

XXII. God has made promises to us regarding difficulties of life.

A. He has promised us strength so that we can be content in any state (Php. 4:11-13).

1. We can be content when we are brought low (humbled).
2. We can be content when we overflow.
3. We can be content when full.
4. We can be content when hungry.
5. We receive this strength in our inner man to be content.
6. We receive this strength **in** the one strengthening us, that is Christ.
 - a) In Christ is where we get the strength, "by the grace in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2:1; cf. Rom. 5:1-2).
 - b) The Spirit is the One who strengthens us in our inner man (Eph. 3:16).

B. Christ promised Paul that His grace was sufficient for Paul's thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:9).

1. The word "sufficient" is related to the word "content" in Philippians four.
2. J.H. Thayer defines this verb, "to be possessed of unfailling strength; to be strong, to suffice, to be enough."
3. Paul had to learn that Christ's grace would give him sufficient strength to deal with his scars.
4. This refers back to the strength from God's grace (Rom. 5:1-2).
5. We too must learn that His grace is strong enough to deal with our traumas.

C. Godliness with contentment is a source of great gain (1 Tim. 6:6).

1. The word "contentment" is related to the verb "sufficient" in 2 Corinthians 12.
2. Godliness is the quality of honoring God.
 - a) We honor God by using what He has given to us in the manner He intended it to be used.
 - (1) He has given us eternal life.
 - (2) He has given us a new nature.
 - b) We use eternal life to be godly (Tit. 1:1-2).
3. Some think that godliness is a means of gain or consists of gain (1 Tim. 6:5).
4. We must learn that we can honor God and we do not need material prosperity.
5. We can find God's provision through godliness to be sufficient.

6. We can be content with food for the day and covering (6:8).

D. Christ promised to never leave or abandon us, so we can be content (Heb. 13:5).

1. We should live without a love for money.
2. We should be content with whatever is present, be that much or little.
3. We should remember Christ is always present with us.

E. The issue is whether we will put our "faith" or trust in our possessions or in God? We often are discontent because we want something other than what God has given us, and we don't want to live by faith but by sight.

F. God has promised that we do not need to fear death (Heb. 2:15).

1. Christ has rendered idle the devil's power regarding death (2:14).
 - a) He freed us from the fear of death.
 - b) Satan enslaved us with the fear of death, manipulating people into making irrational decisions.
2. Christ called believers to not fear what they were about to suffer (Rev. 2:10).
 - a) Satan was about to throw some of them into prison.
 - b) Satan tempts them to not be faithful, probably to state that they do not believe in Him under threat of death.
3. Christ has made death "gain" as opposed to loss (Php. 1:21).
 - a) Paul craved leaving to be with Christ (1:23). He was living free of fear.
 - b) Paul considered dying to be much better than having to live (1:23).

G. God has promised that our inner man is renewed daily (2 Cor. 4:16).

1. We have the treasure of light in ourselves (4:7).
 - a) Our bodies are like clay pots.
 - b) God's power is seen through this.
2. We are confronted by problems from every direction (4:8-11a).
3. We do not lose heart (4:16).
 - a) Our outer man is breaking down every day.
 - b) Our inner man is renewed daily.
 - c) Our present lightness which is pressure (that's ironic) is producing an excessive weight of glory (4:17).

