

“UP-rooted ~ Conflict Benefits” [10.23.11]

As I was preparing to teach this weekend,
I was reminded of an **‘URBAN LEGEND’** that heard many years ago 😊

Story is told about a man who was injured in an accident at work who **filed an insurance claim**.
Insurance company contacted him & asked for more information = **here’s his response** 😊

Dear Sir, I am writing in response to your request for additional information in box number three on the accident reporting form. I had put **"poor planning"** in that box as the cause of my accident. You said in your letter that I should explain more fully so I hope the following details will be sufficient.

I am a bricklayer by trade & on the day of the accident I was working alone on the roof of a new six storey building. When I had completed my work I discovered that I had about **500 lbs of bricks left over**. Rather than carry them down by hand, I decided to lower them down by using a pulley, which was fortunately attached to the side of the building at the sixth floor. Securing the rope at ground level, I went back to the roof and attached a barrel to hold the bricks. I swung the barrel out over the side of the building and loaded the bricks into it.

I went back down to ground level and untied the rope holding the barrel. I held the rope tightly to **ensure a slow descent** of the **500 lbs of bricks**. You will note in **box number two** of the accident reporting form that **I weigh 165 lbs**. Due to my surprise at being jerked off the ground so suddenly, I lost my presence of mind and forgot to let go of the rope. Needless to say I proceeded at a rather rapid rate up the side of the building. In the vicinity of the third floor I met the barrel coming down. This explains the fractured skull and broken collar bone. **Slowed only slightly** I continued my rapid ascent, not stopping until the fingers on my right hand were two knuckles-deep into the pulley. Fortunately by this time I had regained my presence of mind & was able to hold tightly to the rope, **despite my pain**.

At approximately the same time, however, the barrel of bricks hit the ground and the bottom fell out of it. Deprived of the weight of the bricks, the barrel now weighed **about 50 lbs**. Once again I refer you to my weight in box number two. As you might well imagine, I began a rapid descent down the side of the building. In the vicinity of the third floor I met the barrel coming up. This accounts for the two fractured ankles and the lacerations on my legs and lower parts of my body. The encounter with the barrel slowed me enough to lessen my injuries, so that when I fell on the pile of bricks - **only three vertebrae were cracked**.

I am sorry to report, however, that as I lay on the ground, unable to stand, and seeing the barrel six storey’s above me, **I once again lost my presence of mind and let go of the rope**. I trust this clarifies matters to your satisfaction: Yours truly, Joe Fizzics

A GREAT PICTURE of how quickly one can **be UP-rooted in life** 😊

Sometimes life goes from bad to worse & it's just hard to hold onto at times:
[Today] we're going to read an account about the time when this happened in Paul's life.

I. Acts 27: 1 – Acts 28: 6 = Paul's situation moves from bad to worse

A. (R) Acts 27: 1 or p. 854 in pew Bible

➤ To begin with Paul is in chains = not for a crime but for his faith in Jesus

B. (R) Acts 27: 9 – 12

➤ To add to his chains = his captors refused to listen to his strong advice

C. (R) Acts 27: 13 – 26

➤ Not only was Paul's counsel right = they are now in the eye of a deadly storm

D. (R) Acts 27: 33 – 38

➤ To add to all the excitement = they have not eaten in (14 days) = H.A.L.T.

E. (R) Acts 27: 42 - 44

➤ To add insult to injury ~ Now Paul's life is threatened – tough times

F. (R) Acts 28: 1 – 2

➤ Talk about being UP-rooted ~ chained + deadly storm + hungry + cold & wet: Surely ~ life couldn't get much worse for Paul could it?

G. (R) Acts 28: 3 – 6

➤ IF things weren't bad enough ~ Paul now gets snake bit ☺

[Ever wonder] how Paul kept his sanity in the midst of **one trial = one conflict** after another?

He had to know the benefits of conflict & trials far out-weigh the negatives.

Remainder of our time ~ I want to **encourage you with scripture & show you how** your present conflicts & trials are filled with **GOD SIZED benefits** if handled God's way!

