

April 25, 2020

Hello Brethren,

The Greek philosopher Epictetus is credited with saying “It is not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters.” While I would certainly not agree with everything the ancient Greek philosophers opined, this one gives us something to think about – something that I think is quite scriptural!

Our world is full of very sad and frustrated people who believe they must behave one way or another because of something in their past. Our past can most certainly impact us greatly, and sometimes leave deep mental, emotional and sometimes even physical wounds from which we must recover. But its important to remember that as difficult as it may be, the past cannot take away our present freedom of choice – to choose how we will react and live.

I’m sure we remember Christ’s words in Matthew 5 where He told us to turn the other cheek, give more than you are asked for and go farther than you are compelled to go (verses 39-41). Our Lord describes a strength of character that allows us to choose how we will respond to circumstances that are beyond our control.

There are numerous contemporary examples of siblings who grew up in the same household and under the same circumstances, but made very different choices in life. Perhaps a parent was addicted to drugs or alcohol, or they were neglectful or abusive. Maybe a parent was absentee, or maybe they never met one of their parents. All are very sad and deplorable situations – and all too common today.

But often we find parents from the same family don’t turn out the same way. If father was a drunk, and one son grows up to be a drunk while the other a sober and successful business man, we might ask each son why he grew up to the way he was. Both could answer truthfully “Because my father was a drunk.” They responded to the same circumstances very differently.

As Christians, it is always important that we react in a godly manner to whatever happens around us. The Apostle Peter wrote *“For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.”* (I Peter 2:20).

This is the example set by our Older Brother, as Peter continued *“For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in his mouth; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;”* (Verses 21-22).

These last few weeks have been stressful in many ways, and we very likely have a few more weeks to go before things can begin to return to whatever the new normal is going to be. The people around us are worried, scared, angry, confused, irrational or frustrated – or maybe all of the above at the same time! We may feel some of those same things, ourselves, and no wonder.

But it is important to remember God has given us the ability to determine how we will react. Plus, we have a hope most of mankind doesn't have – because we know that at the end of the Book, our Great God is going to win, and if we remain faithful, we'll be there with Him!

“It's not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters.” Good thought to consider at this time.

Tomorrow we plan to webcast complete services locally beginning at 9:30 am. Headquarters will webcast a complete service as well beginning at 12 noon if you would like to watch that too. Many of you have commented that you are watching two and sometimes three services every Sabbath! We may be missing out on a lot of fellowship, but it seems like we've been able to connect to a lot of good spiritual food in the meantime!

I wish you all a very good Sabbath!

Best regards,

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