

Sunday, August 31, 2014

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Exhortation: You are hemmed in all around with circumstances and adversity, and it seems all hope is gone, and it seems the night is oh so dark with no light in sight. But Jesus would say unto you this day, this very hour, I am making a way, there is hope, if you will just turn to Me and worship and praise, For here today to bring you to a higher place and restore your hope. For you are not closed in, and there is a way out, saith The Lord.

Psalm 23:4 (KJV)

⁴Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Walking through the valley of the shadow of death is not limited to physical death but includes the death of a dream, a relationship, or even disappointments. But we walk through it.

God's plan is the following scripture:

Psalm 23:5 (KJV)

⁵Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

God is a God that is more than enough.

1 Timothy 6:12 (KJV)

¹²Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

Fighting the good fight of faith is not something that is exciting to us, but without us learning the principles of fighting the good fight we will come up on the short end of the stick.

2 Timothy 2:3 (KJV)

³Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

If we don't learn to endure during challenging and difficult times we won't be a good soldier. We will stay in boot camp learning. There is nothing wrong with that, but it is part of our maturing spiritually.

We are going to learn how to endure hardness. There is a way to go through the challenging times and not lose our joy, and not cave in.

Problems will come our way that are unjust and wrong and there are ones that come that we have created and we can handle them.

In second Peter Timothy was ministering along those lines.

1 Peter 2:21(KJV)

²¹ For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

1 Peter 2:21 (AMP)

²¹ For even to this were you called [it is inseparable from your vocation]. For Christ also suffered for you, leaving you [His personal] example, so that you should follow in His footsteps.

When we accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and personal savior we entered into a life of victory. And not only do we have the victory, nothing can triumph against us. We sometimes forget that in triumph and victory we will have opposition, and that cannot be separated from following Jesus.

1 Peter 2:22-23 (AMP)

²² He was guilty of no sin, neither was deceit (guile) ever found on His lips.

²³ When He was reviled and insulted, He did not revile or offer insult in return; [when] He was abused and suffered, He made no threats [of vengeance]; but he trusted [Himself and everything] to Him Who judges fairly.

When we feel wrong or insulted it doesn't go well, but we must keep it from getting down in our heart. If it gets into our heart it will turn into resentment and bitterness and it is destruction to us. It will cause our bodies to secrete excessive hormones that are destructive and harmful to us physically and it will harm us spiritually.

Jesus is our example.

2 Timothy 2:3 (AMP)

³ Take [with me] your share of the hardships and suffering [which you are called to endure] as a good (first-class) soldier of Christ Jesus.

How do we respond to adversity? Especially when it is wrong or unjust.

John 10:10 (AMP)

¹⁰ The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it ^[a]overflows).

Jesus came for our abundant life but the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy.

How do we respond? Are we going to be proactive or be reactive?

In bible terms are we going to be in fear, vengeance, or respond in faith?

The bible teaches us if we respond in vengeance we close the door for God to come in and vindicate the situation. When we allow Him to take care of the vengeance we leave the door open for God to come in and work in the situation, regardless of the circumstance.

Relationships can be sensitive, and if we try to stubbornly do things our way, the relationship doesn't change but the fellowship and the joy does change.

How can we respond to difficulties or hardness? When you absolutely did nothing and are being treated wrongly? How do we respond to that?

Christ suffered for us. Leaving us His example that we should follow in His steps. The word suffer is translated 17 different ways and not one time does it refer to sickness and disease. Here it refers to being vexed, and oppressed, a closing in on us. It always deals with our emotions, that soulful realm.

Being reactive is on the opposing side, or argumentative. Are we going to respond reactive to God's purpose, plans and instructions? Being proactive is wanting to solve problems. When a problem comes you already have a plan in place on how to deal with it.

Jesus already has a plan set in place for you and I to follow when we are accused unjustly.

Zechariah 4:7 (AMP)

⁷ For who are you, O great mountain [of human obstacles]? Before Zerubbabel [who with Joshua had led the return of the exiles from Babylon and was undertaking the rebuilding of the temple, before him] you shall become a plain [a mere ^[a] molehill]! And he shall bring forth the finishing gable stone [of the new temple] with loud shoutings of the people, crying, Grace, grace to it!

Most of the challenges in life are going to have to deal with relationships

1 Peter 1:4-5 (KJV)

*⁴ To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,
⁵ Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

Jesus never lost sight of where he was headed that is how he endured all the shame.

1 Peter 1:6 (KJV)

⁶ Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

When we use the word temptation we think of the devil and Jesus also and we can get confused. The bible clearly tells us that temptation comes from the devil. God does prove and test us. They come in that the temptation comes from the adversary and then at the same time we are going to prove what we believe and tested to see if we are going to pass.

1 Peter 1:6-7 (AMP)

*⁶ [You should] be exceedingly glad on this account, though now for a little while you may be distressed by trials and suffer temptations,
⁷ So that [the genuineness] of your faith may be tested, [your faith] which is infinitely more precious than the perishable gold which is tested and purified by fire. [This proving of your faith is intended] to redound to [your] praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One) is revealed.*

1 Peter 1:6-7 (MSG)

⁶⁻⁷ I know how great this makes you feel, even though you have to put up with every kind of aggravation in the meantime. Pure gold put in the fire comes out of it proved pure; genuine faith put through this suffering comes out proved genuine. When Jesus wraps this all up, it's your faith, not your gold, that God will have on display as evidence of his victory.

