

TENTH SUNDAY ORDINARY ST BARNABAS 2COR.4:13-5:1

A PERSECUTED CHRISTIAN WROTE OF THEIR SITUATION THIS WAY ,, “WE ARE HARD PRESSED ON EVERY SIDE,, ,,BUT NOT CRUSHED,,, PERPLEXED,,, BUT NOT IN DESPAIR,, PERSECUTED,, BUT NOT ABANDONED,,, STRUCK DOWN,, BUT NOT DESTROYED.

HOW MANY OTHER BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE WORLD COULD HAVE WRITTEN THOSE WORDS,,, YOUNG PEOPLE 18 AND YOUNGER FORBIDDEN TO ATTEND ANY RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY,,,ALONG WITH HOUSE CHURCHES BEING CLOSED AND ALL CROSSES TAKEN OF ALL CHURCHES IN CHINA. NOT TO MENTION THE TORTURE AND DEATH OF BELIEVERS IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES.

WE ARE HARD PRESSED ON EVERY SIDE BUT NOT IN DESPAIR,, BUT NOT CRUSHED,,, BUT NOT ABANDONED,,, BUT NOT DESTROYED. HOW COULD ST. PAUL WRITE THOSE POWERFUL WORDS,,, ONLY OUT OF A HEART OF CONVICTION IN WHAT HE BELIEVED. PAUL EVEN QUOTED KING DAVID IN PSM. 116 :10,,, Ī BELIEVED,,, THEREFORE I SPEAK.” BELIEF FROM THE HEART IS ,, I KNOW BECAUSE I KNOW,,, I KNOW IN MY KNOWER,,, THAT GOD IS FAITHFUL IN ALL THAT I OR WE INTRUST TO HIM,,, UNTIL JESUS COMES AGAIN,,, SAYS 2TIM 1:12. “FAITH SPRINGS FORTH AND GROWS FROM THE SOLID CONVICTION OF WHAT WE BELIEVE.” FAITH IS THE SACRED MEDICINE,,, OR ANTIBIOTIC THAT CAUSES THANKSGIVING TO OVERFLOW TO GOD’S GLORY AND PREVENTS DESPAIR.

NOTICE PAUL DID NOT BLAME CIRCUMSTANCES FOR HIS SUFFERINGS,,, NOR DID HE BLAME PEOPLE OR THE DEVIL LIKE ADAM AND EVE DID IN THE GARDEN,,, NOR DID HE SAY THINGS HAPPENED BECAUSE GOD ALLOWED SATAN TO MESS WITH HIM WHICH IS SIMILAR TO OUR GOSPLE READING.

SO WHY IS THAT.. PAUL WAS ABSOLUTELY CONVINCED OF GOD’S POWER AND FAITHFULNESS,, AND IN CHRIST JESUS WHO OVER CAME DEATH,,, SO PAUL DID NOT FEAR DEATH. ST. PAUL SAID HE

REJOICED IN HIS TRIALS AND SUFFERING FOR CHRISIT AND THAT HE WAS THANKFUL IN AND FOR ALL THINGS FOR GOD'S GLORY,, AS HE RECOUNTED HIS BEATINGS,, SHIPWRECKS,, NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCES ,, PRISON, AND HUNGER,, ,,AS HE SAID,,,, DEATH IS AT WORK IN US,, BUT IN CHRIST BY FAITH HE HAD VICTORY OVER ALL THESE THINGS. YOU SHOULD READ 1-2 CORTH'S.

