

BaptistWay Bible Series for June 12: The sisterhood: Challenging unfairness

June 1, 2011

I am blessed with three beautiful little girls. They are a source of joy, happiness and inspiration to me ... who am I kidding, I am in over my head.

Many people come up with very spiritual and theologically demanding questions that they want to ask God when they get to heaven; I just want to know why God thought that I should be blessed with raising three girls. I know he must be laughing.

In all honesty, I thank God every day for my precious girls, but I also realize I am in trouble. Even though my oldest is only 8, I already am thinking about teenage years, dating, cars, college and marriage. And then I realize I have to deal with all of those things three different times. Thankfully, many of our adoring church members remind me of how beautiful my daughters are and with all sensitivity and wisdom tell me to "have fun with the dating scene."

As my wife and I raise our girls, we want them to be strong and courageous women who rely on the Lord to lead them through life. I want them to have every opportunity to experience the life God has given them, and I will do all I can to ensure all obstacles are removed from their journey.

The one obstacle I will stand up against more than any other is the obstacle of unfairness and discrimination. I am thankful we live in a country founded on freedom and aspiring to seek freedom for all, even though there still are strides to be made. Unfairness and discrimination still are a very real part of our world today, and we must be willing to stand up against these

obstacles.

In Numbers 27, we are introduced to five sisters; Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milkah and Tirzah. They were the daughters of Zelophehad who recently had died. The customs and traditions of the day were very male dominated, and women had very few rights and these women faced a crisis. Their father's passing and the fact they were not married meant they would lose all their inheritance.

This would not have been a problem had just a single one of them been born male, but the cultural norms dictated these five sisters be cast aside and pushed out of the way so another worthy individual, someone who happened to be born male, could assume their inheritance. Most people just accepted these cultural norms and probably did not even think about the unfairness, but Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milkah and Tirzah were willing to stand up against this cultural unfairness.

Standing up against injustice never is easy and should not be done lightly. These sisters were prepared and ready when they went to Moses. The sisters showed an amazing amount of faith. They were fighting for land that had not been won. The people were not in the Promised Land yet; in fact, they still were wandering in the desert. These women demonstrated their faith in God's promises and provision over their lives.

I believe their faith gave them the strength to stand up for what was right. The sisters also showed an amazing amount of courage. Approaching a leader such as Moses could not have been an easy task, especially when there were probably friends telling them just to drop it and accept their situation.

Finally, Zelophehad's daughters plainly presented the facts of their case and addressed the unfairness head on. Verse four reads, "Why should our father's name disappear from his clan because he had no son? Give us

property among our father's relatives." That is not easy to argue against.

Today, there still are many cases of unfairness and injustice throughout our world and country. Some are the result of cultural norms and some are blatant acts of prejudice. We need to be asking God to open our eyes to the unfairness around us.

Do we have faith in a God of justice like the sisters did? If we serve a God who confronts injustice and has proclaimed we all are made in his image, then we should seek justice and see people as God created them—equal.

We also need to have the courage to stand up for those who are being treated unfairly. The actions of Zelophehad's daughters were courageous and necessary, but why were others not standing up against this injustice? Proclaiming unfairness and calling for justice should not be the sole responsibility of those who are receiving the treatment. We should be sensitive to unfairness and stand up alongside those or for those who are vulnerable.

I encourage all of us to be aware of the unfairness around us. Even though we live in a wonderful country that has broken down many walls, there still is unfairness around us. The number of people in poverty in the United States continues to rise and there are still discrimination issues based on sex, race and social status. As long as humans are living together, there will be issues of unfairness. We all have been guilty of participating in or turning a blind eye toward unfairness, but we can start to make a difference.

I hope my girls will be as strong and courageous as Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milkah and Tirzah. These sisters' example is one all can follow.