If we keep our eyes on heaven we will be able to put up with every kind of aggravation. It is for but a season. We rejoice and give thanksgiving. We don't sit down and have a pity party. We will respond in faith to God's word.

We must bring our emotions in control. We find ourselves in situations of aggravation and we must make the proactive choice to praise in the midst, worship and thanksgiving in the midst of it. That is when God can get involved and turn it all around.

We are so feeling oriented and we can find ourselves allowing our emotions to dominate us, allow that soulish part of us to dominate. And if we haven't followed Romans 12:1-2 and renewed our mind we will stay conformed and limited to how the world thinks.

We learn how to endure hardness if we learn how to praise in the midst of adversity.

James 1:2-4 (AMP)

² Consider it wholly joyful, my brethren, whenever you are enveloped in or encounter trials of any sort or fall into various temptations.

³ Be assured and understand that the trial and proving of your faith bring out endurance and steadfastness and patience.

⁴ But let endurance and steadfastness and patience have full play and do a thorough work, so that you may be [people] perfectly and fully developed [with no defects], lacking in nothing.

James 1:2-4 (MSG)

Faith Under Pressure

²⁻⁴ Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.

Philippians 4:12-13 (KJV)

¹² I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

¹³ I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Philippians 4:12-13 (AMP)

¹² I know how to be abased and live humbly in straitened circumstances, and I know also how to enjoy plenty and live in abundance. I have learned in any and all circumstances the secret of facing every situation, whether well-fed or going hungry, having a sufficiency and enough to spare or going without and being in want.

¹³ I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me [I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who ^[a]infuses inner strength into me; I am ^[b]self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency].

Philippians 4:12-14 (MSG)

Content Whatever the Circumstances

¹⁰⁻¹⁴ I'm glad in God, far happier than you would ever guess—happy that you're again showing such strong concern for me. Not that you ever quit praying and thinking about me. You just had no chance to show it. Actually, I don't have a sense of needing anything personally. I've learned by now to be quite content whatever my circumstances. I'm just as happy with little as with much, with much as with little. I've found the recipe for being happy whether full or hungry, hands full or hands empty. Whatever I have, wherever I am, I can make it through anything in the One who makes me who I am. I don't mean that your help didn't mean a lot to me—it did. It was a beautiful thing that you came alongside me in my troubles.

Paul practiced what he taught. He was in the will of God and preaching the gospel and there was a woman who followed him around with a demonic spirit and harassed him. After many days Paul commanded the spirit to come out and it did in the same hour. There were people being accused of using this woman for monetary gain and there were charges brought against them. Paul was among those being charged.

Acts 16:24 (KJV)

²⁴ Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

What does The word say we are to do in a season of hardship?

Acts 16:25 (KJV)

²⁵ And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

Look what happens when we do it God's way:

Acts 16:26 (KJV)

²⁶ And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

Romans 5:1-5 (MSG)

Developing Patience

5 ¹⁻² By entering through faith into what God has always wanted to do for us—set us right with him, make us fit for him—we have it all together with God because of our Master Jesus. And that's not all: We throw open our doors to God and discover at the same moment that he has already thrown open

his door to us. We find ourselves standing where we always hoped we might stand—out in the wide open spaces of God’s grace and glory, standing tall and shouting our praise.

³⁻⁵ There’s more to come: We continue to shout our praise even when we’re hemmed in with troubles, because we know how troubles can develop passionate patience in us, and how that patience in turn forges the tempered steel of virtue, keeping us alert for whatever God will do next. In alert expectancy such as this, we’re never left feeling shortchanged. Quite the contrary—we can’t round up enough containers to hold everything God generously pours into our lives through the Holy Spirit!

Trouble wants to muzzle our praise and take it away. Glory is just around the corner.

1 Peter 4:12 (MSG)

Glory Just Around the Corner

¹²⁻¹³ Friends, when life gets really difficult, don’t jump to the conclusion that God isn’t on the job. Instead, be glad that you are in the very thick of what Christ experienced. This is a spiritual refining process, with glory just around the corner.

1 Peter 4:19 (MSG)

¹⁹ So if you find life difficult because you’re doing what God said, take it in stride. Trust him. He knows what he’s doing, and he’ll keep on doing it.

If you know the character of God and Jesus you will know that you can trust him.

Psalm 84:5 (KJV)

⁵ Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them.

The bible says that the children of Israel never understood God’s ways, so they died in the wilderness, but the above scripture speaks of Moses.

Psalm 84:6 (KJV)

⁶ Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.

God is so good, when adversity comes He shows he is greater than the adversity by blessing us. We go from strength to strength.

Hebrews 12:1 (KJV)

¹² Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Patience is that quality that doesn’t surrender to circumstances, and is always associated with hope.

Hebrews 12:2 (MSG)

Discipline in a Long-Distance Race

12¹⁻³ Do you see what this means—all these pioneers who blazed the way, all these veterans cheering us on? It means we'd better get on with it. Strip down, start running—and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along the way: Cross, shame, whatever. And now he's there, in the place of honor, right alongside God. When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. That will shoot adrenaline into your souls!

Jesus was able to endure it all because he never lost sight of where he was headed.
Father, I can put up with anything along the way because I am keeping my eyes on You.

Father, I declare that the chains are broken. I declare the clouds of hopelessness are dispelled and blessed God His light is shining. I thank you that you said when we are hemmed in and things are pressing in to smother us; You said praise dispelled it. We choose to praise you, we choose to worship You. We declare your goodness.