

“I Don’t Always Like It, But I’m Thankful for It...”

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The sermon this morning has to do with trying to have the right perspective in facing the struggles and challenges we face. It’s not an easy life and it can sometimes seem as though it’s a lot harder than we could have ever imagined. This world isn’t fair either and that only seems to magnify our frustration. And then to top it all off, we have to endure hardness in this life.

2 Timothy 2:1-3 ...therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

Well, for starters I don’t like the idea of suffering any more than I absolutely must. I’m pretty sure that’s universal but I can’t always speak for everyone. But what about those things like fasting and prayer, visitation, having a good work ethic, being friendly to strangers, being friendly with each other, paying our tithes and offerings, paying our bills, showing up for service, and showing up for work. Those things are optional, right? Actually they are.

I’d like to hear people name some things that they don’t always like but are thankful for. And maybe some are too personal, and that’s between you and God but can anybody name something? How about work, how about exercise, how about the dreaded getting up in the morning? Those things aren’t easy but what if we didn’t work, didn’t exercise, or couldn’t get up in the morning? Would we be any happier? Absolutely not.

Look at people that are less fortunate, and believe me, no matter how bad you think you’ve got it, there are others less fortunate. The Bible tells us that we are not ignorant of Satan’s devices (2 Corinthians 2:11). God doesn’t expect us to just go blindly through life.

So why does it seem harder than that? Why does it seem as though society is caving in around us, the economy is collapsing, and that it’s the end of the world as we know it, right? Maybe it is and maybe it isn’t. It could end tonight or it could end 500 years from now. Will we still live for God regardless of how long it takes? He’s not coming when we think (Matthew 25:13). Take heed that no man deceive you (Matthew 24:4)

Matthew 10:16-22 ...he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

Have you seen the trailer for that movie, ‘Colombiana’? The tag line is, “Revenge is Beautiful”. That’s not the way we want to be. There are things that we as Christians certainly don’t like; corruption, ungodliness, injustice, and the list could go on. And we’re not thankful for those things, so this message isn’t designed to convince us that we should be thankful for everything. God isn’t telling us we need to be thankful for the corruption, ungodliness, and injustice of this world either. *****But this message is designed to give us a godly point of view on some things in our lives that are seemingly burdensome and sometimes very difficult to deal with, but in reality are spiritually fruitful.*****

God Understands and Isn't Always Asking Me/Us to Like It

Do people really think God expects us to enjoy sacrificing or suffering the way we do? God isn't asking us or expecting us to like it but he is asking for us to do it and that is the paradox. God has standards for our lives that He wants us to uphold and it means we need to walk in the spirit and not fulfill the lust of the flesh. It means we need to concentrate on what's most important in our lives and know that we have heard the gospel truth and obeyed and that as a result of that our names are written in the book of life.

God feels our pain... - He's been down this road.

Hebrews 12:1-3 ...lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

Quote from Arman Jorge in a testimony a few years ago. "Thank God for the good times and the bad times." Not always an easy pill to swallow but that's a great outlook to have.

Romans 8:18 ...the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory

What Am I/We Thankful For?

For a long time I've felt that there's a lot more to be thankful for than things to worry about. Now as soon as we think that, a hundred things to worry about come to mind. But what about being thankful? Does God really want us to be thankful to him? Are we thinking about things to be thankful for? I'm talking about right down to the breath of life.

As Christians, one of our most telling aspects is our ability to receive kindness. The Bible tells us that to have friends, you must show yourself friendly (Proverbs 18:24).

John 14:1-2, 26-27 ...Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Can you look back and say that you've enjoyed your life as a Christian? Hopefully you can and although I know I can't speak for everybody, I can honestly say that I've been exceedingly and abundantly blessed above all that I could have ever imagined. Hopefully you feel that way too. Does that mean we always feel that way? Absolutely not. There are times we feel ripped off and that we haven't gotten everything we think we deserve. Things don't always go the way we hope they'll go. Tragedies happen and unfortunate events happen but there comes a point in time when it's spiritually imperative to count our blessings. Reflect on the great wonders of God. Reflect on the good times and good memories we have. And always remember that Jesus said that he would never leave us or forsake us.