



THE BROOKSVILLE BULLETIN

Brooksville church of Christ
604 W. Fort Dade Avenue, Brooksville, FL

December 12, 2021

What Does Despair Look Like? (Eric Sanders)

Despair. In Auschwitz there was a word used by the old ones of the camp to describe the weak, the inept, those doomed to selection.

"Muselmanner."

Camp inmates were so emaciated they had lost the will to live. They moved about in a state of utter apathy, didn't look after themselves, and

gradually joined the ranks of the hopeless, wasting away to skin and bones, the divine spark dead within them, already too empty to suffer. Their life is short, but their number is endless.

What does despair look like? Consider the prodigal, who after wasting away his inheritance, wallowed in the mire, longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, yearning for the day to be just a hired servant in his father's house. (Luke 15.13-17)

What does despair look like? Perhaps it's the man who weeps

uncontrollably in the courtyard after hearing the loud cry of a rooster as his friend, the man he once called Rabbi (Mark 9.5), is being led away to His death. (Mark 14.72)

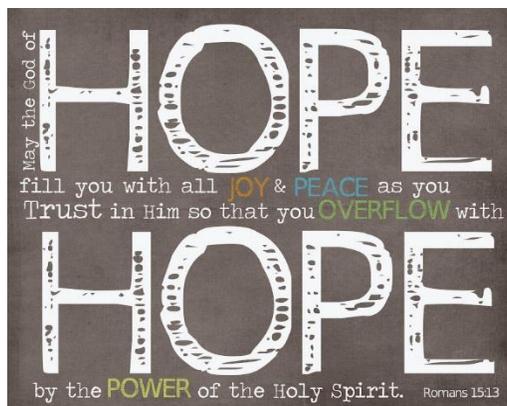
What does despair look like? It's the plaintive cry of over three

thousand souls from every nation who discovered they were complicit in the cruel death of the Christ, the very One the prophets longed to see and hear (Matthew 13.17).

"Brothers, what shall we do?" (Acts 2.37).

What does despair look like? It's in the phrases we find throughout the Pauline epistles. Children of wrath (Ephesians 2.3). Slaves to sin (Romans 7.14). Enemies of God (Romans 5.10). Lawless. Ungodly. Unholy. Profane. (1 Timothy 1.8-9). Dead in your trespasses (Colossians 2.13). Worthy of death (Romans 1.32).

What does despair look like? Peter, in his letter to the exiles of the Dispersion wrote: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord



Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in Heaven for you” (1 Peter 1.3-4).

Under the shadow of the cross, despair quickly fades to hope. To reconciliation. To victory. To glory. For the Christian, the emblem of suffering and shame is a reminder that our despair, the shadows of the soul that so quickly engulf us, is quickly torn away by the blood of the Lamb. The chasm that lay between the Father and us

Compromise makes a good umbrella but a poor roof; it is a temporary expedient.

is no more. The debt has been paid “by the blood of the eternal covenant” (Hebrews 13.20).

So on this day. The first day of the week. As we gather together at the Supper of the Christ. The question “what does despair look like?” becomes moot. In its place, we find another, more poignant question: What does hope look like?

We live in a world that is often called hopeless. A hopeless world of despair is often how many people feel about life. We, however, have a hope that is alive. We have something to set our eyes upon when life becomes full of

suffering and difficulty. The God of ages stepped down from glory to wear our sins and bear our shame. The cross has spoken. We are forgiven.

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being out to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit” (1 Peter 3.18).

Despair and death have lost their grip on us. Let us praise the One who has set us free. Jesus Christ, our living hope.

Hallelujah! Praise God.

In Christ I Will Not Lose (Matthew Bassford)

[Matthew Bassford preaches in Columbia, Tennessee and is the author of several hymns – Exalted; Be Strong and Courageous; to name a few. In July 2021, Matthew was diagnosed with ALS, Lou Gehrig’s disease. He wrote this short reflection.]

As I contemplate my future, one of the most unpleasant prospects is that of developing frontotemporal dementia. In my family, FTD and ALS are genetically linked. My mother had both. I do not know whether I will be spared.

However, as awful as FTD is, my trust is in the One whose power is greater than any illness. As of now, there is no medication that will slow its inexorable march, but I

am confident that any victory that it wins over me will be temporary only. For me, as for any Christian afflicted with Alzheimer's disease or dementia, I know these things to be true:

In Christ I will not lose my memories. Jesus knew His friends and loved ones after His resurrection, and I will be raised like Him.

In Christ I will not lose my personality. He who is able to restore the martyrs from scattered ashes will be able to restore it too.

In Christ I will not lose my relationships. Heaven is a place of greater fellowship, not lesser.

In Christ I will not lose my mind. I know I will have it because it is impossible to love God fully without it.

In Christ I will not lose my joy. At His right hand, there are pleasures forever.

In Christ I will not lose my life. It is hidden in Him.

