

Daily Devotional, August 31, 2021 A New Way of Seeing

“I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.” Philippians 4:12-13 (NIV)

I have often thought of contentment as a personality trait, people whose natural disposition is to be happy with just being present versus those at the other extreme who are “high maintenance”. Contentment for Paul was a secret to be learned, not a gift found in a blinding flash on the road to Damascus, but a revelation in a new life born of spirit and truth. Through Christ Paul caught a vision of the true kingdom of God. He started living his eternal spiritual life in the present, in the here and now. He lived not just as a citizen of heaven, but as a member of the royal family in the Kingdom of God.

Following Christ Paul learned a new way of seeing the world. Once a model Pharisee and zealous defender of the law, Paul counted all these past accomplishments as nothing. For the first time Paul deeply understood God’s love for us. Paul’s treasures were the fruits of the spirit, the spiritual gifts permanently stored in heaven never to be damaged by moth or rust. Paul never looked at what he lacked, but at what God provides, the Holy Spirit and the strength of Christ. He knew he was no longer that person who persecuted Christians and also recognized he had not yet become the true likeness of Christ, but instead lived in the gap of who he was at present and who God intended him to become. He also became content in the knowledge that Christ fills this gap. Paul learned that he had Jesus and didn’t need anything more.

Think of life as a looking through a kaleidoscope: turn it 45 degrees to look from a different angle and you’ll see a different picture. Your perspective is your reality. That new perspective will make a new reality.

I believe we all had a totally different picture of how these past 18 months would evolve than we have now experienced after social distancing, masking and quarantining, since early March of last year. From these varied disruptions we can look at the many things lost. We can also seek insight into how we have been living and we find new revelations and opportunities in Christ that were previously overlooked. How we feel about this experience and our current situation depends on how we perceive the consequences of our experience.

This is not an exercise in dishonesty, trying to ignore a stark reality or trying to blur the image by looking through rose-colored glasses. This is our opportunity to live now as eternal children of God, spiritual siblings with Christ. We are all called to live a new beginning, the Kingdom of God that Christ has shown. A new way that sees our imperfect world through faith in Christ. A faith that moves us to action not because we’ve got this, but because we have Christ who can do all things.

In Max Lucado’s book, “Anxious for Nothing” he says it this way: “They can’t take away our joy because they can’t take away our Jesus. What you have in Christ is far greater than anything you don’t have in life.” What great joy we have in that truth!

Prayer: (From the hymn “Open my eyes that I may see, by Clara H. Scott) Dear Jesus, Open my eyes that I may see glimpses of truth thou hast for me. Place in my hands the wonderful key that shall unclasp and set me free. Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, thy will to see. Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine! Amen.