

Turning Bad Situations and Joyful Ones

Philippians 1:12-20

Intro

Our circumstances determine our disposition (spiritual or not). Why? Because our perspective is not where it ought to be - we don't have the full picture of our lives.

We have to see things from God's view point - the divine view point. When we don't respond to life in an un-Godly manner.

It's not what happens to us but our response to what has occurred.

John 15 - the beauty marks of the believer: 1. love 2. joy 3. sacrifice? 4. fruit bearing? 5. ???

Hudson Taylor - Spiritual Secrets - "It's not how great the pressure is, but where it lies. See that it never comes between you and Christ. Then, when it comes it will push you into his [embrace]"

Chuck Swindoll - "Life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it"

God majors on doing the impossible

2 Cor 11 - Paul's context of writing Phi

What was Pauls attitude that lead to joy?

The Gospel was advanced (v12)

Paul was joyfull because the Gospel was being advanced.

"know" - "epignosis": "I want you to get this; don't miss this"

"my circumstances": "Things that pertain to me", in Col 4:7 it is "my affairs"

"greater progress" - "prokope": "To cut before" The wood cutters in the Roman army

This doesn't sound like a guy who is licking his wounds or having a pity party. Instead he looked for the hand of God in his suffering.

Summary: Don't have a pity-party. Take life's circumstances with a positive attitude.

How does this differ than the way the world thinks? Is this approach to life the same as the "power of positive thinking; happy-go-lucky" view on the world?

What about those emotions that are negative? (mourning, sadness, depression, etc.)? Do you disregard them?

Remember: Joseph's story in Gen 45:8, 50:20 - "it was not you who sent me here but God...as for you, you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good"

The encouragement of others (v14)

Paul had no fear when sharing the gospel, or when in prison.

How do people go on sharing the gospel when they see their leader being thrown in jail? Via observing how Paul has reacted to his imprisonment.

People watch how we respond to trials. They learn from what we do when something bad happens to us. God uses our right response to suffering to touch others.

We don't always do this, and God understands. The point is we can't stay there.

Paul had integrity! God is not looking for perfection but progress. And progress implies consistency.

Selflessness (v15-20)

James 4:1-2: there are those in the Church who will rise up against the leaders.

For the one who is serving the Lord - to be maligned by unbelievers is to be expected; by believers it is not expected and drives pain deep within us.

Paul experienced persecution and he refused to focus on himself. He put his pride, reputation, self-worth on the line for the sake of the Gospel.

"rejoice": "continue to rejoice!"

"ambition" - "eritheia": Originally spoke of one working for a living to only benefit oneself. Later came to mean one who is out for an office to magnify oneself.

Be selfless!

Some scholars have tried to rationalize that these were not believers but Judaizers. However if that were the case then he would have responded the same way he did in Galatians.

Are you content to be just God's child? Or do you have to be someone whose significance is to be recognized? We can be in ministry for the wrong reason and no one will notice but God.

v17: It doesn't matter who gets the credit - as long as God's kingdom is furthered.

v20: "hope": What is joy? The twin sister of joy. The knowing that God's purposes will be accomplished in our lives. When you have hope the emotional response is joy.

Application

The secret to living well is the secret of Joy

When Christ is the center *He*: 1. Changes our attitude toward life. 2. He delivers us from our pre-occupation with how others view us 3. He calms our fears