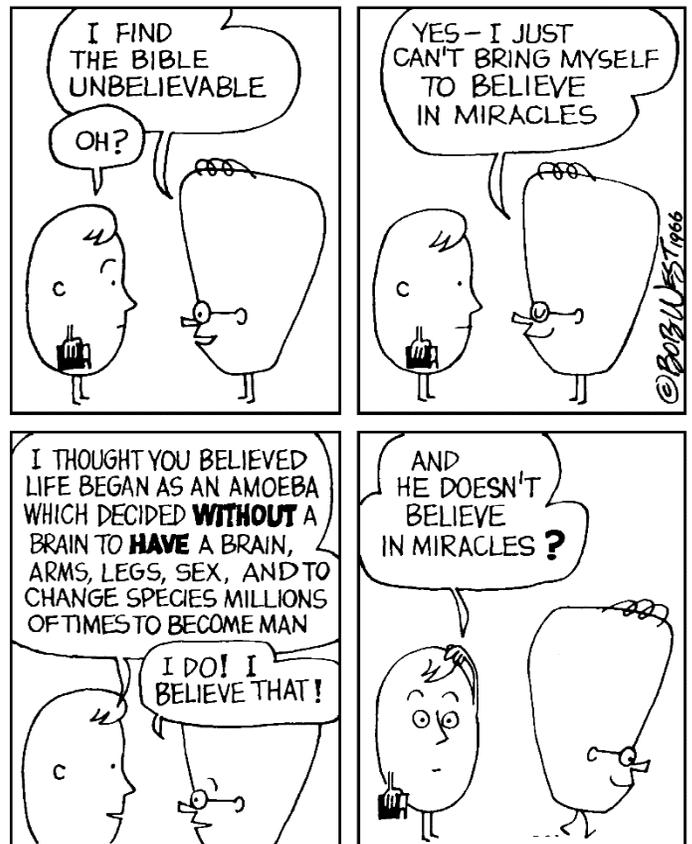
(Amen)

The Perfect Church (Author Unknown)

I think that I shall never see
 A church that's all
 it ought to be;
 A church whose members
 never stray
 Beyond the straight
 and narrow way:
 A church that has
 no empty pews,

THEOPHILUS

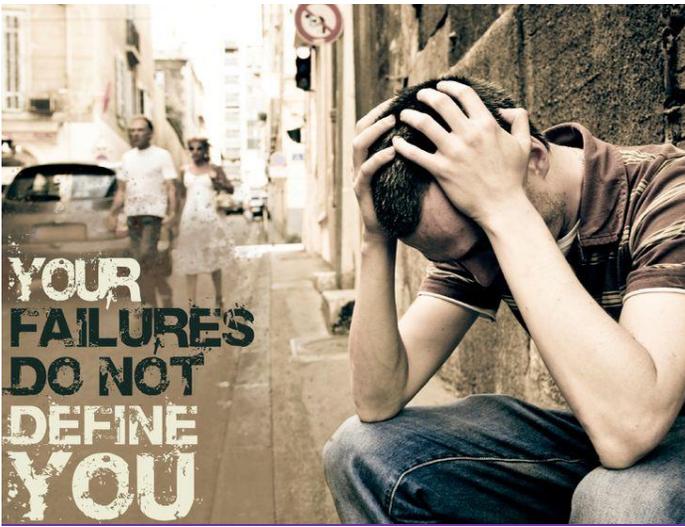
A Matter of Faith



Whose preacher never
 has the blues,
 Where elders 'eld' and
 deacons 'deak,'
 And none is proud,
 and all are meek;
 Where gossips never
 peddle lies,
 Or make complaints
 or criticize;
 Where all are always
 sweet and kind,
 And all to other's faults
 are blind.

Such perfect churches
 there may be,
 But none of them
 are known to me.
 But still we'll work,
 and pray, and plan,
 To make our own
 the best we can.

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Worldliness (C. S. Lewis)

If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this one. Aim at Heaven and you will get earth thrown in; aim at earth and you will get neither.

**We do not usually learn that Christ is all we need until we reach the place where He is all we have.
(Vance Havner)**

Trust (Selected)

A burst of thunder caused the three-year-old to race into her parents' bedroom. "Mommy, I'm scared," she said. Her sleepy mother responded by saying, "Go back to your bed. God will be there with you." The little girl stopped at the doorway, turned and said, "Mommy, why don't I sleep here with daddy, and you go in there with God?"

- ⊕ Marriage is when a man gets hooked on his own line.
- ⊕ Marriage is nature's way of keeping people from fighting with strangers.
- ⊕ Marriage is like a midnight phone call – you get a ring and then you wake up.
- ⊕ A marriage certificate is a legal paper that lets guys keep the game in captivity after the hunting season is over.

Brooksville Church of Christ

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Times of Services

Sunday Bible Class for all ages (10:00am)

Sunday Worship all Welcome (11:00am & 6:00pm)

Wednesday Bible Class for all ages (7:00pm)

Supporting the GOSPEL in other places:

↪ Jamey Hinds, Hollywood, Florida; Roy Fenner, Panama City, Florida

↪ Zeke Flores, Columbus, Texas; Philip North, Branson, Missouri

↪ The saints in Nicaragua

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