

April 2009

A Word from our Pastor

Our Rallying Cry, "Yes, Lord" (not "Yes Lord, but...")

"God is educating you; that's why you must never drop out. He's treating you as dear children. This trouble you're in isn't punishment; it's training, the normal experience of children. ... No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. ... See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks."

Hebrews 12:7-8,11,25

I just checked a number of major news sources as I began this article: NewsMax, Fox, Drudge, CNN, and a few others. Guess what was the subject of their top stories? If you said the world economic news, you are correct. This topic is on everyone's minds. The uncertainties of it and the scope of its effects are reaching deep into the hearts of people world wide. Many of the articles below the headlines had to do with how we are coping. Honestly, if a person doesn't have Christ in their heart, there has to be deep ache of foreboding and for hope. As followers of Christ, what is to be our response?

First, we are to settle the fact that our Heavenly Father is superintending the happenings of our world and that the hardships we face (no matter how hard they get) are part of His training plan. Hardships are another way of saying "training sessions." Like a human parent, our Heavenly Father is all about seeing us take possession of the promises of His Word to us and keep us from self destruction. Hardships are allowed by Him to get our attention and "return" us onto a path toward life. Because His plan and purpose for us is to experience the good of the unshakable kingdom (Heb 12:28), our "return" is in response to His invitation toward the good He eagerly longs for us to experience.

Second, we are to understand that all spiritual discipline (read this training) is hard and unpleasant. It is unpleasant because it goes directly against our self-centered nature as we are sinners from birth. Because of this inherent sinfulness, God's training regimen is all about subduing unto death our sin nature - and it doesn't take this lying down. Spiritual training is also hard because our Enemy will tempt us in the middle of the "lesson" to give up. "It's too hard; you can't do this, besides you are just a little grasshopper." In the midst of these spiritual disciplines, we must remember, "He is good and He knows us thoroughly." He knows just how hard and how long to make each lesson. We can trust Him.

Lastly, in the midst of the current world-wide economic meltdown — this spiritual training “lesson”— our focus should be upon the harvest that He has planned for us. Lessons learned in God’s training school will result in a heart “at rest” and the Holy Spirit empowered ability to live in such a way that produces life rather than strife. Knowing the point of the lesson helps us to “endure” and surrender to our Master’s lesson plan.

It is easy to get caught up in the bad reports that continuously bombard our minds and fall into the trap of pessimism or escapism. Rather than feed on a diet of secular media reports, our source for the faith inspired response, “Yes, Lord,” comes from His Word. Read this hope-filled account from Jeremiah where he declares God’s intention for Israel through a very hard spiritual discipline.

“These are the words the LORD spoke concerning Israel and Judah: “This is what the LORD says: “Cries of fear are heard — terror, not peace. Ask and see: Can a man bear children? Then why do I see every strong man with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor, every face turned deathly pale? How awful that day will be! None will be like it. It will be a time of trouble for Jacob, but he will be saved out of it. ” In that day,’ declares the LORD Almighty, ‘I will break the yoke off their necks and will tear off their bonds; no longer will foreigners enslave them. Instead, they will serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them.” Jeremiah 30:4-9

Pastor Dave