

Overwhelmed???

Psalm 9

It was one of those looks a person could never in a lifetime forget. A good friend and fellow leader had just called to tell me his father had taken his life. Since I had never met his parents, I experienced a powerless sense of awkwardness as I approached the family to meet the mother and wife. My uncertainty was immediately removed the moment I stepped into the room. I will never forget the look of this one who was absolutely overwhelmed and totally broken into pieces by her loss. Her look never changed, even on the day of the memorial. Each word intended for encouragement seemed lodged in my throat as I looked down and saw the look of one overwhelmed by her circumstances.

So what is it that overwhelms you? Us? As we read the paper, watch the news, or simply look around, we see an alarming surge of people who are increasingly becoming overwhelmed by their circumstances.

This sense of being overwhelmed certainly means different things to different people. It depends upon what we have become accustomed to and expect. Some of us may feel overwhelmed by the uncertainty of being able to make the next car payment, while others may be overwhelmed by not having a car at all. The high school student may not understand why she cannot have that pair of “Seven” jeans, while yet another may be thrilled just to have a pair of hand-me-downs from big sister. Others of us may feel overwhelmed by losing a significant portion of our retirement, while some are devastated to end up with no retirement at all.

In a sense, the harsh reality is that our feelings of being overwhelmed are often, not always, but often, relative to what we have come to expect or to another person’s circumstances, aren’t they? Even more sobering, what if those circumstances don’t change? What if they only become *worse*?

Many circumstances are beyond our control. How we respond to our circumstances is not beyond our control. This is especially true for the person who truly *knows* Jesus Christ and has a relationship with Him. The question then is not in the circumstances but how we each choose to respond to our circumstances. How we respond is the litmus of what we know about God and the dynamics of our relationship with—more accurately “in”—Him.

Much of what is called “Christianity” asserts that we will never experience those times of *feeling* overwhelmed. That might be within the realm of what is called a “tragedy.” God never promised a life of no sacrifice, suffering, tribulation, or simply doing without. He has, however, promised that we need never *be* overwhelmed by anything we face in this present world. He has promised we can experience His peace, joy, and confidence through times that otherwise would overwhelm us.

LIFE RESPONSE

1. This week, MEMORIZE and MEDITATE on Psalm 9:1-2, *“I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart; I will tell of all Your wonders. I will be glad and exult in You; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.”*
 - (a) Put this passage in the form of a prayer, only include at the beginning or at the end the phrase, “regardless of my circumstances.”
 - (b) Based upon Psalm 9, what is the foundation or basis of such a prayer? What confidence does it provide?
2. What are some of the circumstances you are presently facing that tend to “overwhelm” you? How do they affect your attitude? Your response to a friend or family member? Your perception of God?
3. What are your first thoughts when you pray about a harsh, discouraging circumstance and nothing happens in an immediate or obvious way?
4. There isn’t a family at FBC that has not, is not presently, or will not shortly experience a significant change in their circumstances and have feelings of being overwhelmed or even oppressed. It could be due to our spending habits, issues of health, rejection because of character choices, etc. Take this opportunity to discuss as a family how our perception of God will determine our response.

“Ignorance is worst when it amounts to ignorance of God, and knowledge is best when it exercises itself upon the name of God.”

- Charles Haddon Spurgeon

What does it mean to truly know God?

Psalm 9:9-10

*“The Lord also will be a stronghold for the oppressed,
A stronghold in times of trouble;
And those who know Your name will put their trust in You,
For You, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You.”*

THE REALITY OF ENCOUNTERING OPPRESSION

It’s a given: Context of chapter

Jesus: John 16:33; 17:14-15

Paul: Rom 8:35-39; 2 Cor 4:7-9

Peter: 1 Peter 4:12-14

Subtitle: Death of a fool; Death of an enemy

Psalm 9:9

Oppressed: crushed, broken into pieces, overwhelmed to the point of despair.

Troubled: all forms; man or Satan

Question:

Given the reality of encountering oppression, what can I do about it?

It’s in our oppression, feeling overwhelmed that we begin to question what we really know about God.

THE REQUISITE FOR FACING OPPRESSION

Central: Those who know Thy name will put their trust in Thee.

Know: general, common knowledge

Ref – The character of God

The nature of God

The manifestation of God

The truth of God in respect to His attributes

Attribute: That which distinguishes or identifies a subject or person

Think about it... Based only upon what David knew about God, he was able to place his trust in God.

O.T. Impersonal, know about – events

N.T. Relational, knowing personally – experiential

God is no longer limited to simply His Being or His attributes, but is revealed through His humanity (personality) in the flesh as a person to be known in a personal relationship.

Today: We have the privilege to know God personally and not simply about God in name only.

John 1:14 – Incarnation: God in flesh

John 1:12 – Spiritual birth: in relationship

Rom 6:4-5 – United: in Him

“Trust in Thee” – His promise

His promise:

...will be a stronghold for the oppressed

...a stronghold in times of trouble

Stronghold: Refuge – a tall protective, impregnable tower

...has not forsaken those who seek Thee

Does our perception of God affect how we face our circumstances or do our circumstances dictate how we perceive God?

THE RESPONSE TO OVERCOME OPPRESSION

The litmus of my knowledge of God

To resolve – “I will” a choice

- I will...give thanks to the Lord with all my heart
- I will...tell of all Thy wonders
- I will...be glad and exult in Thee
- I will...sing praise to Thy name, O Most High
- I will...put my trust in Thee

Prayer:

Father, God, O Most High

I thank You for all You have revealed of Yourself in Your name and in Your Person, Jesus Christ. Thank You for making it possible to know You personally through Your sacrifice on the cross and removing the barrier of sin through Your blood.

As I face the challenges of this week, regardless of how overwhelming they will seem . . .

I will...give thanks to the Lord_with all my heart

I will...tell of all Thy wonders

I will...be glad and exult in Thee

I will...sing praise to Thy name, O Most High

. . . by Your grace and power I will choose to put my trust in Thee.

I thank You for that privilege in the name and Person of Jesus Christ, My Lord.

Amen