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

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**Sunday – March 19, 2017**

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

We need a faith based on the word of the Lord and draw from Him and His word in times of difficulty. We need to gain discernment and that comes from listening and applying the word properly. Instead of taking in the truth, and we agree we need to, His word is having minimal impact. A difficulty arises and we crumble. We let everyone know in social media! And tell anyone who will listen. That’s our answer, while we never reach for the real answers from the Lord. Situations become a mountain and things become hopeless in our heart.

Life can be difficult without a genuine faith in the Lord. Life can be intimidating enough, but without guidance from the Lord and His word ... it leaves us frozen. Let’s look at Joseph. Here was a young man, seventeen years old with a wonderful home life and all his dreams before him. He didn’t realize how much his brother’s jealousy led them to hating him. One day that hatred was acted upon. Instead of killing him, his brothers sold him and was taken against his will with foreigners. There was nothing he could do. His life had become very difficult. These foreigners sold him into the hands of an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh. What would happen next? His life taken? Beaten because he was godly? Was any of this fair for a young man who had done nothing against anyone? Matters became worse. He was lied about by the wife of an officer, accused of a horrible crime which he didn’t commit, and was in prison as a criminal and could do nothing about any of it! But in it all he remained steadfast, faithful and tuned to God. With shackles and an iron collar around his neck (Psalm 105:18), it was a horrible position to be in for such a young boy. But there was God, and Joseph never let anything drag him another direction. There was over eleven years of heartache and disappointment. What should we learn? This is how a person of faith lives, even when over-whelmed by difficult circumstances. His faith was real and he was genuine in the Lord. There was a deep affection for God. He could have been bitter and expressed it! He could have built a world telling everyone who came along his unjust story. But instead, he loved his God and trusted in Him. His life was built upon listening to God and His direction only. In all these difficulties Joseph found himself blessed in the circumstances he was in because God made him prosper. God brought something greater into his life. It took years but the outcome was all destined by God and Joseph refused to crumble under the injustices.

What about us? Why do things take us down so easily? When we face dire circumstances, our reactions to those circumstances speak volumes about our faith and direction of our hearts. The promises of God fade into the background, forgotten and placed on the shelf. We shrink back from the power source. We drown while letting everyone around us know to sympathize in our experience. Just reading James chapter 1 should tell us how God will respond and how we should respond, but all the promises given are conditional on a true faith in Him. Double-minded people receive nothing from the Lord. One single mind toward God is what the Lord is looking to find. Then we listen carefully to the words of faith from Joseph: ***“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.”*** (Genesis 50:20) I wonder how much we forfeit by not trusting in and listening to the Lord? Think about it!!!

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