

Seventeenth Church of Christ, Scientist – Chicago IL (USA)

Wednesday, May 23, 2018

Subject: ***Seeing Blessings in Adversity***

Isn't it wonderful that people can view challenges, and even crises, as opportunities, or blessings? The Holy Bible is filled with accounts of individuals and communities who turned hardships into blessings by turning to the one God in prayer. These readings explore this subject.

Hymns: 460 480 519

Holy Bible

Numbers 12:1 - 9 Miriam

Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the Lord heard it.

(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)

And the Lord spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out.

And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth.

And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.

My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house.

With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?

And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them; and he departed.

Galatians 3:28

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

Acts 15:12, 36-39 (to :), 40

Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.

And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.

But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other:

And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

Acts 16:16-40

And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,

And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,

And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.

And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely:

Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,

And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

And when it was day, the magistrates sent the sergeants, saying, Let those men go.

And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.

But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.

And the sergeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.

And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city.

And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

Acts 17:22 - 28 Paul

Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

II Corinthians 10:1-5 I

I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you:

But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

II Corinthians 11:21-31

I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also.

Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I.

Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?

If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

Romans 8:35, 37-39

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures by Mary Baker Eddy

494:10-11

Divine Love always has met and always will meet every human need.

66:6

Trials teach mortals not to lean on a material staff, — a broken reed, which pierces the heart. We do not half remember this in the sunshine of joy and prosperity. Sorrow is salutary. Through great tribulation we enter the kingdom. Trials are proofs of God's care. Spiritual development germinates not from seed sown in the soil of material hopes, but when these decay, Love propagates anew the higher joys of Spirit, which have no taint of earth. Each successive stage of experience unfolds new views of divine goodness and love.

64:8

Pride, envy, or jealousy seems on most occasions to be the master of ceremonies, ruling out primitive Christianity. When a man lends a helping hand to some noble woman, struggling alone with adversity, his wife should not say, "It is never well to interfere with your neighbor's business." A wife is sometimes debarred by a covetous domestic tyrant from giving the ready aid her sympathy and charity would afford.

410:14-17

Every trial of our faith in God makes us stronger. The more difficult seems the material condition to be overcome by Spirit, the stronger should be our faith and the purer our love.

39:1

Meekly our Master met the mockery of his unrecognized grandeur. Such indignities as he received, his followers will endure until Christianity's last triumph. He won eternal honors. He overcame the world, the flesh, and all error, thus proving their nothingness. He wrought a full salvation from sin, sickness, and death. We need "Christ, and him crucified." We must have trials and self-denials, as well as joys and victories, until all error is destroyed.

78:28

Spirit blesses man, but man cannot “tell whence it cometh.” By it the sick are healed, the sorrowing are comforted, and the sinning are reformed. These are the effects of one universal God, the invisible good dwelling in eternal Science.

517:30

Divine Love blesses its own ideas, and causes them to multiply, — to manifest His power. Man is not made to till the soil. His birthright is dominion, not subjection. He is lord of the belief in earth and heaven, — himself subordinate alone to his Maker. This is the Science of being.

596:1, 7

Unknown. That which spiritual sense alone comprehends, and which is unknown to the material senses.

Paul saw in Athens an altar dedicated “to the unknown God.” Referring to it, he said to the Athenians: “Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you.” (Acts xvii. 23.)

3:27-2

If we are ungrateful for Life, Truth, and Love, and yet return thanks to God for all blessings, we are insincere and incur the sharp censure our Master pronounces on hypocrites. In such a case, the only acceptable prayer is to put the finger on the lips and remember our blessings. While the heart is far from divine Truth and Love, we cannot conceal the ingratitude of barren lives.

vii:1-2

To those leaning on the sustaining infinite, to-day is big with blessings.

From Concord Express - A Christian Science Study Resource: The King James Version of the Bible and Mary Baker Eddy's published writings