

Liberty Commentary March 30, 2009

I was recently watching a cable news channel where a nationally known pastor was being interviewed about the current economic crisis in the United States. The question was asked, “how does one stay positive during difficult times?”

I remember years ago a story of two prison inmates. They each looked out their prison bars, but each had a different perspective on what they saw. One prisoner saw mud, dirt, and weeds while the other saw the bright blue sky and the radiant sun. For the one prisoner his outlook on life was despair and hopelessness, but for the other his outlook on life was for a better day when he would cast off his prison garments for the freedom to walk in the warmth of the summer sun.

These indeed are challenging times for millions of Americans as the economy slows and the fear of being laid off looms as a constant threat. For those who only have their confidence in the material things of this world, they only see the mud, dirt and weeds of their present situation. Jesus tells us in Matthew chapter six, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

Whether it is a financial crisis, marriage crisis, health crisis or any other crises of life, those who try to find solace by looking to the things that this world can offer will be overcome with despair, depression, pessimism and negativism. On the other hand, those who look upward and focus their time and attention on the eternal things where God reigns, will find great satisfaction and fulfillment because they are laying up their treasures in heaven where they

will one day receive a reward for their stewardship of Gods manifold blessing while here on earth.

The Apostle Paul writes from a Roman prison these inspired and positive words, “for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.” Paul had endured much persecution. He had been abandoned by many of his friends. He had been bitten by a poisonous snake. He had been left for dead in a city street after being stoned by an angry mob. He had been evicted from almost every city he entered because of the hostility to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and now some 25 years into his ministry, Paul finds himself falsely accused and sitting in a Roman prison where he writes to the church in Philippi exhorting them to be steadfast in their faith.

When Paul looked out his prison cell he did not see mud, but he saw the Son, S-O-N. Paul was able to stay positive while enduring difficult situations because his confidence was not in the material things of this world, but rather his confidence was in the Lord Jesus Christ whom he had met on the road to Damascus and consequently Jesus changed his life from that of a pessimistic, critical hater of Christians, to become the greatest missionary of all time who wrote half the New Testament, started some 100 churches throughout the known world of his day and left a legacy that continues to impact the lives of people even today.

For the Christian who focuses his or her attention upon the S-O-N, they are the people who are positive and motivated in life irrespective of the current political or economic situation. They are the people who know what they believe and why they believe it regardless of the naysayers and malcontents who try to dissuade them from their faith. They are the people who get things done for Christ and leave a lasting legacy for their family and the community to follow. They inspire hope in people by staying true to their faith in the prosperous times as well as during the valleys of life.

The Apostle Paul writes in first Timothy chapter six, “But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”

Living life was never intended to be easy. In fact, it is down right challenging and difficult. Without Christ in your life all you will see is the mud and weeds of life. However, with Christ you can excel to new and glorious heights regardless of the ebb and flow of life because, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”. (Philippians 4:13)

Pastor, Randy Mason www.libertybaptistofmarshalltown.com
Liberty Baptist Church