

COUNT IT ALL JOY:

The Joy of Adversity

July 29, 2018

Philippians 1:12-26

Paul's Present Circumstances

12 I want you to know, beloved, that what has happened to me has actually helped to spread the gospel, 13so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to everyone else that my imprisonment is for Christ; 14and most of the brothers and sisters, having been made confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, dare to speak the word with greater boldness and without fear.

15 Some proclaim Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill. 16These proclaim Christ out of love, knowing that I have been put here for the defense of the gospel; 17the others proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but intending to increase my suffering in my imprisonment. 18What does it matter? Just this, that Christ is proclaimed in every way, whether out of false motives or true; and in that I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, 19for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will result in my deliverance. 20It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be put to shame in any way, but that by my speaking with all boldness, Christ will be exalted now as always in my body, whether by life or by death. 21For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. 22If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labour for me; and I do not know which I prefer. 23I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; 24but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. 25Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, 26so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

What happens to you when adversity comes your way? In the moment of challenge / broken dreams / lost hopes / despair ... what brings you to the table of faith with passion for continuing to live and breath and have faith?

There is a reason...

The Apostle Paul Wrote to the little church in Philippi! Because he loved them and he knew that they were supporting him. He wrote with greater intensity as he was imprisoned. Paul and Timothy were in Jail!

Paul took the experience of being jail as an opportunity for the power and intensity of his faith. He discovered with even more zeal his own desire to give witness to Jesus Christ. He also knew that such ADVERSITY was reason for joy in that purpose that had come to be so profound for him.

Today is a message from the Apostle that calls us COUNT IT ALL JOY ... There is a joy in adversity.

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Moses Spoke: Deuteronomy 30:

15 See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. 16If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess.*

Moses knew that adversity has a way of bring the need for God into our lives with greater significance!

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Jesus speaks in Mark's Gospel:

4Again he began to teach beside the lake. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the lake and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the lake on the land. 2He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to

them: ³Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. ⁶And when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it had no root, it withered away. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. ⁸Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.' ⁹And he said, 'Let anyone with ears to hear listen!'

¹⁰When he was alone, those who were around him along with the twelve asked him about the parables.

¹¹And he said to them, 'To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables;

4: 13 And he said to them, 'Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables? ¹⁴The sower sows the word. ¹⁵These are the ones on the path where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. ¹⁶And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: when they hear the word, they immediately receive it with joy. ¹⁷But they have no root, and endure only for a while; then, when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. ¹⁸And others are those sown among the thorns: these are the ones who hear the word, ¹⁹but the cares of the world, and the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things come in and choke the word, and it yields nothing. ²⁰And these are the ones sown on the good soil: they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.'

Jesus is teaching through parable / story and specific step by step understanding! Are you getting the message? That when our faith rules and reigns in our spirits ... it is ripe for sustaining us and giving us life. If we let the Joy of faith grow within us, we can indeed discover the ways that life gets better and better ... When trouble comes ... it can make us stronger rather than destroy us!

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Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, ¹⁹for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will result in my deliverance.

What happens to you when adversity comes your way? In the moment of challenge / broken dreams / lost hopes / despair ... what brings you to the table of faith with passion for continuing to live and breath and have faith?

When you are thinking of the adversity that has been / is / and will be part of your life...

Are you ready? NOT DENY THAT IT EXISTS! NO ... Please NO! Faith is not ignoring adversity ... Faith is the awakening of passion and awakening a tenacious hope and joy that will leave despair / frustration / anger / "woe is me" in the past and welcomes joy.

Please do not misunderstand ... when the circumstances of life ... "adversity" ... crush us ... we cannot avoid the realities of the harsh break and sever chaos and the aches and pains that result! For the emotions of hurt / pain / death / life are very real!

When we are in the throws of such moments, it is our time ... it is the moment when the seeds of faith begin to send roots deep ... it is the moment when we see (as the Apostle Paul did ... we see the joy that our witness provides others.)

WHEN LIFE KNOCKS YOU DOWN:

- Get back up!
- Roll over, and look at the stars
- Just stay there and take a nap
- You have three choices. You can either let it define you. Let it destroy you. Or you can let it strengthen you.
- FINALLY: "when life knocks you down on your knees, You are in the perfect position to pray.

PAUL WAS IN THE PERFECT POSITION: in prison ... he prayed!

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, ¹⁹for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will result in my deliverance.

AMEN.

It Is Well with My Soul

The United Methodist Hymnal Number 377

Text: Horatio G. Spafford

Music: Philip P. Bliss

Tune: VILLE DU HAVRE, Meter: 11 8.11 9 with Refrain

1. When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
when sorrows like sea billows roll;
whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.
Refrain:
It is well with my soul,
it is well, it is well with my soul.
2. Though Satan should buffet, though trials should
come,
let this blest assurance control,
that Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
and hath shed his own blood for my soul.
(Refrain)
3. My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!
(Refrain)
4. And, Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be
sight,
the clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
the trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
even so, it is well with my soul.
(Refrain)

Horatio G. Spafford was a successful lawyer and businessman in Chicago with a lovely family - a wife, Anna, and five children. However, they were not strangers to tears and tragedy. **Their young son died with pneumonia in 1871**, and in that same year, much of their business was lost in the great Chicago fire. Yet, God in His mercy and kindness allowed the business to flourish once more.

On Nov. 21, 1873, the French ocean liner, Ville du Havre was crossing the Atlantic from the U.S. to Europe with 313 passengers on board. Among the passengers were Mrs. Spafford and their four daughters. Although Mr. Spafford had planned to go with his family, he found it necessary to stay in Chicago to help solve an unexpected business problem. He told his wife he would join her and their children in Europe a few days later. His plan was to take another ship.

About four days into the crossing of the Atlantic, the Ville du Harve collided with a powerful, iron-hulled Scottish ship, the Loch Earn. Suddenly, all of those on board were in grave danger. Anna hurriedly brought her four children to the deck. She knelt there with Annie, Margaret Lee, Bessie and Tanetta and prayed that God would spare them if that could be His will, or to make them willing to endure whatever awaited them. Within approximately 12 minutes, **the Ville du Harve slipped beneath the dark waters of the Atlantic, carrying with it 226 of the passengers including the four Spafford children.**

A sailor, rowing a small boat over the spot where the ship went down, spotted a woman floating on a piece of the wreckage. It was **Anna, still alive.** He pulled her into the boat and they were picked up by another large vessel which, nine days later, landed them in Cardiff, Wales. From there she wired her husband a message which began, "Saved alone, what shall I do?" Mr. Spafford later framed the telegram and placed it in his office.

Another of the ship's survivors, Pastor Weiss, later recalled Anna saying, "God gave me four daughters. Now they have been taken from me. Someday I will understand why."

Mr. Spafford booked passage on the next available ship and left to join his grieving wife. With the ship about four days out, the captain called Spafford to his cabin and told him they were over the place where his children went down.

According to Bertha Spafford Vester, a daughter born after the tragedy, Spafford wrote "It Is Well With My Soul" while on this journey.

When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll,
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Chorus:

It is well with my soul,
It is well, it is well with my soul

Anna gave birth to three more children, one of which died at age four with dreaded pneumonia. In August 1881, the Spaffords moved to Jerusalem. Mr. Spafford died and is buried in that city.

And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, shall keep your hearts, your minds through Christ Jesus. - Philippians 4:7.