Daily Devotion #103

Overcoming Grumpiness

*1 Thessalonians 5:16 – “Rejoice always.”*

Grumpy, Grumpy, Grumpy. Life has a way of making us all grumpy usually in the morning. I don’t know why it is, but if there is ever a time people are grumpy, it’s in the morning. Whether its talking to the clerk in the store first thing in the morning or sitting at a red light and not moving fast enough for the person behind you, people are grumpy.

Of course, grumpiness is a part of our sinful nature. We know that because of how God speaks about how we should be. Paul is a great example of someone who preached the opposite of grumpiness. To the Thessalonian church, he reminded them to rejoice always. And that was because he knew that no matter what life holds, it is easier to be grumpy about everything. We often, in our sinfulness, resort to complaining and just being grumpy about our lives.

But it doesn’t have to be that way. If there was ever someone who had the right to be grumpy, it was Paul. He was a well-known religious leader, living his life to fulfill the Law of God. Life was good. (Philippians 3) But when He met Jesus, that former life changed. (Acts 9) He went from someone who was respected in his community to someone who was now the enemy.

Because of his stance for Christ, he was ridiculed, beaten numerous times, left for dead, abandoned, at times without necessary provisions. (2 Corinthians 11) He was isolated in prisons and treated like a criminal, simply because he put his trust and whole heart into the work of Jesus. (Acts 16:16-40) That change in life would make the best of people grumpy. But not Paul.

In fact, to the Philippian church he wrote of himself, “*But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice of service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all*”. (Philippians 2:17) Who talks like that? Who thinks like that? Who honestly lives their lives joyfully when life is not going well? The answer is simple, Paul. But not just Paul. God’s people live that way. Why? Because our hope is not in what happens to us or doesn’t happen to us in this life. Our joy comes from knowing that we are not of this world anymore and we are eventually going to our real home, heaven.

But even though heaven is future, God has given to us all we need to be joyful now. To rejoice always. And it’s not because life is always good. Life is full of challenges and things that make us grumpy. But the key is to remember what God has done for us. “*Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.”* (Philippians 4:8)

God took it upon Himself to sacrifice His Son for us so that we would have joy - inner contentment that comes from the filling of the Holy Spirit who Jesus sent to live in all believers after He left the earth. (John 14:6) To have the Holy Spirit in us is something the world does not have. And because the Holy Spirit lives in us, our focus is on spiritual truth and spiritual things, or should be at least.

So, what do we do when we are grumpy and life just gets the best of us? We rejoice! We reorient our minds to what is good and true and lovely. We focus our minds on what God has done for us and remember that He has promised to provide everything we need. (Philippians 4:19) We purposefully change our thinking to all that is holy and righteous and good, which is Christ. He is to be our focus. Remember, He gave His life so we could have a new life. And that new life is now not just in the future. Remember what Jesus said, “I have come that you may have life, and have it abundantly. (John 10:10) Wow! An abundant life? Here? Now? Yes! Grumpy? No!