

Contentment in adversity requires a spiritual perspective

'For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.'

Rom 8:5-6

What do you see in the world?

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We are slow to realise how pervasive and ingrained the attitudes of the world have become part of our development, often accepting the proposition by Psychologist that human behaviour is a mixture of nature and nurture, what we have from our genetics and what we have learnt from our environment. And basically, all people are essentially good.

If the psychologists are right, we don't need a saviour for our sin, and the cause of our personal problems lies with someone else or something else. The wisdom of the world is from the flesh.

But what if all the harmful conditions in the world and all ungodly human behaviour was not caused by our environment or some random scientific condition that man thinks he can control or understand, but ultimately comes from a corrupted spiritual life with a disposition of ignoring the need for obedience to honour God who made us? Biblically, all behaviour that falls short of God's character is the result of a failure to love God with our whole being, and a failure to love our neighbour as God intended His children to love as He loves.

One reformed preacher recently challenges us to have a biblical perspective. “One of the great challenges of the Christian life is maintaining a proper and biblical perspective as we walk through this world. Our world is an exceedingly troubled and wicked world. It is unloving. It is unjust. It is anti-Christ. The world in which we live actively opposes and rages against the LORD Jesus Christ, and those who belong to him.

As we walk through this world, it can be very easy to get overwhelmed, and distracted, not only with the difficulties of this life, but also with the delights that this world affords. The world, and the things in the world, can be very alluring, they can be very attractive, and they can very easily redirect our attention and our focus away from the LORD Jesus Christ.”

Again: “In your daily life, do you live in the reality that you are a citizen of the kingdom of heaven? Do you live in the reality that your true home is not of this world? Do you live in the reality that your inheritance, your reward, and your treasure, is in heaven, and that it, your treasure, along with you, are being kept and protected by the LORD God Almighty?”

Again: “What is the origin of these fleshly passions? All of these sinful passions originate from the same place, our own sinful flesh. James 1:13-15, *Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is urged and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.*

He goes on to say that “God is not responsible for your sin. The Adversary is not responsible for your sin, the devil didn’t make you do it. Your circumstances are not responsible for your sin. Your spouse is not responsible for your sin. Your children, your siblings, your relatives, your in-laws, your friends, your neighbours, your co-workers, your church family –none of these people are responsible for your sin. You are responsible for your sin, you are responsible for your actions. I am responsible for my sin, and you are responsible for your sin. Evil always lies close at hand, and temptation to sin always comes from the inside, from our own sinful desires, and it is these desires that give birth to sin.”

The powers of the darkness would have us believe that the world and the flesh is our only reality. Therefore we are to be constantly beholding the glory of Christ in us if we are to live in peace with Him in a fallen world.

“For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are

seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

2 Cor 4:6-8, 16-18

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The scripture affirms that we who are chosen by God to follow Christ are a new creation made suitable for His dwelling place, and that we no longer live according to the flesh of natural man, because we are born again by the Spirit of God.

But do we really believe God?

Are we aware that our flesh wars against the spirit of our minds?

We are often unaware of this spiritual conflict.

How many times have we felt alone?

How many times have we felt unloved?

How many times have we felt abandoned?

How many times have we felt like a loser in the world?

How often do we feel we must have what we desire in the world?

How many times have we felt victimised?

How many times have we felt powerless?

How many times have we believed the darkness and lost sight of the light?

How often do we live as if what is seen with the eyes of flesh is the only reality so we don't live by faith?

How often do we lose any semblance of peace when disturbing events confront us in our ignorance?

Haven't we forgotten that our treasurer is Christ who lives in us?

And that being raised up with Christ means we are to look to where He reigns with us in heaven.

Haven't we forgotten we are spiritually seated with Christ in heavenly places?

In order to keep ourselves from despair, Christ and His work of grace on our behalf needs to be at the forefront of our minds.

Christ in us is the promise of glory

If we have Christ we have all we need.

In Christ we are destined for glory.

Our unity with Christ means He is our life.

We are joined to Him who is all wisdom and knowledge.

His eternal will must be our priority if we are not to be distracted by the world.

To be in Christ is to be blessed with the awesome presence of His glory.

Being raised in Christ is to be indwelt by the Spirit of God to complete our holy transformation as God's children.

His Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are indeed children of God.

To be joined to Christ is to be adopted into the family of God.

Life with Christ means always being covered by His love in a loveless world.

To be in Christ is to be upheld by His mighty power that works in us because He lives in us so we live for His glory.

To be joined to Christ is to be enabled by His many graces to live His life as a faithful witness to His glory.

To have life in Christ is to be a citizen of His heavenly kingdom having forsaken the world.

To be one life with Christ is to be blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

In Christ we share in His eternal Kingly inheritance.

To be in Christ is to live for His eternal kingdom.

Life with Christ means already ruling with Him over the world.

To be joined to Christ means having His peace regardless of disturbing circumstances in this temporal world because He is the prince of peace and the Lord of lords.

Life with Christ means living as an alien in the world that doesn't know Him.

Union with Christ results in godly attitudes because His divine nature is supernaturally imparted to us.

Union with Christ means we are a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Life in Christ is to be lived for Him, through Him and by dependence on His Spirit.

We are one life with Christ who according to the riches of His glory will strengthen us with the power of His Spirit so that we can know the reality of His love that is beyond understanding.

Believing the words of God will set us free

His peace is with those who follow Him and obey His commands.

“If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” John 8:31-32

*‘But I say, **walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.** For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.’* Gal 5:16-17

Therefore there is no reason for anxiety or to feel that we are not loved by God because God is love and He is in control. In our union with Christ His almighty power is at work in us to complete what He has begun in transforming us into His glorious image. But don't we often believe in the temporal world that is passing away more than the eternal?

For those who love Him and live for Him His presence is promised for eternity.

We need to guard our minds.

Because of the imprint of the flesh that remains in us, we need to have a spiritual mindset that believes all that the scriptures convey about our life in Christ, and that requires discipline and perseverance.

Our constant assurance of the presence of the Almighty is to know in our hearts and minds that we are with the God of all glory and Majesty, and He is with us.

‘Therefore my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.’ Phil 2:12-13

In all these ways God's word tells us that in Christ we are more than conquerors.

John Owen wrote the following in reference to 2 Cor 4:6-8, 16-18:

"In this, then, our present edification is principally concerned; for in this present beholding of the glory of Christ, the life and power of faith are most eminently acted. And from this exercise of faith, love to Christ principally, if not solely, arises and springs. If, therefore, we desire to have faith in its vigour or love in its power, giving rest, complacency and satisfaction to our own souls, we are to seek for them in the diligent discharge of this duty; elsewhere they will not be found. In this would I live; in this would I die; upon this would I dwell in my thoughts and affections, to the withering and consumption of all the painted beauties of this world, to the crucifying all things here below, until they become to me a dead and deformed thing, no way suitable for affectionate embraces."

‘So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.’ Rom 8:12-14

To live as a follower of Christ is to live with the proper mindset and an eternal perspective. To live as a child of God is to abstain from the passions of the flesh that harm our soul. To live as a light in the world as children of God is to maintain an honourable lifestyle that is pleasing to God our Father.

Oh Lord, may I always have eyes to see and ears to hear.

Living Water Resources

Come to the River

‘So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness. But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.’

Eph 4:17-24

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