

Sermon Series: “Celebrating Life–Catching the Joy Stealers”–Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN – 6/14/09
Title: “Celebrating Trials: Catching Resentment”
Text: 1 Peter 4: 12-19
Intro.: *Illus.: Definition of Resentment and Obnoxious Saint*
Theme: When we get mad at God for troubles we endure and resent the life conditions which He seems to have dealt us, we must remember that for Jesus’ sake He even has redeemed our trials for an eternal purpose.

Don’t be surprised by daily troubles! (1 Peter 4:12-13)

- Living your life in a broken world
 1. The cure to “**alienation**” from God
 - a. Remember that it is Satan’s lie “*becoming a believer inoculates you from the effect of sin’s impact*”
 - b. *The devil was a murderer from the beginning. He has never been truthful. He doesn't know what the truth is. Whenever he tells a lie, he's doing what comes naturally to him. He's a liar and the father of lies. John 8:44*
 - c. Grounding yourself in God’s word and promise (*If you dwell in my word . . . you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. John 8:31-32*)
 - d. **Illus.: Keep Reading and Keep on Praying**
 2. God never promised believers a life freed from suffering/persecution but that doesn’t nullify God’s love
 - a. *Strengthen the disciples and encourage them to remain true to the faith. We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God. Acts 14:22*
 - b. God did promise you an eternal home which will be **freed from tears, pain, or death.** (Revelation 21:4)
- Responding rather than reacting “when” we suffer
 1. **Isaiah 43:1-3**
 2. Looking to God who has not only redeemed you but your times of trials for an eternal purpose
 - a. *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. James 1:2-4*
 3. Celebrate with joy even in the midst of your tears – rooting out all bitterness and resentment because trust God
 - a. *Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Ephesians 4:31*
 - b. **Illus.: Misery Dinner --Now is the time to celebrate**

Troubles to avoid and others to navigate (1 Peter 4:14-19)

- Watch your witness while you may be suffering
 1. When we loose our focus (heaven), we sometimes resent God’s intervention/lack of it in life, marriage, job, child
 - a. We rebelliously involve ourselves in **conduct unbecoming and pay the price (vs. 14-15)**
 2. We give a poor witness to the **hope that we have**
 - a. *But dedicate your lives to Christ as Lord. Always be ready to defend your confidence in God when anyone asks you to explain it. However, make your defense with gentleness and respect. Keep your conscience clear. Then those who treat the good Christian life you live with contempt will feel ashamed that they have ridiculed you. After all, if it is God's will, it's better to suffer for doing good than for doing wrong. 1 Peter 3:15-17*
- **Be** rather than **Do** endurance
 1. “You **are blessed** because the Spirit of glory–God’s Spirit–is resting on you.” (vs. 14)
 2. Your faith’s power is not in what you can muster but in God’s Spirit at work in and thru you
 3. *“Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great.” Matthew 5:11-12*
- Adapting to each moment to trust more in God and lean less on your ability in the midst of tough times (vs. 19)
 1. *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. Proverbs 3:5*
 2. **Illus.: Trust is the issue**
 3. Not a fatalism at the hand of a whimsical God but faith in a God who really cares for you
 4. Those who suffer because that is God's will for them must entrust themselves to a faithful Creator in doing what is right. (vs. 9)

Definition of resentment

Resentment is when you let your hurt become hate. Resentment is when you allow what is eating you to eat you up. Resentment is when you poke, stoke, feed, and fan the fire, stirring the flames and reliving the pain. Resentment is the deliberate decision to nurse the offense until it becomes a black, furry, growling grudge. **Max Lucado, The Applause of Heaven (Word, 1996), p.100**

Obnoxious Saint

If you are a saint, God will continually upset your programme, and if you are wedded to your programme, you will become that most obnoxious creature under heaven, an irritable saint. **Oswald Chambers in Run Today's Race. Christianity Today, Vol. 32, no. 2.**

Keep Reading and Keep on Praying

It is a common temptation of Satan to make us give up the reading of the Word and prayer when our enjoyment is gone; as if it were of no use to read the Scriptures when we do not enjoy them, and as if it were no use to pray when we have no spirit of prayer. The truth is that in order to enjoy the Word, we ought to continue to read it, and the way to obtain a spirit of prayer is to continue praying. The less we read the Word of God, the less we desire to read it, and the less we pray, the less we desire to pray. **George Muller in "A Narrative of Some of the Lord's Dealings with George Muller."**

Misery Dinner – Now is the time to celebrate

Author Leo Buscaglia tells this story about his mother and their "misery dinner." It was the night after his father came home and said it looked as if he would have to go into bankruptcy because his partner had absconded with their firm's funds. His mother went out and sold some jewelry to buy food for a sumptuous feast. Other members of the family scolded her for it. But she told them that "the time for joy is now, when we need it most, not next week." Her courageous act rallied the family. **Christopher News Notes, August, 1993**

Trust is the issue

The Department of Transportation has set aside \$200 million for research and testing of an Automated Highway System. This system would purportedly relieve traffic woes with "super cruise control" in heavily congested cities. Special magnets embedded in the asphalt every four feet would transfer signals between vehicle and main computer system. Steering, acceleration, and braking would be controlled by sensors, computers navigation systems, and cameras along the side of the road. Control would be returned to drivers at their specified exit. Researchers and government officials claim they have the technological capability to address any potential problem. But one challenge they have yet to address. Says Mike Doble, Buick's technology manager, "The only thing we can't do yet is get people to comfortably trust the system. It's not a technology issue. Would you drive, closely spaced, at high speeds, through San Diego?" Trust is always the question. **USA Today (4/9/97). Leadership, Vol. 17, no. 4.**

1 Peter 4:12-19

¹²Beloved, don't be surprised by the fiery troubles that are coming in order to test you. Don't feel as though something strange is happening to you, ¹³but to the extent that you suffer be glad as you participate in Christ's sufferings. Then you will also be full of joy when he appears again in his glory. ¹⁴If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed because the Spirit of glory—the Spirit of God—is resting on you. ¹⁵If you suffer, you shouldn't suffer for being a murderer, thief, criminal, or troublemaker. ¹⁶If you suffer for being a Christian, don't feel ashamed, but praise God for being called that name. ¹⁷The time has come for the judgment to begin, and it will begin with God's family. If it starts with us, what will be the end for those who refuse to obey the Good News of God? ¹⁸If it's hard for the person who has God's approval to be saved, what will happen to the godless sinner? ¹⁹Those who suffer because that is God's will for them must entrust themselves to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

Isaiah 43:1-3

But now, thus says the LORD, your Creator, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel, "**Do not fear**, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine! When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, Nor will the flame burn you. For I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior."