

“I Know You Meant Well: It Is What It is”
Philippians 4:11-13 (NIV), Romans 8:28 (NIV)
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I put the thingamabob inside the whatchamacallit, turned the doohickey and the whatsit connected to the do-dad still doesn't work.

Some of you know exactly what I meant, while others have just confirmed that this pastor is crazy.

Oh, there are things we say which sometimes are very clear in their meaning, while at other times things we say could be confusing or have a double meaning.

In our series, “I Know You Meant Well,” we are examining phrases and statements we say to others, or to our self, that could be misleading.

Last week we examined, “I Know You Meant Well: It Must Be God's Will,” next week “I Know You Meant Well: Let Go and Let God,” but today, “I Know You Meant Well: It Is What It Is.” This phrase has actually been around for years. I've said it. There are times when it is appropriate to say, it is a statement of fact. It even makes sense to say it. Sometimes it is right on target. Sometimes when it is said it feels dismissive, and sometimes it seems callous and cold.

An example: I am 5 foot 5. It is what it is. I know I can't change that. Well, no I could----I could my height and be on stilts: **(Image)**



But it would be very hard to shake hands after church, and very difficult to get in my car.

I also found these nifty shoes I could wear. **(Image)** Yes men platform ankle boots. But if I wore these I would look like a 'heel.'



So, I accept that I am 5'5" and know that in the upcoming years I may even get a little shorter than that. It is what it is. There's nothing I can really do about it.

And yet sometimes the phrase, “It is what it is,” smacks of resignation, or an unwillingness to do anything about it. It comes across as frustration, resigned acceptance or feeling like you can't do any thing about it. It is what it is **(image)**.

You can see how we use this phrase as we listen to some things some popular people have said. Take a listen:

Some may remember in 2006 when then Vice-President Dick Cheney shot someone accidentally with a shotgun: "We went through it thoroughly yesterday," said Scott McClellan, the White House press secretary, somewhat testily after being badgered recently about the Cheney hunting accident. "It is what it is, and I think it's time to move on." (2006)

Or how about this one when pop icon Birney Spears was photographed driving with her baby son on her lap instead of strapped in a seat (2006)

"I made a mistake, and so it is what it is, I guess."

In 2006 the coach of the U.S. hockey team, arriving at the Turin Olympics, concerned about his travel-worn players going up against a well-rested Latvian squad, said in a resigned tone, "We're going to do the best that we can. It is what it is."

Coaches when questioned about injured reserve list or an upcoming opponent will often use the phrase. 2 that do this frequently or Nick Saban, Alabama coach, and Tom Belecki NFL New England Patriots.

However, one I find extremely interesting is one made by TV mogul Ted Turner who said, "I regret that I wasn't more successful with my marriages, but it is what it is."

I know you meant well, but if someone tells you, "My child has run away from home." And for you to respond, "It is what it is---is certainly a statement of not seeming to care.

I think we sometimes say "It is what it is" when the situation stinks. As if to say, "I wish things were different, but I just don't have it in me to fix it."

It is what it is can be used as an avoidance and not wanting to deal with it. Example: I am 5'5." It is what it is=reality. And then there's "I just spilled red Kool-Aid on the carpet. Oh, it is what it is=resignation. **(It is what it is image)**

Well, you better believe there's one I can't do anything about and the other I need to respond to quickly. So even though you mean well, could it be if you respond by saying, "It is what it is" that you are avoiding responsibility?

Sometimes we say "It is what it is" as false empathy. "You broke your arm...ah, it is what it is."

Sometimes "It is what it is" seems to be a great end to a conversation when we don't know what else to say. I have nothing helpful to contribute, but I don't want to stop talking yet and know how to end the conversation, so---"It is what it is." **(it is what it is image)**

Let's look at some Biblical context and a positive way that this saying could be applied. A new way of looking at it is---if 'it is what it is' then what's next? Friends don't give up. I may have used this before, but it's one of my favorite images.



I'm sure you've noticed the frog with his hands around the neck!!!! It is what it is, but don't give up!!!!

So, Biblically we must balance the reality of the situation with God's peace and contentment and/or see what else God want us to do. To say "It is what it is" could be in statement of contentment.

Philippians 4:11-13 New International Version (NIV) ¹¹ I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

It is what it is.

But are just saying that or there that true peace and contentment of your soul. Or is "it is what it is" a statement of surrender.

The context of this scripture addressed to the church at Philippi is that the Apostle Paul, the author, is writing this from prison. He had previously been beaten, and betrayed and yet he is talking about the secret of being content. Wow, should he just give up and not care, or maybe he'll just light a candle.

A candle for "It Is What It Is" **(Image)**



Scented with What it could Have Been
Apathy has never smelled so sweet

Yes, this is an actual candle you can get for about \$16 bucks!

¹³ I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

No, I can't do it, but THROUGH Jesus, who gives me strength I can do it. I CAN get through this. It doesn't say it would be easy. Sometimes we focus on what we don't have rather than what we do have.

It may be a circumstance or situation that is dire, devastating, or dreadful, but rather than apathy and not caring---face it with the strength Jesus gives you while facing that reality.

The other passage read this morning is a famous one: **Romans 8:28 New International Version (NIV)** 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.**

All things that happen are not good, but God works for the good in all things. What does it mean, "God works for the good?" Perhaps God is working for the good of developing a closer relationship with you. The good of bearing fruit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). God works for the good of conforming us to the image of Christ. **(image of 'it is what it is')** It is what it is.

It is what is could be a statement of Reality. A statement of Resignation. Or a statement of Resolve.

Reality=It is what it is, I have an illness.

Resignation=It is what it is, I am going to give up.

Resolve=It is what is, I resolve that through His strength, power and presence I will go on.

*** 8:05 and 9:30 closing***

It is what it is becomes----it is well. Not that all things are going well, but it is WELL with my soul even in the middle of bad things.

Through it all my eyes are on you. **Hebrews 12:1-2 New Living Translation (NLT)** **12 ... And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. ² We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.**

Through it all, "it is what it" becomes, "It is well." **Psalm 121 ¹ I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? ² My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.**

Through it all, "it is what it is," becomes "it is well with my soul."

Today there are those with heaviness. Those fighting and battling illnesses of one sort or another. Caregivers. Those with family or financial problems.

Friends, I invite you during this last song---to come and pray. Pray to the one who can change your attitude. Pray to the one who can calm your soul and make it well. Come. Pray.

closing for 11:05

Jesus is the way maker. **John 14:6 New International Version (NIV)** ⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life.

He is the miracle worker. **Ephesians 3:20 New Living Translation (NLT)**²⁰ Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.

He is the promise keeper. **1 Corinthians 1:9 New Living Translation (NLT)**⁹ God will do this, for he is faithful to do what he says, and he has invited you into partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

He is the light in the darkness. **John 1:5 New Living Translation (NLT)**⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

I encourage you to come, pray and experience, no matter the heaviness you are going through—that in the IT IS WHAT IT IS, you will know that the I AM WHO I AM is with you.