

“UP-rooted ~ Healthy Conflict” 9.25.11

There's nothing like a **good wind storm** to remind us **how fragile life can be:**
It's always disheartening to wake up & find a magnificent tree
that once stood tall for literally decades, that has been **UP-rooted** overnight by a storm.

The forest that has left the greatest impression upon me personally to date
is **Muir Woods in N. California ~ Coastal Redwood Forest.**

These gigantic trees are **600 to 800 yrs old** & are **as tall as a 25 ft story building:**
Mature Redwoods make **full grown oak trees** look like saplings.

What's really crazy is that periodically in this National Park you will come across one of these
MAMOTH TREES that has been **UP-rooted** by a storm.

(PHEW) I don't even want to imagine how furious that wind storm had to be!

We face storms like these in our own lives ~ **times of crisis & conflicts** that can
unexpectedly **UP-root** our very lives + families in just a moment of time.

I don't know about you but I loathe...**absolutely detest times of crisis & conflicts**
& attempt to avoid them like the plague.

Instead of looking to God & what He might be doing in & thru us
during these difficult & often embarrassing moments **we embrace the FALSE IDEAS**
that **all conflict** is negative-damaging + that **times of crisis & conflict** are
either the result of an attack from the devil **OR** direct result of unconfessed sin in our lives!

Instead of viewing times of conflict & crisis thru a biblical lens & understanding that God uses
pain-filled moments to grow us in our faith ~ help us become more like Jesus.

We often run from it & then MISS God's blessing for us in the midst of it.

Today we will begin with an **OT principle** found in the **1st book of the Bible** that
needs to be memorized & stored away for the next storm that comes your way!

OT principle is this:

GOD can take bad things that are intended to harm us & redeem them for His glory!

This **OT principle** is 1st found in **Genesis 50 = Joseph's story:**

I. **Genesis 37 – 50 = God's transformation of Joseph**

A. As a young man Joseph was full of himself ~ arrogant & self-centered (little snot)

He was his father's favorite ~ who gave him the coat of many colors which he wore w-great pride every moment of everyday to remind his **11 brothers he is the special one**.
One-day his brothers had enough ~ **wanted to kill him but backed away from this initial plan** ~ **instead sold him into slavery to some Ishmaelite traders...good riddens!**

B. **He was shipped off to Egypt as a slave** ~ worked in Potiphar's house until he refused to be seduced Potiphar's wife = she falsely accused him ~ **Joseph thrown in prison!**

C. **In prison he befriended Pharaoh's ousted cup-bearer** ~ interpreted his dreams ~ cupbearer won back favor with Pharaoh ~ **cupbearer forgot his friend Joseph, Joseph was left to rot in that Egyptian prison.**

All during this time GOD was shaping Joseph's character & preparing him
to be Israel's deliverer during a great famine that would last for years!

D. **Genesis 50: 14 – 21= KEY VERSE (v. 20) = OT principle**

God didn't put Joseph in Egypt to strengthen Joseph ~ **God put Joseph in Egypt** to save the nation of Israel & show grace to his biological family!

(1) **prime example of the OT principle =**
God can takes bad things that are intended to harm us & redeem them for His glory
is found in Acts 8:

II. **Persecution begins**

A. **Acts 8: 1a or p. 836 in pew Bible**

B. **Troubling = "...agreed completely w-the killing of Stephen"**

1. **(R) Acts 6: 5**

2. **Next week** ~ we will spend more time w-Saul who is pre-Paul

C. (R) Acts 8: 1b – 4 = (2) prophecies fulfilled in these 1.5 verses

1. 1st prophetic fulfillment = (R) Matthew 24: 9 or p. 754 in pew Bible
2. 2nd prophetic fulfillment = (R) Acts 1: 8

- ❖ IF Stephen's martyrdom led to persecution ++ and the **persecution led to the dispersion of the Christians** from Jerusalem ++ the dispersion now resulted in wide-spread evangelism.
- ❖ **"Saul was going everywhere to destroy the church = Greek = brutal cruelty**
- ❖ **What the devil intended for evil = the scattering of the Christians resulted in God using this tragic conflict into scattering the good seed of the gospel**

- ❖ **The devil's best attempt to destroy the church ~ brutal cruelty worked against his evil desires, "Blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church."**

Personal problems & conflicts & trials can be productive if we respond to them positively & not to it w-anger or bitterness.