IF is a big conjunction ~ these benefits only come to those who **OBEY GOD!**

II. God-sized benefits of conflict & trials ~ [if handled God's way]!

A. 1st benefit = Equips us to comfort others!

1. (R) II Corinthians 1: 3 – 7

2. Thru our trials and conflicts – we can **set an example** that will encourage others to depend on God + remain faithful to God's commandments.

3. **[on the other side]** Addictions counselors + Marriage ministry ~ strongest ones = people who have walked similar paths & by God's grace made it thru.

B. 2nd benefit = Allows us to glorify God!

1. (R) Daniel 3: 16 – 18 + vv 24 – 28 or p. 669 in pew Bible

2. **The most effective way to glorify God** in the midst of conflict is to depend on & draw attention to God's grace = His underserved love, mercy, forgiveness, strength, and wisdom He gives us thru Jesus Christ.

3. As you forgive someone who has hurt you deeply ~ trusting God in these '**unnatural ways**'; people will see that God is real & praise Him for His work!

C. 3rd benefit = Builds our confidence in God!

1. One reason that men & women in the Bible could face problems with such confidence is that they knew God would never give them more than they could handle.

2. They trusted that every time God gave them a challenge, God would also give them the guidance + strength, & ability needed to deal with it.

3. (R) Exodus 4: 10 – 12 or 2nd book in the O.T.

4. **I Corinthians 10: 13**, *“The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, He will show you a way out so that you can endure.*
5. **Keep this passage promises close** = God will always make available the strength & help we need to deal with the difficulties in life.

D. **4th benefit** = *Conforms us to the likeness of Christ!*

1. **II Corinthians 3: 18** reminds us, *“So all of us who had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord ~ who is the Spirit ~ makes us more and more like Him as we are changed into His glorious image.”*
2. **God’s highest purpose for you** is not to make you comfortable, wealthy, or happy.
3. If you have put your faith in Him, **He has something far more wonderful in mind** – God plans to conform you to the likeness of His Son.
4. **He began to change you** the day you put your trust in Him & He will continue the process throughout your life.

Conflict is one of the many tools that God will use to help you develop a more Christ-like character.

E. **5th benefit** = *Makes us less dependent on results!*

1. Even if others refuse to respond positively to your efforts to make peace, you can find comfort in the knowledge that **God is pleased with your obedience.** This knowledge can help you persevere in difficult situations.
2. It’s important to realize that if you do not glorify God when you are involved in a conflict, you will inevitably glorify someone or something else.
3. **By your actions** you will **either** show that you have a big God or that you have a big ego + big problems.
If you don’t focus upon God – you will inevitably focus on yourself and your will.
4. **(2) questions** that will help you keep your focus on the Lord is:
 - a. **How can** I please and honor God in this situation?

- b. **How can** I bring praise to Jesus by showing that He has saved me & is changing me?
5. Seeking to please and honor God is **a powerful compass for life**, especially when we are faced with difficult challenges.
- a. **Jesus said**, "I seek not to please myself but Him who sent me." **John 5:30**
 - b. **King David showed the same desire in Psalm 19:14**, "*May the words of my mouth & the mediation of my heart be pleasing to you, O Lord, my rock & my redeemer.*"

WHO are you attempting to please today ~ your life's testimony speaks volumes:

In 1985 ~ treasure hunter Mel Fisher became world famous.

After (17 yrs) his life-time dream came to be a reality.

He finally found the mysterious Spanish war ship that had been sunken for 100's of yrs.

Reports of bars of silver stacked like cord wood started pouring in. Divers started bringing emeralds up by the quart loads. **In the end = over 450 million\$ treasure** was discovered.

But there is much more to the story ~ Mel Fisher spent 70 million dollars in search of that sunken treasure ~ some of his crew went without pay for over (6) yrs.

Once during a terrible **storm his son & daughter-in-law lost their lives** in the hunt.

Thru all the adversity, Mel Fisher held firmly to his dream of finding Spanish treasure!

[Insert]

Mel lived a pretty focused life ~ found what he was searching for **[what good is it today]?**

Honor God -- obey His words -- live to please Him = heavenly treasure awaits