



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

**Sunday – June 7, 2015**

## ***Heart to Heart...***

The sadness was on their face. Lostness was in their eyes. Their words revealed everything you could see: *"I feel so empty inside. Everything has caved in on me. What little life I have left within, my job robs. Our finances are over-whelming. I find no joy in anything."* These words were spoken from a fellow saint.

Have you ever found yourself in this position? Some may never have but many have. Why are those of us in Christ Jesus, a child of God so empty? There is only one answer. It's not complicated. The answer is found in Jesus. I can hear people say, "Oh, I know that!" If we know it, why are we so empty? When we allow things to affect us, we begin taking our eyes off Jesus and our faith begins to waver. The longer we look away, the more we focus on the hurts, the disappointments, the difficulties, the misery and it starts to influence us rather than Christ Jesus. In this process, faith erodes away a little at a time.

Read Paul's letter to the Philippians. Paul was in prison, facing a life and death sentence not knowing how it was going to turn out. He pens one word over and over to these saints: **REJOICE!** How can one rejoice when things are so difficult? Because his life, his love and his heart was centered on Jesus alone. His circumstances did not affect or cancel God's intentions for him. Paul believed with all his heart that he possessed all spiritual blessings because of Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:3). These weren't trivial words. These were the reality of promises spoken from the Lord. These same spiritual blessings belong to us as well in Christ Jesus. The spiritual blessings are not slowed or halted because of our circumstances. Faith takes us beyond our circumstances. Faith reaches beyond what we see. ***"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain."*** (Philippians 1:21) His circumstances were not obstacles that robbed him but the opportunity to see the power of God's grace at work.

When we allow circumstances to control our happiness and contentment, it robs us of the life of God in Christ Jesus. God didn't bring us to Himself through Jesus to be overcome by difficulties. We look at our problems and let that determine our reaction. Christ takes a back-seat!! The longer you wallow in your difficulties, the longer you state, *"You don't understand!"* faith is being lost and might never be recovered. I've watched many a fellow brother/sister walk away because the burdens became too much while faith was too little.

Paul said, *"For to me, to live is Christ..."* What would you say? Who or what do you live for? Do you count things as all joy knowing the power of Christ is there or do you count it all misery? It all depends on faith. When a crisis hits, yes, it can rattle our life at the moment but faith looks to Jesus. How do you know you're looking to Jesus by faith? What do you expect? The grace of God and the spiritual blessings or dejection? Your reaction says it all. Do you look for the opportunity to grow or taken down? The following is not a suggestion from the Lord, it is an imperative (a command): ***"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say rejoice!"*** (Philippians 4:4) Think about it!!!

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