

Sunday, 18th May 2014

Wisdom in Life's Trials

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Calvary
Christian
fellowship

NOTES



- ❖ Introduction - Living Faith.
- ❖ The writer: James, brother of Jesus.
- ❖ Bible Reading: James 1: 1-18 (GNB)
- ❖ Our response to trials - no holds barred from James!
- ❖ One boy's response to cancer.
- ❖ Who does James think he is, saying that? Has he any credibility? Who do we listen to?
- ❖ What is James actually saying?
- ❖ Need wisdom? Just ask!
- ❖ A man with a song and a man with a smile.
- ❖ What about you?
Putting it all into practice, in real life, at work tomorrow.
- ❖ Bible Reading Again: James 1: 1-18 (The Message Version)

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

In a family, small group or community

These notes are to help you as a family, community or small group unpack the Sunday teaching. It's a bit unrealistic for a small group to do everything - **so feel free to be selective!**

OPENER

Who has encouraged you because of the way they have coped with trials and tribulation - sickness, pain, financial hardship, bereavement?

Tell some stories to inspire.

DISCUSSION

1. Do you think that you have to have experienced something to be able to share wisdom about how to cope with it?
2. Two genuine scenarios:
 - i. A man goes bankrupt because someone else fails to pay back a large sum.
 - ii. A Sudanese woman is sentenced to death by hanging by a Muslim court under Sharia law because she refuses to convert to Islam. She is a Christian brought up by a Christian mother with a Muslim father.
(True story, reported on 15th May 2014)

James says:

The rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. (v10, NASV)

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds (v2 NIV)

What do you think can make it possible for the bankrupt man or the Sudanese woman to respond as James suggests? Or is there a get-out clause in extreme cases like these?!

3. Do you have doubts or is your faith rock-solid? Be honest.
4. Do you think doubts can co-exist with faith or does the Bible deny that possibility?
5. What do you think is the difference between wisdom and knowledge?

REFLECTION

Joseph Scriven

Born into a wealthy family in Banbridge, Co. Down, N. Ireland in 1819, Joseph Scriven emigrated to Canada aged 25. He was a devastated young man. His fiancée had tragically drowned on the eve of his wedding. He carved out a new life and fell in love once again. Then, shortly before the date of his wedding, his new love fell ill and died of pneumonia. Joseph devoted the rest of his life to helping others. He never married and fought depression. He died mysteriously at the age of 66, by drowning.

We know him for this poem that he wrote for his mum when he heard that she was terribly ill back home in Ireland. He called it "Pray without ceasing". He probably never heard it sung and certainly never knew that it would become one of the most popular hymns of all time. He wasn't even given credit for it initially. Joseph Scriven may have lived a life punctuated by tragedy but he gave us these words that have encouraged hope and faith in millions.

*What a Friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.*

*Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged; take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to the Lord in prayer.*

*Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Saviour, still our refuge, take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do your friends despise, forsake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In His arms He'll take and shield you; you will find a solace there.*

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