

If any of you lacks wisdom

Adapted from the original article written on 3 August 2003 at the height of the farm invasions in Zimbabwe. Now sent out as a lesson for the people of South Africa and other countries experiencing trouble.

Jas 1:5 “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

1:6 “But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.

1:7 “For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord,

1:8 “being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”

Dear friends,

As many of you know, our country (Zimbabwe) is facing another crisis - the lack of hard cash. Because of the galloping inflation, people are now needing to walk around with thick wads of \$500 notes to purchase even the smallest of their needs, and the government printers have fallen far behind in physically supplying the billions of bank notes that are required. We were not able to draw any wages for our factory workers or our farm workers on Friday. Our names have been put on a list at the bank, and we are at the bottom of the second page of a list of names. That means that many thousands of workers have gone without wages for the month-end or weekend. That is a serious crisis, and fuel for violence.

The question for us as Christians is, *“What can we do to help?”* If the Scriptures and Christianity are relevant, *and they are*, then they must be relevant for crises situations like these. The Scripture in James,

quoted above, has been coming to me over and over again. I can kick myself for not being more sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in time for this crisis. I was aware of the impending crises, and had started making provisional plans for my staff, but was too slow in acting on it. It caught me quite unprepared.

I have been asking the Lord for wisdom in solving this cash problem, and of course, as always, the solution the Lord gave me was very simple. God always makes a way for us in the desert. We should never despair or sink into a complaining mode like the Israelites in the wilderness. There is a way out of the mud! For the present cash crises, the answer came very simply.

“Purchase in bulk from a wholesaler the typical groceries which the workers need, paying for it by cheque, of course. Then sell the groceries to the workers on credit - so each worker can purchase only up to the value of their wages.”

The prices for the goods would be much cheaper than what they would pay individually. The workers would then be able to use the groceries they needed and sell the rest on the street where there was some cash available and make some extra profit on the sales.

That way they could increase their own income, as well as obtain cash for the paying of rent, etc. In fact, even their rent could be paid in the form of groceries - thus entering a barter trade where hard cash was not needed. So, in one go, the workers were benefitted much more than they would have in normal circumstances. Well, that is the way that the Lord supplies us, isn't it?

Folks, I believe that we as Christians should always be seeking wisdom. In this crooked world, things are tough. However, the Scriptures make many promises, which we should believe and stand upon. Here is one such promise - King David writing:

Psa 37:25 "I have been young, and now I am old: Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his decedents begging bread."

How is it that God provides? The Scripture shows me that God provides a way. The following Scripture, from Isaiah, though referring to the coming of the Messiah, establishes for us a principle of how God works.

Isa 40:3 "Clear the way for YHWH in the wilderness; make smooth in the desert a highway for our God."

Again and again, we see examples of how God wonderfully prepares a way for His people *in the wilderness*. The way He led the people of Israel through the desert for 40 years is a brilliant example. Any natural-thinking army quartermaster would have told you that to lead three million people into the desert would be a suicide mission. It is impossible to provide for such a large group in such a dry, arid place. Yet God did it! And not only was it for a few days of travel, it was for 40 years that He supplied all their needs. Moses' testimony at the end of these 40 years was:

Deut 29:5 "... Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandal has not worn out on your foot."

Earlier on, Moses adds some more:

Deut 8:2 "And you shall remember all the way which YHWH your God led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not."

8:3 "And He humbled you and let you go hungry and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of YHWH."

8:4 *“Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.*

8:5 *“Thus you are to know in your heart that YHWH your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son.*

8:6 *“Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of YHWH your God, to walk in His ways, and to fear Him.”*

So, God commands us to walk in His *ways*. What are His *ways*? He makes *a way* in the wilderness. As much as we can see from hindsight how God had wonderfully prepared a way for the people of Israel, those people who were right in the situation did not see God's purposes and kept on complaining over every new trial they had to face.

Criticism and complaining will close your eyes to God's amazing provision just waiting there around the corner for you!

To find God's answer, we are instructed to seek Him for wisdom. In Proverbs 2:1-10, God instructs us to seek for wisdom with all our heart as if we are seeking for *“hidden treasures”* (verse 4). The Lord then makes this wonderful statement in verse 7:

Prov 2:7 “He stores up sound wisdom for the upright ...”

This tells me that there is a whole storehouse full of wisdom to be had, and any of us can tap into that amazing resource. If I read the passage in Deuteronomy correctly, then I see that God purposefully allowed them to go hungry - to face a crisis - so that He could direct them towards His storehouse. He wanted them *to learn how to seek Him* in their times of crises, so that He could show them His great and mighty wonders.

Moses sought Him every time, and He provided. Yet for most of those people who saw God act, their heart remained hardened, and their

mouths were just full of complaining all the time. *Complaining is not God's way to blessing. Faith is!*

Paul warns the Hebrews of this:

Heb 4:1 "Therefore let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it."

4:2 "For indeed we have had the good news preached to us, just as they also (the Israelites in the wilderness); but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard."

4:3 "For we who have believed enter that rest ..."

So we come back to our opening Scripture speaking of wisdom,

Jas 1:5 "But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind."

1:6 "For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord ..."

We understand then that even *wisdom is received by faith*. With faith, there is *no room for complaining*. Faith sees God's provision in the wilderness before the solution to the crises has become a reality. It is faith that looks at a crisis, and says, *"There must be a way through this."* By faith, we then seek the answer from the Lord. The answer can come to you in several different ways.

Firstly, it can come directly through Scriptures. Or, secondly, it can come through godly counsel. This latter part is something that few Christians tap in to. I know of several people who have had disasters in their lives which they could have easily avoided if only they had

asked for help and advice. There are people near you who have been endowed with godly wisdom. To go through a crisis and not ask for advice is really foolishness. King Jehoshaphat, in facing a severe crisis, counseled his people as follows:

2Chron 20:20 "... Put your trust in YHWH your God, and you will be established. Put your trust in His prophets and succeed."

We see here, and in many other passages, that God uses counselors - His prophets - who know His Word, to give direction to His people. Use them. They are there for your benefit. Don't be afraid to ask, and for goodness' sake, when they give you good counsel, ***follow it!***

That wise woman of which Solomon spoke in the last chapter of Proverbs, had learned the secret of finding God's ***way*** for her and her household. I quote here only a few extracts. It is worth reading the whole chapter:

Prov 31:10 "An excellent wife who can find, for her worth is far above jewels ..."

31:21 "She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet ..."

31:25 "Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she smiles at the future."

Folks, God has prepared a ***way*** for us. He has stored up sound wisdom for you so that you will not need to fear the cold. There is ***a way through the wilderness***. We can ***smile at the future***. We just need to open our eyes, search for ***the way***, and by faith, walk in it.

With much love to you all,

Henry D Jackson