RETROSPECTIVE REFLECTION ON FAITH VS PHILOSPHY & LOGIC

Introduction

Colossians 2:8 (Amplified Bible) reads:

See to it that no one carries you off as spoils or makes you yourselves captive by his so-called philosophy and intellectualism and vain deceit (idle fancies and plain nonsense), following human tradition (men's ideas of material rather than the spiritual world), just crude notions following rudimentary and elemental teachings of the universe and disregarding the teachings of Christ the Messiah.

Philosophy is the study of fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence which acts as guiding principles for behaviour. Though not the same, philosophy and logic tend to be the same when it comes to application in real life.

On the other hand, faith is acting on what one has believed through the power of Jesus Christ the Messiah.

Philosophy and Logic work very well in life but in matters of faith and especially Christian life, philosophy and logic do not work at all because faith defies logic and philosophy. It is very impossible to use philosophy and logic to explain matters of faith though it is only possible to use logical examples to understand some elements of faith, like parables.

Colossians 2:8 quoted above, just like Isaiah 29:14, 1 Corinthians 1:19-20, 1 Corinthians 3:19-20 and 1 Timothy 6:20, God advises Christians to disregard philosophy and logic in matters of faith.

Those that are able and understand Tumbuka, listen to a *Ntchidongo* from Moto Album (2006) by Mte Wambali Mkandawire, Malawi's multi-Award winning Afro Jazz Maestro and one of the very few artists to be recognised by World Intellectual Property Organisation for his own sound in music industry. There is a verse in the *Ntchidongo* song that expounds on 1 Corinthians 1:19-20.

Faith Defying Logic/Philosophy in the Bible

In Genesis 5:24, it was because of faith that Enoch never saw death but was just taken up to heaven. While philosophy and logic tell us that he was supposed to die and be buried. Logically it does not add up, but faith wise it totally adds up.

In Genesis Chapter 8, it was faith that made Noah build the ark when logically there was no weather forecast that there would be heavy rains for so many days. And it was faith that made Noah endure all the mockery from those that lived on logic and philosophy and not faith.

In the same Genesis 8, it is faith that prevented lions for eating antelopes or zebras or bushbucks in the ark while logic and philosophy tells us that in no way a lion can stay for 40 days without eating and much more with all the food around it. It was faith that prevented snakes from getting to the heels of the Noah family and other animals that were in the ark.

In Genesis Chapter 12, it was faith that forced Abraham to leave his land, relatives, belongings etc and went to a land that he never knew of but just because God told him to go. Logic/philosophy tells us that if you are to relocate, you must have prior knowledge of that land, how you will survive, where to get what and what etc.

In Genesis Chapter 13, it was faith that made Abraham let Lot choose the best fertile land for himself and he was left with not so good land but Abraham prospered still while logic tells us that Lot was the one who was supposed to prosper much more owing to the fertile land that he had chosen.

In Genesis Chapter 21, it was faith the brought about the birth of Isaac when Sarah was past the age of conceiving while logic and philosophy tells us that it is impossible to conceive in old age.

It Genesis Chapter 26, it is faith that made Isaac have plenty in the land of Gerar when everyone else failed due to adverse weather while logic and philosophy tells us that it was practically impossible for Isaac to produce and harvest under those circumstances.

It was faith that made Moses believe what was coming out of the burning bush. It was faith that made Moses approach Pharaoh with just a walking stick. It was faith that made Moses believe that by striking the sea with a stick, the waters will part ways. It was faith that made Moses believe that by striking the rock, water will gash out of the rock. Logic and philosophy tell us all this is impossible.

In Joshua 6, it was faith that led Joshua and his team to go around the walls of Jericho singing songs of praise and worship in order to break the walls of Jericho. Logically that is a nonstarter because you need jack hammers etc to break walls.

In Joshua 10, it was faith that caused the sun to stand still over Gibeon until he defeated the Amorites while logic and philosophy tell us that the sun cannot stand still.

It was faith that led David, a small boy with a sling and a stone, to face Goliath the giant and warrior and defeat him for David said “I come to you in the name of the Lord

my God". Logic and philosophy tell us that David was not in a position to face Goliath as he was not a warrior and not armed.

In 1 Kings 17, it was faith that made the widow of Zarephath make bread for Elijah using the very last flour and oil she had believing that her flour and oil will never finish until God sends rain in Israel. And it happened like that. Logic and philosophy tell us that it was madness to think like that.

In 1 Kings 18, it was faith that made Elijah tell Ahab that there will be heavy rains just because he saw a cloud as big as a man's hand. Logic and philosophy tell us otherwise.

I can go on and on but let me also use some examples in the New Testament.

It was faith that made Jesus Christ defy the gravitational force and walk on water while logic and philosophy tell us that one cannot defy gravity.

It was faith that made Jesus Christ speak to the storm to calm it when logic and philosophy tell us that storms do not have ears to listen.

