



"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 – September 10, 2017

Heart to Heart...

You could see the sadness on his face and the lostness in his eyes. His words trembled as they came out: *"I feel so empty inside. Everything has seemed to cave in on me. What little life I have, my job takes away. If that weren't enough my finances are over-whelming. I have no joy or peace."*

Have you ever found yourself in this position? Why are so many, those who are children of God, so empty? Everyday life is such a struggle? Let's be real. The answer to such emptiness is found in Jesus and Him crucified. To many these are just words but the reality of this is grasped by faith. When things affect us and take us down, we take our eyes off Jesus. Our faith waivers and our focus becomes our hurts, our disappointments and life starts becoming a strain. The wrong things influence our thinking rather than Jesus Christ. The longer one continues in this state of mind, faith is slowly being lost.

Read Philippians! Paul wrote this letter from prison facing a life or death sentence. His fate was about to be decided. Yet he rejoiced! How could he rejoice? How could Paul be so thankful? Was it because he was a man of positive thinking? No! He was a man centering his life on Jesus Christ. His circumstances did not affect or cancel God's intentions. Paul lived in reality and that was Jesus and Him crucified! Faith is what takes one beyond circumstances. Faith is what reaches to God and Christ. ***"For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain."*** (Philippians 1:21) Paul had hope if he lived and hope if he died. His circumstances were not obstacles to overcome but opportunities to live in and share in the grace of God (Philippians 1:12-18). Too many are wanting everyone to know how their circumstances are and it takes them down.

When we allow our circumstances to control our happiness it robs us of God's life and faith. God did not save us for us to be overcome by our circumstances. Our tendency is to look at our problems and our spiritual eyes are clouded with those problems. Christ takes a back seat. What does that leave us with? The longer one wallows in their troubles, faith is lost and it could get to the point that the faith lost might not be recovered!

Circumstances never stop God's intentions or power. Circumstances do not rob us of life. We allow that. When circumstances are piled one on top of the other, when people hurt you deliberately do you become depressed and tell others or reach for God's grace? (Philippians 1:15-17) Difficulties are to push us toward God and His resources (Philippians 1:18-20). Paul saw Christ Jesus as his hope and it led him to exalt: ***"To live is Christ!"*** To continue to live on this earth with all the difficulties around, Paul saw the benefit of helping others make it. (Philippians 1:22)! Sometimes we don't get the best situations in life, things just don't go the way we want and our complaining starts. It will rob you of life, joy and grace, inserting misery

into your being. Paul wanted the better to be with Christ, but he didn't get the better so what did he do? He made progress anyway (Philippians 1:24-26)! Paul taught the brethren and us: ***"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."*** (Galatians 2:20) There is the answer for all misery to be believed upon!

When a crisis hits, which do you expect: Christ and His grace to you or dejection? Who do you magnify: Christ and Him crucified or the problem you face? One is by faith and the other is not. Think about it!!!

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