

EVERY STEP FORWARD (Is a Meeting with God)

We like to know where we're going. Before we take a step, we want some assurance that it's the right one. We want to know where it will lead, what it will accomplish, and whether it will be worth it. Preferably, we'd like God to show us the whole thing first. Then we'll move.



But that doesn't seem to be how faith usually works.

Throughout Scripture, people encounter God on the other side of a step they had to take without knowing exactly what would happen next. Abraham left home without knowing where he was going. Peter climbed out of a perfectly good boat. The disciples left nets, tables, careers, and familiar lives because Jesus said, "Follow me."

Again and again, movement came before clarity. We want God to reveal the path so we can take the step. Often, God uses the step to reveal the path.

That doesn't mean every step works out the way we hoped. Sometimes the door closes. Sometimes the idea fails. Sometimes we discover that what we were convinced would happen doesn't happen at all. Sometimes we realize we were wrong. Sometimes it blows up in our faces.

Faithfulness does not guarantee a cushy outcome.

Stephen knew that.

In the book of Acts, he faithfully spoke what God had given him to speak. The response wasn't applause, affirmation, or a successful ministry opportunity. They picked up stones. By almost every measurement we tend to use, the story went terribly wrong.

Except Stephen saw Jesus.

As the stones were coming, Stephen looked toward heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. His faithfulness didn't lead to the outcome any of us would have chosen. It led him to Jesus.

That changes the way I think about taking the next step. What if the purpose of a step of faith isn't always getting somewhere? What if sometimes the purpose is discovering Jesus there?

If the Kingdom really is near, we aren't stepping into empty territory hoping God eventually catches up with us. We are moving into a reality where He is already present and already at work. That means we can move differently. We can pay attention. We can follow our Holy Curiosity. We can move toward the person, the question, the tension, the opportunity, or the stirring we can't quite explain.

And if the harvest really is plentiful, there is already more happening around us than we can see. We don't have to manufacture an outcome. We take the step and pay attention to what it uncovers.

Maybe we find fruit.

Maybe resistance.

Maybe an unexpected conversation or a closed door.

Maybe we discover that one of our assumptions was completely wrong.

Maybe the step leaves us with more questions than answers.

And yes, sometimes it may hurt.

None of those automatically means we took the wrong step.

The question isn't, *"Did it work?"*

The real question is, *"Where did I meet Jesus in it?"*

Because a step of faith is not a transaction with God. We don't give Him our obedience in exchange for the outcome we wanted. We trust Him enough to move, and then we look for Him there.

Some encounters with Jesus may be waiting on the other side of a step we haven't taken yet. Not because we know where the step will lead, but because we know Who is already there.

Every step forward is an opportunity to meet God there.