It was faith that raised Lazarus from the dead after 4 days while logic and philosophy tell us that by that time the body of Lazarus should have started decomposing by then..

In Acts 3, it was faith that healed the lame beggar using simple words and he attests to that in verse 16. Logic and philosophy tell us that only medication and physiotherapy can do that.

In Acts 12, it was faith that released Peter from prison while logic tell us that it was impossible.

In Acts 28, it was faith that prevented Paul from death after being bitten by a viper while logic and philosophy tell us that he should have died shortly from venom.

I can go on and on but let me give some personal testimonies.

How God used Faith to defy Logic & Philosophy in my Life

In 2004, I was ministering at Army Secondary School SCOM Branch and the work of God was just too much as many students wanted to be prayed for. I wanted to go back to the campus, The Polytechnic, to study for I had end of year exams the following day. I arrived late and tired. I said God, you forced me to work today beyond what I planned and against my plans. I will not fail the exams. In that night I woke up 4 times and God led me to a Thermodynamics book written by Featherstone. I was shown four examples and I practiced. In the morning, when I received the Question Paper, there were 7 questions and each student was supposed to answer any 5. The four examples that I was shown at night were part of the seven questions. I just went straight to those

4 and got them right and I knew that was already 80%. I did not even bother with the fifth one as that was already a distinction. Faith defying logic/philosophy.

In 2012, I saw a vacancy 2 weeks after the closing date for receiving applications. Logic/philosophy told me that there is no chance because the time for receiving applications was gone. Faith told me to apply. I applied. 3 weeks later I got the interview invitation. I went. I was successful and got the job. If I followed the logical/philosophical thinking, I would have missed that opportunity.

In 2015 I was in driving back to Windhoek from Ekwendeni. I met Samuel Mayuni at SCOM North Offices who asked if I could come the following weekend to be one of the speakers at the SCOM UCS regional Conference. I said, “I do not have money to fly in with my family next week, but I have faith that God will provide so I am coming”. Logic/philosophy told me that it is madness to accept that invitation when you know the time is not on your side and your account balance is zero. But faith told me, all things are possible. I was driving back worried about where to get funds for the trip. Upon entering Namibia through Katima Mulilo boarder, I just got a message from someone who wanted my assistance with some technical aspects of his project. To spice it all he had already deposited into my account 50% deposit for the work. And that amount was enough for air tickets for my family to fly in and out of Malawi for the preaching trip.

I can go on and on but on, but these are enough.

Cultivating Faith in the Middle of Philosophy & Logic

1 Corinthians 2:19-20 (Amplified Bible) reads:

For it is written, I will baffle and render useless and destroy the learning of the learned and the philosophy of the philosophers and the cleverness of the clever and the discernment of the discerning; I will frustrate and nullify them and bring them to nothing. Where is the wise man, the philosopher? Where is the scribe, the scholar? Where is the investigator, the logician or the debater of this present time and age? Has not God shown up the nonsense and the folly of this world’s wisdom?

This is just a reminder to us that we cannot depend on logic and philosophy to please God and live a victorious Christian life. The more we depend on logic/philosophy than faith, the more we are doomed. God calls us to have faith in him and He wants unquestionable faith that is not subjected to philosophy and logic. Jesus Christ puzzled philosophers just like Apostle Paul. They used spiritually driven wisdom to leave philosophers speechless. Many confused Jesus Christ and some of the apostles as great philosophers. But they were just faith driven and used spiritually driven wisdom

to present their facts.

The study of the word of God and constant prayer are crucial when it comes to cultivating faith. We live in a world where we are surrounded by logical thinking. The devil has infiltrated the systems such that any contrary view that defy norms and logic is taken with contempt. In addition, those that have understood the power of faith fail to articulate their facts out of fear because the majority are grounded in logic, including Christians. Others even fail to testify what God has done in their lives out of fear because the miracle they have seen does not make sense, logically. They forget it is called a miracle because it defies logic. And that is what faith is all about. It is only the study of the word of God and prayer that can make Christians rely more and more on faith than logic and philosophy as far as their spiritual lives are concerned.

Consider the following as I conclude:

- We get educated in order to serve God better through studying of the word of God because without education, we cannot read anything as such we cannot study the Bible. That is why the missionaries brought Christianity and other services like education, hospitals etc. We do not get educated in order to get intoxicated with logic and philosophy and defy faith in the long run.
- When we leave our homes, we lock them and close doors not that we have less faith in the protection power of God and that we rely on our locks and doors BUT because we do not want to put our God to test and deliberately tempt thieves who can see that there are no people and the doors are wide open.
- Similarly, when there are worldly threats, we take precautions not out of fear but rather not to deliberately test God BUT those precautions must not define our way of Christian life and norms as the devil hides in such worldly threats to prevent the work of God from going on.

Remember, we plunder hell in order to populate heaven. We touch heaven in order to change earth. Nsungwi ikhale nsungwi, nzimbe ikhale nzimbe (Undiluted Gospel).