

A YEAR OF DOING THAT GOD-BREATHED THING..... FOR THE FIRST TIME

There is a country western song that I heard for the first time in late summer of 2017. The song is by Darius Rucker. The one line in that song that really jumped out at me was the question: "When was the last time you did something for the first time?" This is a relevant question for anyone, but I felt the Lord really spotlighted that question in my own heart. For probably several years, I have had this feeling that I should begin "bloging" on our ministry website. Brothers and Sisters, I guess it took God speaking to me through that country western song to get me to sit here at my computer and begin bloging. So here goes.....

When was the last time YOU did something for the first time. For you Christians, how many times has the Holy Spirit been saying to you to begin - for the first time - to engage in that activity He put on your heart quite some time ago? All through scripture, we see God directing His servants to do things they had never done before. Consider God's servant Moses. I mean really! Deliver Israel from the Egyptian captivity? Confront Pharaoh who could have him killed with the wave of his hand? And yet Moses was willing to do what seemed impossible. Granted, Moses was reluctant (being the stuttering man who never enrolled in debate class or speech classes)..... He could even be accused of begging God to use his brother Aaron instead. Yet, God used Moses to do amazing miracles.... not the least of which was the parting of the Red Sea! Then there was Abram (later became Abraham). God told him (Genesis 12:1-3) to "get out of your country, from your family and your father's house..... and go to a land that I will show you." (NKJV). That little phrase "your country" is a key to what needed to happen in Abram's life. God was going to give him a new name and a new family and a new country - a promised land, and God was going to become Abram's father, but Abram had to first leave the influence of an environment that was filled with idol worship and all it's perversions. But in order for God to accomplish that, Abram had to do something for the first time. He had to leave the familiar. What about that little shepherd boy David? Sure he had fought lions and bears (I Samuel 17:34-37), but giants? I don't think so. And yet David did have & "first times" - before the giant came along - that built a foundation of boldness and confidence. I suspect there were even "first times" before the lions and bears. My point is that these and many other individuals in the scriptures were able to break through the wall of fear, doubt, and unbelief that God would help them, that the God who allowed (and perhaps occasionally created) over-the-top and beyond established comfort zones... specific situations - that would be growth situations for His kids or His "soon to be kids" would show up and be there with them.

As Doris and I minister to people who have spent time in either jail or prison or maybe both, we hear time and time again that they are thankful that God allowed them to get caught and that they had found Jesus in jail or prison. They say that if

God had allowed them to keep doing the same things like doing the drugs on the street or to keep stealing or running in gangs, they would surely be even deeper into drug or alcohol addiction, or even be dead now, but God allowed a situation they didn't want so they could ultimately be set free.

So many times, we are victims and prisoners of our routine. We never break out and embark on that new adventure that's waiting for us to discover. When I was involved in a Christian ministry called White Water Adventures, I became a white water rafting guide. While in training, I was taught and shown how there are "eddies" along the sides of a river that was filled with white water adventures. These eddies are calm places that can be good resting places, places where you can regroup, discuss problems issues, re-hydrate, etc. before getting back into the main river current. However, some eddies that are good for those reasons and are generally very easy to get into from the main river current, are also so "constructed" in such a way that you have difficulty breaking out of them and getting back into the mainstream of the flow of the river so you can reach your ultimate destiny (the take out point). In fact, the boundary between the eddie and the main river current is called the "eddie-line". In eddies with strong eddie-lines, it takes a unified "push" with paddles from the crew to forcibly break through the eddie-line. If insufficient force is used, you actually move at the same speed as the main river channel for a while. You may even be fooled into thinking you broke out of the eddie, but when you get to the downstream edge of the eddie, you find yourself going around the backside of the eddie and then actually moving in an upstream direction! (literally a "one step forward- two steps back" kind of reversal of direction). It's at that point you realize, you hadn't really broke free. In my book, *The Temple, A Prophet, and the River* (available on Amazon in both print and as a Kindle version, as well as with Barnes and Noble, etc), I make the statement, "If the river you're traveling in is always the same - predictable- then open your eyes, because you're in a water park, not out in the wild!" I mean really, how many times have you floated on that "lazy river" of life? You know every bend and turn. How many times have you done that same water slide? You know how to do that cannon ball to splash those guys and girls sitting on the edge of the water..... So when are you going to jump in that wild river called your destiny? How about doing something new that causes you to be on the edge or maybe even a little past the edge of your comfort zone and trusting that God who inspired it will help you and that He will show up? In Jeremiah 33:3, God makes us a promise. He tells us: 1. "Call to Me" 2. "I will answer you" 3. "I will show you great and mighty things". He promises us that He WILL show up!

Finally, in Numbers 14:24, God testifies of Caleb, "because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it". If you follow God in that new thing..... in that thing He had made to be stirring in your spirit - deep down inside - maybe since you were a child - then God will bring you into that land.... that destiny.... that fulfillment of your dream, and you will have a testimony, an inheritance (of demonstrated faithfulness of God to bring you through and enable you to do what

you once thought could never happen in your life). This amazing inheritance, then you can pass on and inspire the next generation and the ones after that to follow God. So in the words of Darius Rucker: "When was the last time you did something for the first time?" Maybe in my next installment, I'll share some of the amazing adventures God has given us that were "firsts" just in the last couple of years. As a tease, I'll just hint that they may involve, Niagra Falls, Hong Kong, Toronto, Web Casting..... Blessings in the Lord, Papa Paul