

December 25, 2011

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Monday

Phil. 1:12-13 I want you to know that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard.

How you frame your circumstances makes all the difference in how you respond to them and how you celebrate your journey. Paul did not do what most of us would do. He did not spend time blaming others, bemoaning his plight, or becoming depressed by his circumstances. Instead he reckoned the hand of his gracious and loving God in every situation. Therefore he looked for and saw a purpose, plan, and providence in all things. God was at work and Paul was pleased to be a tool and a partner however and wherever God took him. Do you want to change the joy of your journey? Don't change your circumstances; change your perspective.

Tuesday

Luke 1:38 Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word."

Have you reckoned yet how much God loves you? He loves you so much that He willingly gave His Son Jesus to die in your place. Meditate upon that thought. Let it sink in. Let its impact grow upon you. Mary understood God's great love for her and the honor which that love bestowed upon her life. Reckoning God's love first, then she could see her call, her circumstances, and her journey all as coming from and expressing God's love to her. It changed everything. Of course she was willing to bear the shame of an unwed mother. Of course she would bear the trauma of the stable and the terror of the cross. In it all she reckoned God's love.

Wednesday

Heb. 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Faith is not a feeling. And it certainly is not demanding and receiving what you want from God! How foolish are those who think it so. How sad that they have missed biblical truth and traded it for self-serving heresy. We are not God's lords. He is the Lord God! Faith is the willing trust that you place in God. Trust to keep His promises. Trust to lead you forward. Trust to walk wherever He takes you and to believe that He will always take you to places of grace flowing from His love. Faith is following even when, especially when, the journey is unclear or not understood. Faith is a noun describing the act of trusting -- trusting in God.

Thursday

Luke 1:46 Mary said: "My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior."

Seeing the wonder of God's love and the work of God's hand, even or especially, in the circumstances of her life: Mary's response was worship and praise to God. She drew near to Him in hardship. She praised Him in difficulties. She exalted Him in praise. She sang of His faithfulness. Strength for your journey is found in genuine worship. Do not allow the past, the present, or the future's trials to pull you away from the worshipping church. Such is Satan's desire. Draw ever closer to the church in worship. Engage yourself in worship; in worship God will encounter you.

Friday

Luke 1:52 "He has brought down rulers from their thrones, and has exalted those who were humble."

Would you like one key for a successful year? HUMILITY! God exalts you when you walk correctly aligned under His authority. Humility searches for God's will, seeks to walk in obedience to the full counsel of God's word, and to serve God. Humility puts God in the primary place of your life. He is your first priority. Humility says, "Here I am, ready to serve, ready to learn, ready to embrace, ready to forgive, ready to love." God exalts the humble and tears down the prideful.