

“Shift It Forward”

A Lord’s Flock General Assembly Topic

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“What really matters?” is a very important question for each of us, because it determines our focus and the direction of our lives. However, changes happen, and when they do, we might lose focus, if we do not know the answer to this question. St. Paul never expected to be preaching from a prison cell. However, what mattered to him was preaching about the Word of Jesus, so he confronted his situation with hope. He accepted his situation and moved forward, “Indeed, I shall continue to rejoice.” St. Paul teaches us to shift from explanation to great expectations and how to find hope to move forward.

1. What Does St. Paul Teach about Hope (Phil. 1:18-27)?

- As long as Christ is preached, he did not care about all the negative things that were thrown at him, nor about what people said or thought about him. “What difference does it make, as long as in every way ... Christ is proclaimed? And because of this I rejoice” (Phil. 1:18).
- Whatever circumstances or changes we face in life, as long as we believe in Him, we are headed in the right direction. “... have sufficient courage so that now as always, Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death” (Phil. 1:20).
- St. Paul used the word “WILL” 10 times in different verses because he had an eager expectation in Jesus Christ and he saw hope in his dark hours.
- Despite of all the things we are going through, we should expect great things from the Lord. “I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed...” (Phil. 1:20).

2. How can we “shift our faith forward”?

“Apo-kara-dokia” – is made-up of 3 Greek words: “Apo” means to shift or to turn with concentration; “Kara” means head; “Dokia” means to stretch forward.

2.1 Shift our head intentionally to God’s purpose and to stretch our faith forward.

2.2 Let us not be stuck in what was, what is or what’s now. Instead, let us expect what’s ahead, our God-given destiny towards healing, fullness, favors, open doors and our mission.

2.3 To change our lives, we have to shift it, especially in those tight spots when it is so hard to do it. Forget about trying to get an explanation because Jesus is working in our situation, even if we do not see it yet.

2.4 When the devil comes with all the lies, let us fight with faith, what God says in His Word.

2.5 We may still be struggling with our pains, our troubles, but we have our courage and our faith that God will fight our battles for us.

Conclusion: Let us never doubt God’s power. Our faith must be a functional-faith. Let us all together declare, “apo-kara-dokia”! We need to shift our thinking, stretch our faith forward, and expect great things from Him. He will achieve infinitely more than our greatest request.

Reflection:

1. What really matters to you? What situation is breaking your focus?
2. How can you bring back your focus to what matters?
3. What aspects in your life do you need to shift and stretch forward to faith?

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