

THE FOREST HILL NEWS

Published weekly by the Forest Hill church of Christ

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FOREST HILL CHURCH OF CHRIST

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VISIT US SOON!

Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:30 A..M.
Morning Worship.. ...10:30 A.M.
Evening Worship..... 6:00 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study7:00 P.M.

HOME OF MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING

Missions Supported:

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In Search of the Lord's Way

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ENCOURAGEMENT FROM PSALMS

Scott McCown

Leah was an attractive coed...a business major with a bright mind and a good family background. Life had always been good to her. Over Christmas, however, her father lost his job with the company after twenty years. Leah's brother had been sick and a blood test revealed a rare disease. For Leah, life took a downward spiral...she felt hopeless. Her family and her life had become a failure.

Most of us realize life is a series of mountains and valleys, opportunities and obstacles, ups and downs. The law of averages, as well as Murphy's Law, tells us we will have problems—some small, some major. The dilemma is: When I have these problems, how will I survive? Paul writes:

“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed: we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; ...for which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:8,9,16-18).

Paul is saying that problems are a matter of perspective. We would probably agree that we often perceive our own problems as greater than everyone else's. The Hebrew writer gives us a godly perspective: “Fix your eyes on Jesus, the finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:1-3). Do not focus on the circumstances that bring you down, but rather on the Christ who overcomes circumstances.

There are some passages in Psalms that help us with our perspective. Psalms 37:1-5 reads:

“Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the LORD; and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.”

Look to **God's goodness**, David says. We tend to focus on the negative. Such a focus is an “all or nothing trap.” If one thing goes wrong then everything is wrong...if one person criticizes me then everyone is against me. It is the “Chicken Little Syndrome,” “Where if an acorn falls on your head, the sky must be falling.

When the situation looks depressing, it may mean we have quit looking at the good in our life. Return your focus to the goodness of God. Thank Him for

what He has done. It is amazing what gratitude can do for depression.

David tells us to remember God's goodness. If we think all of life is bad, we should make a list of what God has given us. List every blessing, from the smallest to the biggest blessing. You will find that we all have so much to be thankful for, especially in our nation.

- We worry about car problems, when most of the world doesn't even have a car.
- We worry about making mortgage payments, when much of the world would like to have a roof.
- We worry about the cost of health care, when much of the world would like the smallest of care.
- We worry about our children's grades in school, when many in the world wonder if their children will go to school.
- We worry about where we will have lunch today, asking "will the service be good?" Many in the world wonder, "Will I eat today?"

As Christians we can add to these the blessing found in being a part of God's family (Eph. 1:3). These blessings include the association of His children, the privilege of prayer, and our salvation. When we realize the blessings God gives us, we realize God is good!

Maybe the entire world does not seem to be against you; maybe you simply feel defeated. You are always tired, drained, and out of energy. You feel like a failure, you think you are incompetent, you might as well throw in the towel. You are defeated, so you might as well admit it—nothing you do will work out for your good. There is a Psalm for you to consider:

"In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in thy righteousness. Bow down thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: be thou my strong rock, for an house of defense to save me. For thou art my rock and my fortress; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me. Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me: for thou art my strength. Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth" (Psa. 31:1-5).

When the situation looks defeating, when you are feeling like there is no hope for your life, the psalmist says to look to the **greatness of God**. Realize your strength is not in yourself, but it comes from God. Allow God to be your fortress, your rock, your power source, and your strength. Plug into God's power.

Maybe you have been studying the Bible with a member of your family for a long time. It seems improbable that he will change. It may be that you are having difficulty in your family. You are caring for aging parents, a sick spouse, a rebellious teen, or a busy and active young child. You may be experiencing a crisis in your personal life. Whatever the situation remember that all things are possible with God. "[God] is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20). Look where the power is. The power works within us to do what we think is impossible. This power isn't miraculous events or great physical feats that impress people. This is power to live for God to work His plan no matter what life's circumstances are. Realize there is great power with God—*God is great*.

Maybe not everyone is against you, and you don't feel like a failure, but maybe the situation is simply dark. You do not know where to turn. You feel all alone, isolated; you can attend worship with 300 people and still feel alone. You might live in a house full of people and still feel isolated.

God understands. The psalmist records:

"Wither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee" (Psa. 139:7-12).

Open your eyes to the closeness of God. It doesn't matter where you are in life, how isolated you feel, how alone you may be. If you are a child of God, then God is with you. You are not alone.

There is nowhere you can go in this uni-

verse and God not go with you. It is encouraging to know that even when you feel alone, God is with you. You cannot escape the presence of God. You have the promise that God is going through your problems with you.

God’s message to you is “Draw near to Me and I will draw near to you.” Realize:

- God is with you—*God is Close.*
- Realize God’s power—*God is Great.*
- Realize God’s blessings—*God is Good.*

The Goodness, Greatness, and Closeness of God are wonderfully encouraging. God made these characteristics known in Christ, specifically in Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. Think of Christ’s sacrifice in this light:

- God is *Good* in that He sent His Good Son when we were not good.
- God is *Great* in that Jesus rose from the grave. God has power over death for us too! We will be raised to be eternally with Him.
- God is *Close* in that Not only did He love the world, but He loves us as individuals...He cares for each of us personally. He wants the best for every man, woman, and child.

COMING IN FEBRUARY

“In Times Like These We Need...”

A Five week sermon series

Presented by

Barry Grider

Each Sunday evening during February

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