

A GODLY PERSPECTIVE

A Godly perspective breeds gratitude, perseverance and hope in every circumstance.

When the servant of the man of God rose early in the morning and went out, behold an army with horses and chariots was all around the city. And the servant said, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" He (Elisha) said, "Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." Then Elisha prayed and said, "O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see." So the Lord opened the eyes of the young man and he saw and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha." 2 Kings 6:15-17

When we find ourselves in the midst of trying circumstances, we can often benefit from a shift in our perspective. Elisha's servant received such a gift in 2 Kings 6:8-23 as he was given the supernatural ability to see an angelic army that surrounded the invading Aramean army. The vision set his heart at peace and gave him courage.

If you're like me, you may be feeling a little discouraged. Just as you felt a rhythm beginning to settle in, our circumstances have changed anew. When this happens repeatedly, minor annoyances can start to feel major (is all the TP really gone again?) and the limitations we experience can fatigue us in surprising ways. It's in these moments when we need to take a step back and invite a new, godly perspective to guide us.

FARSHID FATHI

Recently, I heard a devotional that provided just such a perspective shift. It came from Farshid Fathi, an Iranian brother in Christ who spent five years in prison for his faith. He spoke into this cultural moment and I believe it will bless you.

Here's a little background on Farshid: On December 10, 2010, Iranian believer Farshid Fathi was arrested by members of Iran's intelligence ministry and locked up in the infamous Evin prison. Taken from his wife and two children, he endured solitary confinement and harsh interrogation sessions for more than a year. He finally stood trial in February 2012 and was convicted of "action against the national security" simply for being a Christian leader. Farshid was sentenced to six years in prison, but was released on December 21, 2015.

ISOLATED BUT NOT ALONE

In this reflection, Farshid challenges us to find reasons to praise God, to trust in him and to persevere through the trials we face. What does that look like for you today? When you walk across your family room, pick up the Scriptures, or call a friend, prayerfully ask God for the ability to move with His perspective. Invite Him to give you a spirit of blessing and abundance and remove any spirit of restriction or scarcity.

One final thought: Farshid was isolated, but he was not alone. He knew that believers around the globe were aware of his situation and lifting him up in prayer. Similarly, we can take comfort in the fact that we are united to Christ and to one another by the power of the Holy Spirit and through prayer. This thought is captured well in an excerpt from a poem Farshid wrote while in prison called "My Wilderness."

My wilderness seems to be a lonely trip, but I am not alone - My beloved is with me.

Not only Him, but my faithful brothers and sisters, I carry them all in my heart.

- Farshid Fathi

REFLECTION:

- What struck you most about Farshid's testimony?
- In what area of life do you need a godly perspective shift? What will cause you to praise God today?
- The most important thing Farshid came to realize was that "it's all about God." His life – even his imprisonment – was ultimately about glorifying God and not satisfying his own desires or fulfilling his own vision for life. What visions, preferences, or goals might God be asking you to lay down so that you can glorify Him?
- Close by praying for imprisoned and persecuted Christians who have experienced loss and injury. Ask that they might be encouraged to be faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ in the midst of great trials. Ask God to teach you by their example.