It's during **personal times of crisis & conflict** that **God shapes and molds our character** and also is growing us in our faith.

III. Results of 'Healthy Conflict'

A. (R) Romans 5: 1 – 2 or p. 860 in pew Bible

B. (R) Romans 5: 3 – 5

- ❖ Notice what attitude we should adopt as we face the storms of life?
- ❖ Instead of just '**sucking it up**' ~ '**tightening up our chin-strap**' enduring them with a stoic inner fortitude = **Paul says, "...we can rejoice in them."**

- ❖ This is not masochistic advice = the sickness of finding pleasure in pain.
- ❖ **The command 'to rejoice in times of crisis & conflict'** is the recognition that there is a divine rationale behind suffering.

Suffering can be productive ~ it develops some intriguing qualities of Christ-likeness:

- C. 1st quality of Christ-likeness = ‘helps us develop ENDURANCE or some of your translations read PERSERVEANCE.’ (v. 3)

We couldn't learn endurance w-out suffering b-c w-out suffering there is nothing to endure.

[INSERT] Wayne Smith (great preacher) = story of unemployed man

- D. 2nd quality of Christ-likeness = ‘endurance develops strength of CHARACTER.’ (v. 4)

- ❖ Didn't you love hearing growing up ~ it's good for you ~ it's character building
- ❖ [INSERT] Max Lucado's story about the OYSTER

- E. 3rd quality of Christ-likeness = ‘& character strengthens our confident HOPE of salvation.’ (v. 4)

1. I've seen HOPE the most clearly at the bedsides of terminally ill patients who are able to say, *'its okay ~ I'M READY to go home to be w-Jesus.'*
2. I saw this 1st hand once again just last week with a wonderful woman ~ young in her 40s tell her precious husband, take me home (no more radiation) I'm ready to go home to be w-Jesus!
3. HOPE separates Christians from those in our world who FEAR death!

Do you fear dying? Here's some concrete reasons for you to have HOPE!
Some promises to look forward too:

IV. Facts about Heaven

For **most of my life** if you would have asked me,
“What happens to us when we die?” I would have given you a pathetic answer.

I would have told you that when you die your soul goes to sleep until the Lord returns.

@ Jesus' 2nd Coming your soul is resurrected & judged for eternity.

My concept of Heaven was that of a **spirit world**
where **the saved** spend eternity as *angelic spirits* floating on clouds playing harps.

Can't speak for you but I confess it's hard for me to get excited about...

- The idea of sleeping for years upon years...**being unconscious**;
- or the idea of playing a harp for all eternity is about all that I could possibly bear

- **You can only imagine** how ecstatic I was to learn that all my preconceived notions of the *AFTER-LIFE* were mostly foreign to God's word.

In fact - - when we die, **our spirits never lose their consciousness!**

- **(R) Philippians 1: 20b – 23 or p. 899 in pew Bible**
- **II Corinthians 5: 8** says that when we die, "...then we will be at home w/the Lord!"

Just (1) other fact about Heaven:

I sincerely love ALL THE THINGS that will be missing in Heaven?

- **READ Revelation 21: 3 - 4 = Magnificent list!**
- Apostle John's list could have gone on forever
- Since Heaven has no sin or death there will be no more [fill in the blank?]
- No more headaches / no more arguing & backbiting / no more silly drama / no need for chemotherapy/no more wheelchairs / no more divorce / no more jail cells / & no more broken♥'s

USA Today reported what the rich would pay Top Dollar for:
407k for great intellect + 487k for true love ++ 640k for a place in Heaven

Salvation is free ~ all it takes is a confession that Jesus is Lord & Savior!