

Truths to Live By When the Going Gets Tough

Being a Christian and following God is a great adventure. It's also challenging because, to people who don't believe in Christ, we seem a bit odd in our way of thinking and doing things, like we're upside down compared to how the world generally operates.

But the truth is, we're part of "the upside-down kingdom that is right-side up."

During His ministry on earth, Jesus' message was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near" (Matt. 4:17, NIV). His disciples believed Jesus had come to set up an earthly kingdom and rule the world, but that isn't what He was talking about at all.

The disciples didn't get it. They were thinking in physical terms, not spiritual ones.

As believers in Jesus who are born again, we are new creations in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17); we belong to God and are part of His kingdom (Col. 1:12-14). The kingdom of God is unseen to the natural eye, and it is eternal.

Developing Spiritual Vision

The apostle Paul talked about seeing the unseen. In 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, he said, "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So, we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."

Paul had been beaten, shipwrecked, imprisoned and gone hungry many times, yet he considered these experiences to be “light and momentary troubles.” He believed this because the kingdom of God—what is eternal—was more real to him than this earthly realm—what is temporary.

This is hard for us because we are so accustomed to only believing what we can see with our natural eyes, and if we don't see God doing something, we assume He isn't doing anything. But instead of just looking at the world around us and our problems, we can learn to think about and see with spiritual eyes what God is in the process of doing in the midst of it all.

I've discovered that when I'm feeling discouraged because I've been praying for something a long time and I'm weary of waiting for breakthrough, instead of getting down in the dumps, I can stir up my faith and say, “God is working!”

If you want to have a steady flow of joy in your life and “the peace of God, which transcends all understanding” (Phil. 4:7), learn how to believe what you can't see more than what you can see.

Open the Eyes of My Heart

In Ephesians 1:18, Paul prayed “that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you.” The eyes of your heart can see the unseen realm of the spirit and give you hope—a confident expectation of God's goodness in your life—in every situation.

With this kind of hope, when hard times come, we can look beyond what we see in the world around us and realize that there are good things going on. God has done, and He's doing, so many things in our lives!

—He loves us and has good plans for us to give us hope and a future (Jer. 29:11).

-He's always with us and will never leave us or forsake us (Deut. 31:6; Heb. 13:5).

-Jesus paid the price to heal and restore every kind of brokenness in our lives (Isa. 53 and 61)

-And He's preparing a place for us so we can be with Him throughout eternity! (John 14:2-3).

This is the truth we need to live by.

Refuse to Give Up!

I wonder what God is up to in your life. I know it's easy to get discouraged and fearful when hard times come and it seems things will never change. But if you're a believer in Christ and you're praying according to the truth in God's Word, then you can be assured He is working. So, don't stop believing because you're not getting an answer as quickly as you'd like.

Keep believing no matter how long it takes. And remember that just because you haven't seen the final outcome yet, doesn't mean God isn't doing something. Make a determined decision to trust Him and believe what He says no matter what you think or feel or how things look. And pray for God to enlighten the eyes of your heart so you "know the hope to which he has called you" in His kingdom. {eoa}

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