

"Barren Rejoice!"

By

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From Nothing to Life and Abundance

It's ageless past. What will later be called the universe is a vast empty space. Nothing moves. Nothing breathes. It's total silence. You could hear a pin drop! Suddenly from nowhere comes a jangling crashing sound, lights flash across in an iridescent display of brightness. A mighty voice has roared across the vast emptiness of time 'Let there be!' Giant luminous orbs appear in the atmosphere, earth appears, light appears, sea is formed out of earth, vegetation appear, sea life appear, animals appear. Man appears made in the likeness of God Almighty.

The emptiness is bustling with life and goodness. The voice of the Creator has replaced nothingness with fulness, nonexistence with abundance of life. He will always be God:

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God (Ps 90:2).

And He blessed man, and unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth (Gen. 1:28).

After the devastation of flood which depopulated the earth, God repeated the same command to Noah and his family: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. 9:1).

Again, fulness, abundance.

Over the passage of several hundred years, our Creator God who is ever active and seems never short of plans and ideas called one man "alone" and, when he responded to His call with faith, "blessed him, and increased him" (Isa. 51:2; Gen. 24:1, 35). The man's name was Abram, a nondescript member of a big family who was even childless. Yet God promised him descendants as numerous as "the dust of the earth" (Gen. 13:16) and the stars in the heavens (Gen. 15:5). It was a mind-blowing, mega promise which effectively made Abraham "the heir of the world" (Rom. 4:13).

Abraham died having only two children. And only one as the child of promise, the son who would carry on the legacy of the covenantal mega promise of countless descendants and blessings. This son's name was Isaac.

Isaac's inheritance of the promise hit a bad snag, however. A severe famine posed a serious threat:

¹ And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar.

² And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of:

³ Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father;

⁴ And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen.26:1-4).

¹² Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year [of famine] an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him.

¹³ And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great:

¹⁴ For he had possession of flocks, and possessions of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him.

The general condition of the famine had no effect on Isaac's agricultural activities. The year of famine was, for him, a year of plenty and greatness. For "the LORD blessed him".

This God has a way with scarcity and with nothingness in a way no one else can rival. He has the uncanny ability to create zillions out of zero! To turn emptiness into fulness. The year of famine was a season of laughter in the home of Isaac whose name means 'laughter'.

A son of this man Isaac, his own 'child of promise', fled from home because his twin brother sought to kill him. He fled carrying the legacy of the covenantal promise as its current successor. But he fled not with possessions but as a lone wayfarer with nothing but the clothes on his back and the staff in his hand. On his return to his native land from Haran, his uncle's place, God had enlarged Jacob to own "two bands" of possessions. He himself testified to the LORD in prayer:

I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands (Gen. 32:10).

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob's God is the One who gives the barren more children than the fertile woman.

¹ Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.

² Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes;

³ For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited (Isa. 54:1-3).

The woman is still "barren" but she has been told to "break forth into singing"! A miracle is in the works. She should put herself in the mood of a happy mother. The LORD is about to

bless her with "more children" than the children of the pampered fecund wife! Not just in terms of quantity but in terms of quality!

She is going to bear a prodigious child, a child with brighter prospects; a potential man of renown. Her child is not just going to add to the birth statistics; he's going to make history! Her child belongs to the class of children of former barren women like Rachel and Hanna. They attain fame for all time. A Joseph or a Samuel.

The time to rejoice is when you are barren--when you lack and are in need. That's the time to break into songs of joy because God is about to do His wonderful work again: Create abundance out of nothing! So enlarge your dwelling place; imagine big things; expect big things. The size of the blessing God is about to pour out to you will blow your mind! From your shrinking opportunities, you are suddenly going to expand--on the right and on the left!

He fills the void in your life.

God Provides both the Seed and the Food on the Dining Table

As the creative Word of God, Christ created the fish in the sea and the grain on the field, but He still felt it necessary to provide supper for thousands of empty stomachs who had been with Him all day by blessing two fish and five loaves. They were barely enough for one man (it was a lad's lunch pack!), but He applied His miracle multiplying skills to it and they fed 5000 and the leftovers filled 12 baskets!

God is a multiplier. He hates scarcity and emptiness. He multiplies by His power out of His love and benevolence. That is His way. And it springs from the largeness of His heart. He puts His heart in giving to the world and to those He loves, and it shows in the result(s)--there's always an abundance of His blessings!

The secret is a principle He has taught us in His word but which many take for granted:

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap (Gal. 6:7).

So how do we sow bountifully to reap bountifully?

Giving 'bountifully' God's way is not about quantity but the quality of giving; the spirit behind the giving. It's the thought that goes into the giving. It is generosity; giving unstintingly:

2 Cor. 9:6-11

⁶ But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

⁷ Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

⁹(As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.

¹⁰ Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)

¹¹ Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

It's the heart that's key. What the heart decides on, so give *willingly*. The attitude accompanying the giving is the window into the heart. Are you giving from a pure heart, from a willing heart? Not grudgingly or under compulsion because everybody else is doing it?

You are the kind of giver God loves! And He loves you not with mere words but with deeds. Hence His grace attending your giving. The grace is that you will always be self-sufficient in all things to be able to give out more (obviously because of a growing surplus!).

Largesse is His way because He's ever righteous. He not only supplies the seed but also sees to it that the seed expands into a store house of food. So He will bless your seed of giving. He will multiply it so that you become a store house of blessing "in everything". Then our hearts will overflow with gratitude to God.

God is a multiplier and a restorer. He comes into your life not to leave it empty but filled and fulfilled. In Joel 2:25-26, He promises: "²⁵ And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you. ²⁶ And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and My people shall never be ashamed".

So what has the devil stolen from you? Good health, a well paying job, family happiness? You have no worries. So long as you believe in Him, restoration is on the way, and He will add to it.

The seed you have sown today by way of offering - if it was done from a willing heart - is all the token evidence He seeks of your faith to expand you in all aspects of fruitfulness. He's the faithful God who says to the barren--while yet childless--"REJOICE"! Because He both delights in and is able to expand her.

Let not your circumstances dampen your spirit. REJOICE! You are in the presence of God Almighty. You have no lack!