
Doug Hood's Heart and Soul ... A Weekly Meditation

September 4, 2016

Choose to Be Happy

READ: Romans 12:12 (Common English Bible)

"Be happy in your hope, stand your ground when you're in trouble, and devote yourselves to prayer."

MEDITATE:

The choice is ours. Just as each day we choose the clothes we will wear, we choose the disposition that will clothe our heart and mind. The winds of daily circumstance, whether it is good fortune or disappointment, have no access to matters of the interior life. No one can see what any day may bring in the home or the office, but we can determine that each day will be met with a buoyant spirit. Begin the day with a dark spirit, a sour and unpleasant disposition and usually something will happen to confirm the prior decision to be unhappy. Start the day with a positive tempo in your step and the same law will be at work; something will occur that will give affirmation that all is well, even if the day brings disappointing news. How we begin the day is a choice.

But the choice must be inspired by the Christian understanding of hope. Used in the New Testament, hope is never wishful thinking. Christian hope, of which the apostle Paul speaks of here, is the deep conviction that we belong to God. A positive promise woven throughout the New Testament is that our heavenly Father has each one of us in his keeping and will be present in the midst of any difficulty. We are never alone. God remains with us, regardless of the circumstances that may swirl around our lives. Begin each day with that knowledge, that God is present with us, and God will lift your vision to the sunnier possibilities available and rescue you from the power of frustrations and defeat.

It is a great and liberating thing to know that God is with us. It is a knowledge that strengthens our knees and secures our footing. Particularly when the winds of trouble blow, as they must for each of us at some time, we discover that we are able to stand firmly without fear of being defeated. It is a knowledge that frees us from personal concern, and the emotional energy which that effort consumes, so that we may devote all of our strength to reach for life's highest purposes.

Occasionally the winds that blow against us are quite strong. A secure footing is important, such as our knowledge of God's continued presence and care, but something more may be required. As a sailor standing on a boat that is being tossed about, we must grab hold of something. As a Christian, we grab hold of God in prayer. "Devote yourselves to prayer," writes Paul. Prayer is the abandonment of any other crutch, any other hope, and the clinging to God. It is recalling that God is all that is necessary. Prayer nurtures intimacy with God and it is the surrender into the loving presence of God that results in inexpressible joy. For Paul, prayer is not a matter to be taken lightly. Simply, prayer is integral to the choice to be happy in all circumstances.

