

John Oswalt—Nothing has changed since the Garden of Eden. We do not wish to be told by our Creator that something is wrong for us when everything appears so delightful.

TRUST AND SURRENDER. From Abraham to the present the nature of faith has remained the same. We ask ourselves why God called Abraham to start journeying without knowing his precise destination (Genesis 12:1). It is because of the human problem. We want to decide what is right and wrong for ourselves. Nothing has changed since the Garden of Eden. We do not wish to be told by our Creator that something is wrong for us when everything appears so delightful. Neither do we wish to be told that something is good for us when it looks as though it is going to take a lot of effort and may actually bring us some pain. We want to hold the place of God in our lives and have God serve us, supplying our needs as we dictate. So faith always involves letting go of secure footholds and (apparent) certainties to do things God's way.

God's challenge to these people is to exercise faith first and let understanding come afterward.

As long as we first insist that everything about God's ways and plans be made completely intelligible to us before we decide to act on his invitation, we will never act.

If, however, we will surrender our right to decide what is best for us and allow God to determine that, we are on our way home. We have turned that most critical corner—the corner of surrender. Now we are allowing God to be the Creator and to dictate to us the terms under which we were made to operate. So God's invitation comes to all of us, not merely those who have never entered

a relationship with him.

To be sure, it comes to us as he desperately pleads with us to jump from that apparently secure tree of pride and self-sufficiency into his arms. It is a plea to jump from appearance to reality. The life outside of God is only apparently secure and abundant. It really has none of that to offer in the end. To remain in its hold is to choose loss and poverty. It is to live in defiance of the Holy One who made us. That way cannot possibly lead in any other direction but final loss. So God calls us to jump out of what is only an appearance into what is a reality. Come from hunger to food, from thirst to water, from sadness to joy, from death to life. The person debating whether to jump says, "But I already have food, and water, and joy, and life." The fruits of faith are only apparent after you have jumped. Then, looking back, you can say, "Oh my, what I thought I had was only an illusion."

But the invitation is also for those who have been living the life of faith for many years. One of the problems of living on earth is that the longer we live here, the more its ways become our ways. A child has no difficulty in believing in the unseen world; it is only adults who tend to "pooh-pooh" it. In the same way, a child has no difficulty in believing that God can do the impossible. It is only adults who feel they have to temper "childish enthusiasm."

[ALL QUOTES THIS PAGE ... Oswalt, J. N. (2003). Isaiah (pp. 602-604). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.]

THE SECRET AND HIDDEN WISDOM OF GOD

—Neither made for human adaptation—
—Nor to be measured by human minds—

these things God has revealed to us

no eye has seen

nor ear heard

nor the heart of man imagined

the gospel

the testimony of God

Christ crucified

the wisdom of God

the power of God

*"I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE."
(GOD)*

