

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

When You Are Hurting

By Micky Galloway

Hurt and disappointment are common to most people. All have experienced the joy and happiness of hope for a period of time, only to have it crushed by reality. The tragedy of such disappointments is that they can be frequent, and the pain does not necessarily decrease with the frequency of the experience. Disappointment hurts and keeps on hurting. I have often said that I would rather be angry with someone than to be disappointed. Disappointment is a hurt that is harder to overcome. The hurt can be terrible time and time again as it re-surfaces uninvited and our minds are tormented in anguish.

In such moments we would do well to remember that others who have gone before have had their share of hurts and disappointments. Jeremiah was met by almost unimaginable despair, so much so that we hear his plaintive cry, *“Oh, that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them”* (Jer. 9:2). Jeremiah desired to run away to a desolate place out in the wilderness.

Do you ever feel like you just want to run away and hide; or maybe you are so down, you would just rather die? Elijah felt that way! He seemed to have every reason to be so discouraged even to the point of desiring to die. *“But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper-tree: and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, It is enough; now, O Jehovah, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers”* (1 Kings 19:3-4). *“And he said, I have been very jealous for Jehovah, the God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword: and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away”* (1 Kings 19:10, 14). The ungodliness of king Ahab led Israel into such sin that God withheld rain for over three years (1 Kings 18:17-18; 16:30-33). Queen Jezebel massacred God’s prophets and was trying to kill Elijah (1 Kings 18:4; 19:1-3). The people were uncommitted and unwilling to do what was right (1 Kings 18:21). It seemed like Elijah was all alone in his misery, *“Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, am left a prophet of Jehovah; but Baal’s prophets are four hundred and fifty men”* (1 Kings 18:22). Yet, the first thing God said to Elijah as he hid in a cave in the mountain was *“What doest thou here, Elijah?”* (1 Kings 19:9).

There are distressing issues that confront us every day. As we face these issues, we must make choices, but to make good choices we must know what is most important. We have to have a clear vision of our purpose, which is to honor and glorify God. As we pursue the purpose of life, we must do so through faith, hope, and love. To do this, we must focus on the choices we must make today. We cannot dwell on the past, or be overly anxious about the future. We often must forget what lies behind and forgive ourselves and others for the wrongs done in the past. We have to leave tomorrow to itself. When I am hurting, struggling with life to make proper decisions for today, what can I do?

Remember what God has done for you in the past. With Elijah, God had commanded the ravens to feed him. He had commanded the widow of Zarephath to sustain him and had provided a jar of meal that would not waste and a cruse of oil that would not fail (1 Kings 17:1-16). In the contest with the prophets of Baal, God had provided victory over evil and error by His divine power (1 Kings 18:36-40). The Psalmist assures us of God’s provisions for the righteous, *“I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread”* (Psa. 37:25). Jesus also assures us, *“Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you”* (Matt. 6:31-33). Concerning victory over sin and death, we too are assured that our labor is not in vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15:55-58).

Believe God's promise that He cares, you are not alone. While Elijah slept under a juniper tree, God sent an angel who told him, "**Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee.**" With the provision of the cakes and the water God had provided, Elijah "**went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights**" (1 Kings 19:5-8). Though Elijah felt that he was alone in Israel, God reminded him that there were yet, "**seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal**" (1 Kings 19:18; cf. Rom. 11:1-5). Perhaps when we feel that God has deserted us, we need to be reminded of His promise, "**I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee. So that with good courage we say, The Lord is my helper; I will not fear: What shall man do unto me?**" (Heb. 13:5-6). God gives us the things necessary to make us everything He wants us to be. Paul said, "**By the grace of God I am what I am**" (1 Cor. 15:10; cf. Rom. 5:1-5). Yes indeed, God cares.

Realize that God still has work for you to do. There were yet kings and prophets to be anointed (1 Kings 19:15-16). There is much work for us to do that causes us to focus outside of ourselves. Paul said in Philippians 3:12-14, "**Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing (I do), forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before. I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.**" This is not just busywork, but a demonstration of our faith. I do this because it is right! NOTE: If your faith is to count for anything, it must count for everything when you are discouraged and disappointed. Therefore, strengthen your personal faith (cf. Lk. 17:5). "**Be strong and of good courage**" (Deut. 31:6-8). If we are not making regular deposits to increase our faith, the trials of life will cause it to become bankrupt.

Don't forget to pray. The very act of prayer is an expression of one's dependence upon a power greater than his own. Jesus said in John 15:5, "**Apart from me ye can do nothing.**" **Man needs God and He has promised, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you"** (Jas. 4:8). Prayer is not a futile act. God would not draw nigh to men were He not able and willing to hear their prayers to Him. Paul said, "**In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus**" (Phil. 4:6-7). Peter said that we are to, "**Cast all your anxiety upon Him, because He careth for you**" (1 Pet. 5:7). It is reassuring to know that the affairs of the universe are not so absorbing of God's attention that He cannot give heed to the affairs of the individual soul.

Hurt, disappointment, and discouragement are among the burdens that we must bear (Rom. 15:1; Gal. 6:2). These must not be allowed to defeat us in the Lord's work. With Jesus as our example, we must busy ourselves in the Lord's vineyard. There is much to do and there is no place for idle, disappointed, discouraged Christians to quit. It just is not an option. – **Fifth Street East Church of Christ Bulletin, August 7, 2016. ■**



Expectations

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1-3).

In life there are certain *expectations* you must face. For example, you are *expected* to obey traffic laws, pay your bills on time as well as your taxes. But, the Lord has *expectations* which cannot be ignored and even our brethren have *expectations* of each and every member. Consider this:

"As a member of this church, I know I am expected to be present at every listed assembly for edification and glorifying God; unless I have to work, or I'm out of town and attending with other faithful saints, or sick. If I cannot be at any service, I will be brotherly and contact someone so my reason for being absent will be known. I will be diligent to engage myself in true fellowship and be ready 'unto every good work.'" **Will YOU be willing to meet these expectations?** — *tgmc*

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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