

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13

May 1, 2020



Nuremberg, Germany. How many vacations have you been on that you can honestly say, “I was not disappointed at all.” Our trip to Europe in 2018 was one of those. (Thank you Mike and Andrea for “talking” us in to it).

Disappointment

“But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel...” (The disciples on the road to Emmaus, Luke 24:21)

How many times in your life have you been disappointed? Can you even count the times? There are too many to count, in my case since, I guess, I’ve liked to have something to look forward to.

One case of disappointment stands out. For virtually all of my young life, I lived, breathed and ate sports — baseball in the spring and summer and football in the fall and winter. Year ‘round, I was playing or watching one or the other. One Friday when I was 12 years old, I had to stay home from school due to a bad cold. Staying home from school didn’t break my heart. However, on Saturday morning four of my friends showed up at our door because we had made plans to play another team of five boys. Being able to get ten boys together to play a game was rare. I can’t express how excited was to play that long-anticipated game.

When one asked if I was “ready to go” I ran to put on my sweatshirt and grab my football. But my mom stopped me: “You won’t be going out today; you’re too sick.” (For the record, I was never too sick to play sports). I was usually able to convince my soft-hearted mom to let me do stuff, but not this time. There would be no football for me that day.

I don’t know why this incident stands out in my memory like it does, but I can still see the faces of those boys. They had the “what a wimp” look on their faces, the “OK, mommy’s boy” look. Though it was a tiny matter in the big scheme of things, it was an embarrassing disappointment for me that day.

Disappointments are a common occurrence in everyone’s life, from an early age. I experienced several before this one. Kids are disappointed every time they are told they can’t do something they want to do. As you mature, you realize that things don’t always work out as you would like, so you learn to handle disappointment. During this pandemic, some are suffering the horror of the unexpected death of someone dear to them. We don’t use “disappointment” to describe that since that would be a gross, cruel understatement. We sympathize with those who have suffered real tragedy.

For many others, however, “disappointment” is the go-to term that describes life under quarantine. The lack of personal contact with fellow Christians is frustrating and hard to bear. For high school seniors, having to miss their graduation or losing out on their last year of sports is a great disappointment. Many of us had travel plans that had to be cancelled and tickets to games and concerts that had to be refunded. These disappointments are “first world problems,” to be sure, but they are no less real.

There are many cases of disappointment recorded in the Bible. Two come readily to mind. In John 20, Thomas fails to show up to a meeting of the disciples. It’s not much of a stretch to assume he was deeply disappointed because when he meets the disciples later he says, “I will never believe...” His faith was shaken; his expectations were dashed (he thought).

We see it in the disciples on the road to Emmaus, too (Luke 24:13-35). Jesus shows up alongside them, but doesn’t reveal his identity. Jesus asks what they were discussing and we’re told, “And they stood still, looking sad” and they began to describe the events that had taken place. The murder of Christ had dashed their hopes and dreams and they were disappointed. “We had hoped,” they said, “that he was the one to redeem Israel” (24:21).

In both cases, Jesus corrects their mistaken view of things and their disappointment is turned to joy. That doesn’t happen very often in the disappointments we face, though. My mom didn’t relent and let me go with the guys to play football on that cold, cloudy day in 1960. God doesn’t let us “out to play” just because we want to. He doesn’t always take away the pain that comes with disappointing circumstances, or real trouble but he does expect us to learn from it, adjust our expectations and put our hope on things eternal. As the song says, “there’s no disappointment in heaven.” Can you imagine living in a land where nothing disappointing ever happens? I can, and I’m looking forward to it.