

Praying

“If anyone could tell you the shortest, surest way to all happiness and perfection, he must tell you to make it a rule to yourself to **thank and praise God for everything that happens to you.**

For it is certain that **whatever** seeming **calamity happens to you**, if you **thank and praise God** for it, **you turn it into a blessing.**” – William Law, clergyman, 18th century

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The King James Bible Church

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Let's study Paul's life

You'd reckon if anyone knew how to pray, it would be Paul the apostle. And as we study Paul's life, it will be obvious how he prayed.

But I'm just an ordinary Christian?

In your eyes - "Yes", but in God's eyes "No".

I don't understand?

You may not have the official title of Pastor, Preacher, Evangelist or Teacher but when you think about it, all Christians do the same work. As Christians, we all witness, care for other Christians, teach them the Bible and 'preach' and exhort others as well.

So?

We'll look at 2nd Corinthians and see what challenges Paul faced and how he prayed and took them to the Lord.

As Paul says *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:1)*

What is 2nd Corinthians about then?

The theme is "The Ministry". It describes Paul's infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions and distresses for Christ's sake (2Cor 12:10). But not just Paul, 2nd Corinthians is a description of the **trials, tests** and **tribulations** that await for any Christian.

God will put you through such trying circumstances such that you will be able to speak personally of his **comfort** and **deliverance** not from your head, but from your heart.

From experience and not just out of a book, you will know, that you know, that you know, that you know ... that comfort and consolation only comes from the Lord.

And this will come from throwing yourself 100% in utter dependence, in crippling circumstances, on God the Father

Why?

Then God will get all the glory like Moses at the Red Sea! And Shadrach in the fire furnace!

What sort of circumstances did Paul face?

Paul uses 45 words in 2nd Corinthians, to describe his ministry. They are "**anguish, perplexity, devour, smite, bondage, weak, despair, forsaken, faint, persecuted, sorry, grieved, down, perish, burden, cast down, groaning, poor, chastened, hunger, beaten, perils, pain, infirmity, stoned, reproaches, offended, weariness, mourning, trembling, fear, poverty, affliction, despair, necessities, imprisonments, distressed, destruction, tumults, killed, tribulation, dying, suffering, terrified, death.**" examples, admonition and teaching.

So?

Do you know what really “killed” them and delayed their journey? The journey from Egypt to Canaan (their promised land) should have only taken them a couple of weeks apparently. Why did it take 40 years? **MURMURING!**

*“And when the people **COMPLAINED**, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp.” (Numbers 11:1).* They kept wanting their old life in Egypt. God was giving them manna from heaven, but they wanted the old life of Egypt – the fish, the melons, the cucumbers and so on.

What’s murmuring?

It’s called having a whinge and a whine, complaining, bleating, not being content with what you have, grumbling, sullen, frowning, upset with your lot in life, being dealt a ‘bad hand’ in life, walking around depressing others with any upsetting details of your life, seeing your glass as half-empty and not half-full.

“It’s too hot today.” “I want more money” “I wish I had a better marriage!” “I deserve better!” “Why me Lord?” “I’m a Christian Lord, you should be treating me better.” “Not rissoles again” “Why can’t we have a nicer house like our neighbours!”. “Look at my clothes. Why can’t I have better shoes?” Got the picture yet?

It’s alright for you, but you don’t know the crosses I have to bear!

Try this one. What if, as an infant, your parents took you to the doctor to fix up a minor eye condition? The doctor put the wrong ointment on your eyes and you were made blind for life?

This was the lot of **Fanny Crosby** who **used her blindness to write hundreds of hymns for the Lord**. She found her work for the Lord through her handicap. (Blind from a medical mishap when 6 weeks old)

Well I just don’t feel like it!

Well you are sinning if you don’t start praising

Ooo! I'm not sure that's for me.

Dear Reader, you have no choice. **Your life is no longer your own.** You **will** be conformed to the image of the Son (Romans 8:29) whether you like it or not. You can't hope to fight God and win. Put it this way, the sooner you get on the program the better. The sooner and quicker you learn how to pray the better.

Welcome to the Christian life!

And furthermore, you will thank and praise the Lord from the bottom of your heart that he has seen fit to destroy any form of self support or confidence you may have in yourself, in order for him to get all the glory. (Psalm 119:75)

As Paul states "*And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. **Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.***" 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Indeed, "...that **the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.**" 2 Corinthians 4:7

Alright, where do we start?

Paul talks about Israel in the desert and their five chief sins of lust, idolatry, fornication, tempting and **murmuring** (1Cor 10:6-11). Paul says we are to use these for our and thanking the Lord for everything that comes your way. God says *And we know that **all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*** Romans 8:28

Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Ephesians 5:20

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. Philippians 4:6

Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

God is in no hurry. Unless you get on his prayer program, you'll just spin your wheels and sink further into the mud (Hosea 4:16).

Well, that's all easier said than done

Let me put it this way. What does a father want from his children? Thanks, gratitude and appreciation. Do you think that any good father doesn't know what his children want and in advance as well? What parent likes their child to be on the whinge and whine all the time? "I want this and I want that" "My friends have such and such and I don't" Their focus in on themselves about what they need and want.

God the Father is the same. He knows what we need before we even ask. But most people just keep bashing on God's door for their health and wealth and whatever else they want, as though God is ignorant of their needs.

What he wants to hear is our **praise** and **thanks** for, and in **all**, our situations. – good, bad and ugly. In his time, when and where he sees fit, his will, will be done. When we don't do this we sin. God says *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. Romans 12:2.*

Our thoughts must be his thoughts.

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; 2 Corinthians 10:5

I don't get it

Look, God just loves to be the first and last port of call in all matters of life. He deliberately knocks out any form of self-support we have. God hates our independence. **Our calamities are his blessings to us in disguise. HE'LL GET ALL THE GLORY when he delivers.**

Well I still don't like it!

And I'll tell you why. You still think it's your life. You won't have the life **you want**. "If I was a Doctor or a Lawyer I could serve him better." You secretly hate the fact your life is over, being put to death in Christ. You may have a fear about being sent as a missionary?

This won't be easy

It'll be as easy as you want it to be. There was **a crippled girl** who hesitated going to the doctors to get healed. "I don't think I'd better" she said. "I've grown to love Jesus very much, because he is such a strength to me in my

weakness, and I'm afraid that if I were made well, there might be the chance of my loving him less". God said to Paul "... *My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore **I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*** 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

A quote from Martin Luther

God tries all hearts. What's in yours?
