

Monday Morning Rewind – July 12, 2010

Good morning! Have you been disappointed with God? Perhaps you've felt like the dispirited disciples walking home to Emmaus on Resurrection Sunday (see Luke 24:13-24). Jesus hadn't met their expectations, and suddenly, there were left wondering if He was the "chosen one" after all.

A lay-off, a discontinuance of unemployment benefits, a cancer diagnosis, a separation or divorce, a prolonged illness, a custody case—any one of these unexpected detours on our road to happiness can cause us to lose our spiritual equilibrium, and plummet into a slough of despond, wondering if following God is worth it. Wondering if the "King" has betrayed us. Wondering if there is a God, or if this whole Christian thing is a cunningly devised fable. Wondering if Jesus really is who He says He is. Like the disheartened disciples on the road to Emmaus, we had hoped for something else. We had hoped for a new job. We had hoped for a restored relationship. We had hoped for a better diagnosis. We had hoped for more money and fewer bills. We had hoped that in following Jesus, everything was going to be alright. And yet, the struggle persists, the trial continues, and we wonder: Is Jesus truly the "one" or is there someone or something else we should be trusting?

John the Baptist felt the same way. Rewind first to Matthew 14:3-5 to learn why John was imprisoned, and then to Matthew 11:1-3. John surely expected Jesus to rescue him. After all, he had done nothing wrong and was first cousin to the Messiah. But "As week after week passed, bringing no change, despondency and doubt crept over him." (*Desire of Ages*, p. 215)

Ever been there? You've prayed and prayed and rescue hasn't come. And the longer we go with no change in our circumstances, the greater our gloom and the more we begin to doubt. *What's going on God? What are you doing up there? Carest Thou not that we perish?*

When doubts begin to assault your faith, remember this: **When there is no change in your circumstances, everything is gonna be alright because there is no change in God.** (See Mal. 3:6; Hebrews 13:8.) Circumstances may change but God doesn't change with them. And because He never changes, you can trust that if He's ever been faithful to you in the past, He'll be faithful to you now. Everything's gonna be alright.

John's disciples brought him news of Jesus' activities—of the great crowds following Jesus and his powerful preaching. Revival was breaking out and John was missing it! John couldn't understand why Jesus wasn't behaving the way he thought the Messiah should, and his disappointment lead him to question whether Jesus was "the one."

When you don't receive the miracle you want, the way you want, at the time you want it, everything is gonna be alright because of the miracle of grace you received on Calvary. If you have to have a miracle in order for everything to be alright, nothing will ever be right, because the just must live by faith. (Gal. 3:7) If your faith is only in miracles, then what happens to your faith when one doesn't happen? God must be God in the valley as well as on the mountaintop.

The only miracle that counts is the miracle that took place on a hill called Calvary. And it is because of *that* miracle--when God in Christ took my sins upon Himself and wiped my slate clean and gave me eternal life—it is because of that miracle that now I know everything's gonna be alright.

"Doubts which otherwise would never have arisen were suggested to John. Satan rejoiced to hear the words of these disciples, and to see how they bruised the soul of the Lord's messenger . . . There were hours when the whisperings of demons tortured his spirit, and the shadow of a terrible fear crept over him. Could it be that the long-hoped-for Deliverer had not yet appeared?" (*Desire of Ages*, pp. 216, 217)

What are the things demons whisper in your ear when you're discouraged? *Have you wasted your time believing the Bible? Has God abandoned you? If this is how He treats His friends, why stick around?* Demon spirits pile on when we're down.

John, didn't discuss his doubts with his disciples, but he sent them to Jesus with this message: "Are you the One who was to come, or should we expect someone else?"

Jesus received the message and instead of rushing right to the palace to overthrow Herod and release John, He sent back what seems to be a rather terse reply (See Matt. 11:4, 5). Here's what we need to know about Jesus' reply: **Things weren't going according to John's**

plans, but Jesus had to remind John that everything was going to be alright because things were going according to God's plans.

Our plans may not always be God's plans. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa. 55:7-9)

For John the Baptist Jesus didn't open the prison doors, but he did open his eyes. And once John saw that Jesus was who He said He was—not based solely on what He was doing for Him directly, but for what He was doing for all—John knew that everything was going to be alright. Though he would be executed six months later, John knew the prison wouldn't be his final destination, but rather the paradise of God. Jesus' Messiahship is not determined by what He does of my will, but rather, by what He does of God's will. And if He's who He says He is and I'm in Him and He's in me, everything is going to be OK. Why? Because the tomb is empty. He's not there. Because He's conquered the grave and is at the right hand of the Father. And where He is, there I am and will be also. His destiny is my destiny. And that's why everything's gonna be alright!

Jesus' answer was enough for John. His words fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy about the Messiah. John knew that Messiah had come. He knew God's plan had not failed and the rescue plan for humanity was in full operation. And though his earthly life was to be cut short, John knew that because Jesus was who He said He was, death itself wouldn't be able to keep he and Jesus apart. And it can't keep us apart either.

Therefore, **everything's gonna be alright because nothing can separate us from the Love of God!** "...neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38, 39)

And one last thing. Matt. 11:6 – "Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me." The Greek word is: *skan-dal-id'-zo*, or to "scandalize" and cause offense. Jesus was telling John and us, "Don't be offended and tempted to turn away from me when you spend more time in the valley than on the mountain top; don't be offended when the money's funny and you can't see where your next dime is coming from; don't be offended when you can't make sense of what's happening to you and I simply ask you to trust me. Don't be offended when the process is long and you're losing your song in the night." Cry out with the anonymous poet:

*I want to let go but I won't let go.
There are battles to fight,
By day and by night,
For God and the right,
And I'll never let go.
I want to let go but I won't let go.
No, I will not yield,
What, lie down on the field,
And surrender my shield?
No! I'll never let go.
I want to let go but I won't let go.
May this be my song,
Mid legions of wrong,
O, God, keep me strong,
So (even when heaven is silent)
I will never, ever let go!"*

And because Jesus will never, ever let us go, everything's gonna be alright! –Pastor Randy

p.s. Thank you to everyone who contributed food, time, money, hugs, or muscle in Taine's memorial service and dinner on Sabbath. You are an amazing church family. You love well and I love you. Blessings.

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2 Chron. 7:14

"The need is great. The key is prayer. The time is now."