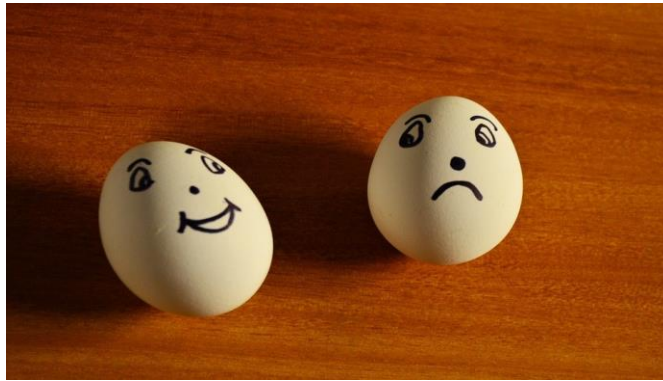


Transforming Power; The Work of God on behalf of Man



Weekly Devotional 01-18-21 The Message of Our Lives

Recently, I was at one of our local restaurants talking with a friend about various things. One of the workers there stopped by our table and began telling us how some moron (her words-not mine) had hit her car. She went on to say that given a chance she would have inflicted great bodily harm to that person. Now, my friend and I have been meeting at this restaurant five days a week for the last 6 years. The employee I refer to has worked there for much of this time. I have never heard her say anything positive, only negative things and they, many times, are spoken in colorful terms.

This made me think of a caption I read on Face Book a few months earlier, “Your Life Is Your Message to The World, Make Sure It’s Inspiring.” I immediately thought of we who are Christians; how our lives appear to those whom we have contact with, or those who know about us. Do we appear upbeat or downcast? Do we appear positive or negative? This is something that we should seriously consider. Why would a non-believer want to be like us if we are as negative as the person mentioned above?

There are many things in life of course that impact us heavily, health, finances, and the oppression of the world just to name a few, but are we not to shine through these things? Have we not in matter of fact overcome the world? The apostle Paul *“reckoned that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us”* (Romans 8:18). If anyone would have had reason to be down cast and negative it should have been him. We get a sense of what he endured from his second letter to the Corinthian church as he defended his apostleship against those who were discounting it as they compared him to the other apostles. He wrote, *“22Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. 23Are they ministers of Christ? —I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. 24From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. 25Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness— 28besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches”* (2 Corinthians 11:22-28).

Earlier in this letter he had written, *“8We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— 10always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11For*

we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12So then death is working in us, but life in you" (Chapter 4:8-12).

Paul's attitude was upbeat through all these things and this same attitude should mark our lives. Of course that is easy to say, but hard to do! However, Paul was convinced that his sufferings were worth it all (Romans 8:18). This should be our attitude as well. If it is, we will shine brightly into a darkened world. We will have a joyful spirit and those around us, or know of us, will take note.

Even though it may be hard at times to show joy in and through our circumstances, it is possible if we set our sights on the prize that is set before us focusing on the end goal which is acceptance with God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

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