

Dealing with Disappointment in Faith (2 Cor. 12:5-10, John 15:1-5) 3/3/19

This morning I want to talk about how to deal with disappointment in faith. The Bible is full of the stories of those people who experienced disappointments that had preceded their final victory in God.

Abraham was so disappointed at God that he chose to have his first son Ismael through his maidservant Hagar. Moses tasted disappointment when he was forced to leave Egypt. David also went through disappointment as he became a fugitive for years in the wilderness.

In the New Testament, the disciples got deeply disappointed at Jesus' imminent death on the cross to the point of denying him and betraying him. Even Jesus himself got disappointed at his disciples as he saw them so slow in understanding his words of life.

I bet you have been no stranger to disappointments, either. Maybe you have longed for healing, for the better report cards from your kids, for a better job, for a baby, or for a spouse. You have earnestly prayed for weeks and months, even years.

But you get disappointed when you are still sick, still unemployed, still childless, or still single. When that happens, you get disappointed at not only those situations but God Himself who allows you to go through them.

I read about a young lady Alice who went through a miscarriage. Sadly, it was the third miscarriage for her. She asked her friend, "Vickie, how can you say God loves me when He never answers my prayers? The one thing I want most in the world is a baby. Is that too much to ask?"

Vickie replied, "God loves you, Alice. There's no doubt about that." Alice said, "But if He loved me, wouldn't He see how much pain I'm in?"

... when you look around, everyone else gets pregnant... People who don't even want babies get pregnant...It's just so unfair... "

For sure, disappointment is a part of our life. I'd like to tell you otherwise, but even the children of God are no exception. I remember the joy and excitement when I encountered God back in August 1982.

I was high up in my spirit for the coming months. On one Sunday, I made a testimony in front of the huge crowd of Christian college students. I told them how God called me and how I was filled with the Holy Spirit.

In those days I almost felt like being an angel in God. I was full of confidence in God as I meditated on Philippians 4:13, **"I can do all this through him who gives me strength."**

To my much disappointment, however, it didn't take long for me to get to the realization that it was not easy to keep up with the same spirit. And I got very disappointed by the end of the year.

The latest issue of our Prayer Chain starts with a question, 'Today has arrived and are you excited about unwrapping it?' My heart was touched by that line. Oftentimes, we take it for granted and forget the fact that each day is given to us from God as an amazing gift full of blessings.

I recommend you say each morning when you wake up, 'God, thank you so much for bestowing me this new day! Help me to explore it with excitement. Guide me to find the treasures of life throughout the day.'

Truly, you have the right to start every single day full of expectation. The reality is, however, at times the bigger expectations we have, the bigger disappointments we end up with.

When the reality unfolds against our expectation, we get confused, disappointed, and even tested in our faith. But don't let them cripple your life because God's goodness for you will prevail at the end of the day.

In today's 2 Corinthians' text, that was what Apostle Paul experienced, too. He preached the Gospel to tens of thousands of people, founded many churches overseas, and performed miracles healing the sick.

But at the same time, he went through a great deal of disappointment. He asked God to heal his own sickness earnestly, but nothing happened. He must've said to God like, 'God, you have had me heal the sick, but why not myself? I can do Your work a lot more efficiently with a better health.'

But God told him something different from his expectation. He records, **"8. three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."**

Paul overcame his disappointment in the realization that God's power is made perfect in his weakness. It must've been difficult for him to swallow that at first, but he embraced God's perspective on his trouble. He didn't allow his disappointment to shake his faith but kept fixing his eyes on God.

Instead, he was able to say these words triumphantly in Romans 8: 28, **"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."**

We believers can learn a lesson from his testimony. Your disappointments mean, by no means, that God is done with you. He is

still leading you in their midst with His good plan on your behalf. The sting of your relatively short-term disappointments compares in no way to the final victory in God.

Days ago, I watched a movie 'Noble.' It is based on the true story of Irish woman Christina Noble. She founded Children's Foundation through which she has helped about 700,000 children in Vietnam and Mongolia.

She grew up in her childhood in a broken family in Ireland. Her father was a violent alcoholic while her mother was very ill. Upon her mother's death, the authority put Christina and her sister in an orphanage.

At one point they became homeless. They dug trash bins on the street. The worst was yet to come. One day she was sexually assaulted by the street gangs and ended up becoming pregnant. Her infant baby was adopted to another family by the nuns against her will.

Her life was a continuation of misery and disappointment for years. She often communed with God in its midst. She asked God, 'God, are you still there? Why don't you answer to my prayers?'

One day at her work in a cafe, she saw the homeless children in Vietnam after the Vietnam War ended through the TV on the wall. It left an indelible impression on her heart. And it eventually led her to her destiny in helping those children in Vietnam and Mongolia as well.

Let me conclude this message. When we set our hearts on people or on circumstances, we are disappointed inevitably. Some stop coming to church due to their disappointments at their fellow Christians. Marriages fall apart when they put the excessive expectation on their spouses that only God can meet. That is because they set their hearts not on God but people.

Psalm 34:10 makes an interesting statement; **“The young lions suffer want and hunger; but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.”** See, even the king of the wild will go through disappointment at times.

You will avoid the trap of disappointment only when you seek the Lord God. So, let us say along with David in Psalm 23, 1, **“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.”** I pray this would be true to you. Amen.