4. We need to look at the unseen eternal things (4:18).
 5. We do not look at the things that can be seen (4:18). Yes, most of do look at the things that we can see, but Paul is telling us that the proper focus should on the things we cannot see. Getting too wrapped up in this present world will drive us nuts and wear out down.
- H. We have grace from alongside of God when we suffer for the right reason rather than the wrong (1 Pet. 2)
1. We are to submit to every human creation (institution) because of the Lord (2:13).
 - a) Leaders normally avenge or set out to right wrongs by dealing with those doing wrong (2:14).
 - b) Leaders normally praise those who do good (2:14). Certainly church history demonstrates that many have suffered for doing the right thing, but that is not always the case.
 2. We can do God's will and silence the foolish human ignorance by doing good (2:15).
 - a) We are free ones (2:16).
 - b) We should not use our freedom as a cover for doing evil (2:16).
 - c) We should use our freedom to function as God's slaves (2:16).
 3. We should show honor to all men (2:17).
 4. We should love the brothers (2:17).
 5. We should fear God (2:17).
 6. We should honor the king (2:17).
 7. We should even submit to masters if we are a slave (2:18).
 - a) We submit to good masters.
 - b) We submit to easygoing masters.
 - c) We submit to harsh masters.
 8. We should submit in view of God's grace (2:19-21).
 - a) It is grace if we have to bear grief and it isn't fair (2:19).
 - b) It is no benefit if we suffer for sinning (2:20).
 - c) It is grace alongside God when we do good and suffer (2:20).
 - d) We were called to suffer (2:21).
 - e) Christ left us an example of how to suffer (2:21).
 - (1) He did not sin (2:22).
 - (2) He had no deceit in His mouth (2:22).
 - (3) He did not retaliate with insults when He was insulted (2:23).
 - (4) He did not threaten when suffering (2:23).
 - (5) He handed Himself over to the One who judges righteously (2:23).
 - (6) He carried our sins in His body while He hung on the tree (2:24).
 - (7) THIS IS OUR EXAMPLE!
 - (8) THIS IS HOW WE CAN EXPERIENCE GRACE ALONGSIDE THE FATHER.
- I. The Holy Spirit refreshes Himself on us when we suffer properly for the right reasons (1 Pet. 4:14).
1. We should not think it strange when we face a fiery temptation (4:12). This fiery temptation involved persecution.
 2. We should rejoice as we get to share (fellowship) in Christ's sufferings (4:13).
 3. We can look forward to a future in which we will rejoice while being exuberantly happy (4:13)!!
 4. We can be happy ones if we are harshly insulted for the name of Christ (4:14).
 5. We can know that the Holy Spirit refreshes Himself on us when we are living in this way (4:14).
 6. We should not suffer for doing unrighteous things (4:15).
 7. We should glorify God if we suffer for being an anointed one (Christian) (4:16).
 8. THIS IS WHY THE SPIRIT REFRESHES HIMSELF.
 - a) We are anointed with the Holy Spirit because He indwells us.
 - b) We only live out Christ's character by the work of the Spirit.
 - c) We are cause for the Spirit's refreshment when we rely upon Him to live as God planned.
 9. We are a source of judgment for the world (4:17-18).
 10. We are to entrust our souls (lives?, probably souls, emotions) to our faithful Creator, if we suffer (4:18-19).

- J. How do you possess your soul?
1. The writer of Hebrews expressed his confidence that the readers were not those who draw back, but those who use faith to possess their souls (Heb. 10:39).
 2. HOW DO WE DO THIS?
 3. 1 Peter 1:13 provides parallels.
 - a) Peter refers to the soul
 - (1) The future salvation of our soul (1:9).
 - (2) Fleshly lusts war against our soul (2:11).
 - (3) Christ is the shepherd and oversee or our souls (2:25).
 - (4) Eight souls were saved through means of the water on the ark (3:20). While “soul” may be a metonymy for “person” Peter may also be using the word to emphasize the struggle in the soul of those who faced the flood.
 - (5) We can entrust our souls to our faithful Creator (4:19).
 - b) Peter charged his readers to girdle their thoughts by soberly hoping on the end when Jesus Christ will carry grace to us (1:13).
 4. The uses of the word “possess” [*peripoiēō* and *peripoiēsis*] inform the meaning.
 - a) A person can seek to possess his life (Lk. 17:33).
 - b) God purchased the Church by His own blood (Acts 20:28).
 - c) Deacons can possess a good depth and boldness in their faith by serving well (1 Tim. 3:13). He must use faith often in addressing others’ needs and every time he does, it adds depth to his faith.
 - d) We are Christ’s special possession (Eph. 1:14).
 - e) God has planned for us to possess salvation not face wrath (1 Thess. 5:9).
 - f) God has called us to have the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ as a special possession (2 Thess. 2:14).
 - g) We are a people who are God’s special possession (1 Pet. 2:9).
 5. The word “soul” is significant to the Hebrews’ problem.
 - a) God’s Word can divide or distinguish between the soul and spirit (4:12).
 - b) We have a hope that acts as an anchor for the soul (6:19).
 - c) We might become weary in our soul if we neglect to look off to Jesus who endured much adversity (12:3).
 - d) Our leaders in the church look out for our souls, to help us use it well (13:17).
 6. So how do we put this information together to possess the soul?
 - a) We must allow the Word of God to help us distinguish between what we FEEL and what we KNOW is true. Too often we allow our emotions to take the lead and do not act or think in keeping with the truth we know.
 - b) We must focus on the hope set before us so it can anchor our souls (6:18-19). Our hope rests on who Christ is.
 - (1) He can respond to our cry for help (2:18).
 - (2) He has freed us from the slavery that comes with the fear of death (2:15).
 - (3) He can give us rest to approach God boldly (4:1, 16).
 - (4) He can carry us to maturity (6:1).
 - (5) The HOPE has entered inside the veil where Christ our forerunner has entered (6:18-19).
 - (6) THAT MEANS THE HOPE IS NOT CHRIST SPECIFICALLY, BUT THE ABILITY TO ENTER GOD’S PRESENCE DIRECTLY THROUGH CHRIST.
 - c) We should fix our gaze as we run this race on Christ who did not become weary but finished His race (12:3).
 - d) To possess our soul, we must anchor it by focusing on what we know, and letting go of the things we feel about our familiar religious practices and let Him carry us to maturity. As long as we hold on to the things down here and the traditions which have been forced on us, we will always be tossed about in our soul.