to see what was causing it as it came closer. There was some commotion! The carrying voice too, of a person in some agitation and distress. Eventually could be distinguished, the footsteps of an *elephant*, which did not stop until it arrived at the tree!

The owner's tale was predictable.....

Three days ago he had been working his animal as usual, when (at about the time the missionaries prayed) the elephant had headed off towards the car. Of course, the man had no idea what was wrong with his usually docile beast and had followed him the whole way, having been unable to bring him to a halt by any usual command. After all, this was his livelihood, an expensive investment to replace and he had no intention of losing it!

Happily, the tree was able to be moved by the elephant, although it was not an easy task. And the car proceeded to complete its mission. I now wish I could tell you how many people turned to our mighty God for salvation, but I remember only that there were some converts.

This also left me with questions about knowing God, about knowing when to pray and for what. In those days, I thought faith was something you got out when you needed it and put it away when you'd finished with it. (No wonder my relationship with God was fragmented for so long)!

Now, it was clear the minister, *knew* God (I thought, 'a little' - enough to know to pray). Yet it bothered me that he did not 'know' how God was going to answer *and* this did not put him off! I saw that his being vindicated in this instance gave him powerful testimony to the reality of a loving God... I could see the point of *trying* prayer, at least! :-P but it seemed *terribly* 'spiritual' to be in such a state of believing-all-the-time, that the thought to pray about a problem came so quickly - next, even. I was truly impressed.

A twin-impact remained. Something about God's timing - that prayers may not appear to be answered immediately, but this is a mistaken perception on our part because God does not forget what we have asked of Him, even if He does not turn up with the answer that day.

And, the quiet attitude of this endearing believer, whose faith was at such a biting point with God, that he could live through those days of waiting, without losing his nerve!

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2005/6/29 18:29

Dorcas, wonderful story. I love it! Thanks for sharing it. It blessed me so...

Ginnyrose