

Is 'Faith' a Blind Leap in the Dark?

Stephano retires from work. Maria is exasperated to find her personal space suddenly invaded by her husband. Feeling somewhat aggrieved Maria complains to her female confidant: "On my wedding day I married Stephano for better or for worse, but I didn't say for lunch as well!"

For a Christian woman to marry 'her man' who, from that day, will become her lifelong spouse, is an act of faith. Faith in him. Trust in him. Belief in him. She says "I do" on her wedding day believing in, trusting in 'her man' to love her as Christ loved the church. She believes her husband will be considerate, treat her with respect, acknowledge she is equally an heir to the gracious gift of life/salvation. That's a huge act of faith.

For a Christian man to marry 'his girl' who, from that day, will become his lifelong spouse, is an act of faith. Faith in her. Trust in her. Belief in her. He says, "I do" on his wedding day believing in, trusting in, 'my girl,' making a commitment to love her as Christ loved the church. He believes she will love, respect and honour him. That's a huge act of faith.

Yet often that 'Act of Faith' turns sour. Either one or both spouses may end up very disillusioned. The dream on the wedding day completely shattered. Their faith in a fellow human being destroyed by broken promises, unfaithfulness, abuse, sin. Faith is replaced with a haunting fear that no one is to be trusted.

Imagine at age 75, married, having no children, being told by God: "pack up, leave, I'll be your GPS, trust me, and by the way Abraham, you will become the father of a great nation!" Think what his neighbours must have said: "Abram, are you out of your mind?" "Where did you say you are moving to?" "You don't know?" "You claim God says your descendants are going to be more numerous than the stars!" "Ridiculous." "Sarah is an old woman." "Come on man, get real."

Despite this chorus of protests Abraham packs up and moves out. Allows God to be his GPS. The Bible records: "Abram believed the LORD, and God credited it to him as righteousness" (Genesis 15:6). ". . . being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised." This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." Faith in God is the decisive factor.

Without faith it is impossible to please God! There is no substitute for faith (Hebrews 11:6). We must believe that God exists. This is basic. But belief that God is real is not enough in itself. After all, demons have that sort of faith (James 2:19). We are also to have a conviction about God's character. The belief "that he rewards those who earnestly seek him." As Barclay puts it, "We must believe, not only that God exists, but that God also cares." Without that deep conviction, faith in the biblical sense is not a possibility. Faith is a committal of our whole being to God - a rest in God for one's total future. That's not a leap in the dark. Why? Because of who God is.