A WISE PERSON ONCE SAID,,, 'ÜNTIL A PERSON IS PREPARED TO DIE,,, THEY ARE NOT REALLY PREPARED TO LIVE “

THE WONDERFUL MESSAGE OF THE EARLY CHURCH WAS THE VICTORY OF CHRIST OVER DEATH,,, AND I THINK WE NEED TO CONCENTRATE ON THAT MESSAGE. PAUL LOOKED FORWARD IN TIME WITH FAITH AND HOPE,,,KNOWING THAT THE ONE WHO RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD,,, WILL ALSO RAISE EACH ONE OF US WITH JESUS WHEN HE COMES AGAIN,,,, AND PLACE US IN HIS PRESENCE FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

THIS SCRIPTURE IS TEACHING US THAT NO MATTER WHAT COMES OUR WAY,,, THE SOVEREIGN POWER AND PRESENCE OF GOD IS ALWAYS WORKING WITHIN AND ABOUT US,,, SO WE ARE NOT TO BE DISCOURAGED,,,, BUT REST IN HIS PRESENCE AND PEACE,,, EVEN THOUGH OUR OUTER SELVES,,,THIS BODY,,,, IS WASTING AWAY. THE POINT OF THIS SCRIPTURES IS,,,, THAT THROUGH OUR DAILY CIRCUMSTANCES OUR INNER SELVES,,, THE REAL YOU AND I,,, WE ARE TO BE DAILY GROWING SPIRITUALLY,,, ARE TO BE SPIRITUALLY MATURING,,, AND BEING RENEWED. **RENEWED IN THE CONVICTION** OF WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT GOD'S WORD,,,THE RISEN LORD,,,AS WE TURN AWAY FROM SELF AND THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD,,, DESIRING HEAVENS HOME,,,SEEK THE COMFORT OF THE LORD IN TIMES OF NEED,,, ASK FORGIVENESS RECEIVE PURITY OF HEART,,, AS FAITH IS RENEWED DAY BY DAY.

LAST WEEK FR. PETE SAID THAT THERE WAS A CRISIS WITHIN THE CHURCH,,, A LACK OF BELIEF CONCERNING THE EUCHARIST. THERE IS SOMETHING WORSE THAN THAT. I JUST READ A SURVEY ON WEDNESDAY CONCERNING THOSE THOSE WHO PROFESS BELIEF IN GOD. OUT OF THOSE 80% WHO PROFESS BELIEF IN GOD,,, ONLY 56%,,, BELIEVE IN THE GOD OF THE BIBLE. THOSE

WHO CLAIM TO BE CHRISTIAN AND SPIRITUAL,,, INCLUDING 28% CATHOLIC AND 26% PROTESTANT,,,, SAY THEY NO LONGER BELIEVE IN THE GOD OF THE BIBLE OR THAT JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY TO THE FATHER.

THERE IS NOTHING THAT WEAKENS OUR FAITH FASTER THAN OUR LACK OF CONVICTION,,, OUR LACK OF CERTAINTY IN WHAT WE BELIEVE. IF YOU QUESTION YOUR FAITH,,, FEEL CONFUSED,,, IF THERE IS A LACK OF CONVICTION OR CERTAINTY,,,, THIS SCRIPTURE CHALLENGES YOU TO ASK THE HOLY SPIRIT TO OPEN THE MIND OF YOUR UNDERSTANDING,,,, YOUR SPIRITUAL EARS TO HEAR WHAT GOD'S WORD HAS TO SAY TO YOU.

START READING THE FOUR GOSPELS AND THEN THE REST OF THE N.T.,,,, AND BECOME CONVINCED AND CERTAIN ABOUT,,, WHAT YOU BELIEVE,,,,, SO THAT YOU STAND ON A FIRM FOUNDATION OF FAITH,,,,, BEING RENEWED DAY BY DAY. ADAM AND EVE SINNED BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT CONVINCED ABOUT WHAT GOD SAID THUS THEY FELL INTO TEMPTATION. THE SERPENT SAID,,, " DID GOD REALLY SAY,,," AND EVE SHOULD HAVE SAID ,, YES HE DID SO SHUT UP AND CRAWL OUT OF HERE,, BUT SHE DID'NT AND FELL.

