

Oasis in the Wilderness

Night #2 – Talking Points from *Streams in the Desert* (May 9 to 15)

Insights based on: "Streams in the Desert" by LB Cowman © Cowman Publications, 1925; © Zondervan, 1996 with "most of the language... true to the original text"

May 9 The Faith of Abraham

"It is no small thing to be on terms of friendship with God."

"Abraham's height of faith and friendship seems beyond our little possibilities. Do not be discouraged, Abraham grew; so may we. He went step by step, not by great leaps."

"...the hottest fires try the most precious metal. Abraham would never have been called the father of the faithful if he had not been proved to the uttermost."

Questions: *Do you want a deeper friendship with God? Is it possible that God allows difficulties and challenges to our faith to cause us to press closer to Him?*

May 10 Strength in Weakness

*I had fainted, unless I had believed
to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.*

Wait on the LORD:

be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

Psalms 27:13-14 KJV

What can a man do when his spirit is fainting under trial?

The approach taken in *Streams in the Desert*, reminded me of a time when I was injured while running in the mountains:

"What do you do when you are about to faint physically? You cannot do anything. You cease from your own doings. In your faintness, you fall upon the shoulder of some strong loved one. You lean hard. You rest. You lie still and trust.

"It is so when we are tempted to faint under affliction. God's message to us is not, 'Be strong and of good courage,' for He knows our strength and courage have fled away. But it is that sweet word, 'Be still, and know that I am God.'

"Hudson Taylor was so feeble in the closing months of his life that he wrote a dear friend: 'I am so weak I cannot write; I cannot read my Bible; I cannot even pray. I can only lie still in God's arms like a little child, and trust.'"

Questions: *Especially for men, it can seem that waiting and trusting — as opposed to being active — are signs of weakness. What can I learn about waiting and trusting in God? Do I need to do that more? How can this give me encouragement and strength?*

May 11: Shouting for Joy?

*Shout for joy to God, all the earth;
sing the glory of his name;
give to him glorious praise!
Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds!"*

*Come and see what God has done:
he is awesome in his deeds toward the children of man.
He turned the sea into dry land;
they passed through the river on foot.
There did we rejoice in him...*

*For you, O God, have tested us;
you have tried us as silver is tried.
You brought us into the net;
you laid a crushing burden on our backs;
you let men ride over our heads;
we went through fire and through water;
yet you have brought us out to a place of abundance.
Psalms 66:1-3, 5-6, 10-12 (ESV)*

"Paradoxical though it be, only that man is at rest who attains it through conflict..."

"It is not generally the prosperous one, who has never sorrowed, who is strong and at rest. His quality has never been tried, and he knows not how he can stand even a gentle shock. He is not the safest sailor who never saw a tempest; he will do for fair-weather service, but when the storm is rising, place at the important post the man who has fought out a gale, who has tested the ship, who knows her hulk sound, her rigging strong..."

Questions: *How might God be allowing difficulties in order to strengthen me? Am I interested in peace, being at rest in God? Can I relate at all to the paradox that this daily reading speaks about? Can I see any way that God is strengthening my ability to find peace in Him because of the storm that I am in?*