

CERTAIN VICTORY

In Every Circumstance
John 12:24-25

Do you find yourself so overwhelmed by a barrage of circumstances that you feel stuck, wondering if you can ever get out? It's not that you don't have enough information or alternatives, but you simply feel immobilized . . . trapped.

It's interesting that as our personal lives are forced into an ever-expanding, complex global world, we tend to develop a built-in resistance that causes us to cocoon into isolation and become more paralyzed. We all attempt to process the overload of the constant bombardment of information, yet we become pressed into seclusion to the point that challenges and circumstances immobilize us as victims of the present.

Where is the simplicity of the past? What happened to the innocence without restrictions that allowed us to dream and think beyond the present? What happened to the hope and vision inherent in our faith, knowledge, and confidence in God that overpowered the present and created anticipation of His power to be revealed in the future?

If you cannot relate to feeling paralyzed by those experiences beyond your choosing, you likely will. It may come with the loss of a job or the inability (and accompanying humiliation) to provide for your family. Perhaps you (or your loved one) are facing a terminal illness, and you feel trapped in not knowing what to do. There are those in our family who have experienced the pain and rejection of divorce, feeling alone, helpless, and stuck. Many in our church family have suffered the loss of a child. They feel trapped and just can't move on without feeling as if they are leaving someone behind. A growing number are facing the gut-ripping effects of unfaithfulness, rejection by children or parents, the deafening screams of depression, or insecurity. Those who are older may have lost a sense of value, worth, and a place to fit.

For the majority of those who feel stuck in their circumstances, the sometimes thoughtless, usually proud, and always insensitive are quick to give the theological answer. "You just need to trust God." Or "God is sovereign; you just need to get over it." Or the always favorite "I'll pray for you" as they move on to what's important to them. We're not saying "truth" has not been spoken, but truth without understanding can be meaningless.

Jesus no doubt spoke truth. But Jesus spoke truth in the two-fold context of the present and the eternal. It is perhaps in this two-dimensional approach that we best identify His unparalleled compassion in the present as He taught eternal truth providing understanding, encouragement, and freedom for those who were stuck.

Believe me when I say we are living in a world . . . a community, yes even a church, with an alarming number who feel stuck. This Easter season provides us with Christ's two-dimensional means for experiencing His freedom for now and for eternity.

LIFE RESPONSE

1. This week MEMORIZE and MEDITATE on John 12:24-25, "*Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.*"
 - (a) Make a list of your present circumstances, challenges which you would never have chosen, situations in which emotionally, physically, or even spiritually you feel trapped. By faith try to imagine the possibility that this may be that time in which God would choose to intervene and

bring glory to Himself.

- (b) What do you see in these two verses necessary for us to apply in our circumstances to allow God to bring glory to Himself?
2. Identify at least two of Jesus' primary motivations as He approached His personal and relational confrontations.
 3. None of us live our lives in isolation, do we? Think about those around you, some of whom you are close to, others who see you from a distance, perhaps those you don't even know. What is it about your life and how you face your circumstance that would create curiosity, and cause them to want to "believe in Jesus"? What if your circumstances were for that very purpose?
 4. Every one of us face challenges, uncertainties, and circumstances in our homes, families, marriages, school, work, etc. Discuss as a family, Mini Church, Care Group, Cell group or just among friends how you can appropriate John 12:24-28. How would you pray? What choices would you make? How would you encourage each other? What two things would you desire to be accomplished? What would be the result?

"He rides, not upon a War-horse, but on an animal which was the symbol of peace"
- Dr. Fredrick William Farrar

THE PERSPECTIVE OF VICTORY John 12:24-25

THE PRACTICE IN THE PRESENT John 11:1—12:11

THE PROMISE IN THE ETERNAL John 12:12—12:30