

My Thoughts For Sunday, 13 March 2016

What To Do In Times Of Trouble

“The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.” Nahum 1:7.

Are you feeling lost in your troubles today? Have you just been diagnosed with a life threatening ailment? Did you lose a close relationship? Did you flunk an exam? Lose your job? Dropped out of school? Your marriage is failing? You just feel like life has failed you or you have become a failure in life? My friend, we have all encountered some of these moments when it seems everything is going wrong.

What is your goal? What do you plan to do next?

It's so easy to just give up, blame someone else for our troubles or to just overlook the situation. We often tend to take the attitude that Jesus' disciples did in the boat when they believed Jesus didn't care if they drowned; they panicked. Unfortunately panic usually causes one to not take that next step or to even know what step they might have available. Often one tends to try to ignore the problem and shove it down deep where it doesn't have to be recognized or dealt with. There are several options: You could just give up, throw your hands up in the air and say “Oh well, I am a loser.” You could turn, as so many do, to alcohol or drugs as a way to appease your feeling of failure. You might even totally give up on your chances for a productive life and join the ranks of the homeless and stand on street corners with a “Help Me, I'm Homeless” sign. Or you could go to the authority on all our life situations, God's Word the Bible. As I have stated before and continue to stress, His Word is the only true place of guidance. Listen to the simple and profound advice from the prophet Nahum regarding our loving God in times of trouble: *“The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.” Nahum 1:7. **Trust Him!*** Be assured in the knowledge that we have someone on our side in our deepest days of despair. Enjoy that comfort! The writer to the Hebrews presented our sure hope in these times when he wrote: *“For we do not have a High Priest (Jesus) who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”* Hebrews 4:15-16.

We are all failures in this sin filled world. We all fail to follow God's commands. We often fail in our decisions in our lives. We fail in our total and complete love of our God. We fail in His command to care for the homeless, the hospitalized, the incarcerated, the blind and needy. We are failures!

Don't let your failure become your fatality!

Do not despair because you are encountering hardships. Know that you have this friend working on your behalf. Jesus is there for those who will call on Him in their times of trouble. Regardless of what is happening in your life at the moment, all things are in God's hands. As Paul wrote to the Romans and inevitably to us: *"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."* Romans 8:28. We have no need to despair. No reason to throw up our hands in failure, we have an advocate. We have our Lord and Savior, Jesus, who gave His very life for the salvation of all men. Although you may be going through some seemingly serious trials in your life, it does not need to proceed to a fatal outcome. We need to accept the hand of love that has been extended to us from our Lord and follow the advice that Paul gave to the church at Corinth. Paul wrote, under direct inspiration from God, in his second letter to those Christians; *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God."* 2 Corinthians 1:3-4. As we listen to God's promises, realize the answers He is giving to us. Don't despair. Don't give up. Don't allow someone to tell you that you are worthless in your failures. Instead, let your failures work in your benefit.

Let your failures be your teacher, learn from them.

That's right! Your failures can teach you a very valuable lesson. They might be telling you that you did not properly evaluate your plan before putting it into action. Maybe you put more stress on your abilities alone without getting needed outside input. Maybe you just weren't able to impart the time and effort into your plan of action before your resources ran out. Maybe...? One thing I am sure of. You have that advocate I spoke of earlier. That one who is looking to help you and prosper you in your endeavors. That one who has clearly stated He has plans for you. As written in Jeremiah 29:11; *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."* **Let's try His plan!** Perhaps this was your only failure. Your failure to present your request to God for guidance and direction. To seek His ultimate approval and assistance in bringing your idea to fruition. In ALL things He is the one we should be asking for help. Passing your exams. Problems with your health. Issues within the marriage. Etc. We all need to take the time to realize that all our problems would be minor if we would seek first the loving Creator who gives us all good things for our benefit. *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* Philippians 4:6-7.