PAUL COULD SAY IN THE MIDST OF HARDSHIP AND ADVERSITY THAT THERE WAS HOPE,,, BECAUSE HE WAS ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN IN WHOM HE BELIEVED ,, EVEN THOUGH HIS OUTER SELF WAS WASTING AWAY,,, HE KNEW THAT HIS INNER SELF WAS BEING TRANSFORMED ,, THAT GOD WAS WORKING,,,, THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS RENEWING HIM EVERYDAY,,,, THAT HE WAS BEING CHANGED INTO THE LIKENESS AND CHARACTER OF JESUS ,, AND HE ROSE ABOVE ANY TEMPORARY AFFLICTION OF EVERY KIND,,,, BECAUSE COMPARED TO HEAVENS FUTURE GLORY THEY WERE NOTHING BUT LIGHT AFFLICTIONS.

THEN TO EMPHASIZE THAT GOD IS MORE INTERESTED IN BUILDING CHRISIT LIKE CHARACTER AND THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT ON THE IN SIDE ,, IN OUR SPIRIT,,, PAUL SAYS THAT THE RESULT SHOULD BE THAT OUR WORLD VIEW OF LIFE SHOULD NOT BE ON WHAT IS SEEN AND ONLY TEMPORARY IN THIS WORLD,,, BUT WHAT IS NOT

SEEN AND ETERNAL. PAUL WRITES IN HEB.11:1,,, “**NOW FAITH IS ASSURANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR ,,,,THE CONVICTION OF THINGS WE DO NOT SEE.**” ST. PAUL IS SO CONVINCED OF THE REALITY OF THE UNSEEN WORLD THAT HE LIKENS OUR BODIES TO A TENT. NOW A TENT IS A VERY TEMPORARY,, NOT ALWAYS THE BEST THING,,,,IF YOU HAVE BEEN IN THE MILITARY,,, GONE CAMPING,,, SEEMS SOMETHING ALWAYS GOES WRONG.

BUT BECAUSE WE HAVE FAITH IN THINGS UNSEEN,, WHEN THIS TENT IS NO LONGER USEFUL,, WE ARE PROMISED A BUILDING FROM GOD,, A DWELLING NOT MADE WITH HANDS,, THAT IS ETERNAL IN HAEVEN. A TENT IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH ,, IS NOT SUITABLE FOR HEAVEN,,, ITS EARTHLY,,,, IS PERISHABLE AND HAS TO BE CHANGED. IN 1COR. 15 WE READ,, “**FOR THE PERISHABLE MUST CLOTHE ITSELF WITH THE IMPERISHABLE,,, AND THE MORTAL WITH IMMORTALITY.**” PAUL WRITES AGAIN IN PHIP. 3:20,, “**"BUT OUR CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN,, AND IT IS FROM THERE THAT WE ARE EXPECTING A SAVIOR,,, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. WHO BY THE POWER THAT ENABLES HIM TO BRING EVERYTHING UNDER HIS CONTROL,,, WILL TRANSFORM OUR (TENT) LOWLY BODIES,,,,,, SO THAT THEY WILL BE LIKE HIS GLORIOUS BODY."**

THEN WE ARE REASSURED AGAIN IN 1JN. 3:2,, “**DEAR FRIENDS,,, NOW WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD,, AND WHAT WE WILL BE HAS NOT YET BEEN MADE KNOWN.(THE UNSEEN) BUT WE KNOW,,, THAT WHEN HE APPEARS,,, **WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM**,, FOR WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS.”**

IN THIS TEMPORARY WORLD THAT WE SEE,,,, WITH IT'S PC AND ANTI CHRISTIAN AGANDA,, MAY OUR HEARTS BE TURNED TOWARDS THE UNSEEN THINGS ABOVE,, AND OUR ATTITUDE OF LIFE BE LIKE THAT OF PAUL'S,, AFTER ALL THAT HE SUFFERED IN THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL AS HE SAYS IN 2TIM. 1:12 “**FOR THIS REASON I ALSO SUFFER THESE THINGS,,,BUT I AM NOT ASHAMED,,, FOR I KNOW WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED AND I AM CONVINCED** THAT HE IS ABLE TO GUARD THAT WHAT I HAVE ENTRUSTED TO HIM UNTIL THAT DAY. “

IN THESE CHANGING AND TROUBLED TIMES,, LET US KNOW AND BE CONVINCED IN WHO,,,, AND WHAT WE BELIEVE. +++AMEN