

Daily View

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

January 6, 2021

Hope Addicts

Angie and Trey’s dog, Rocket, may be the most irritating dog I’ve ever met. When we come through the door, he is so happy to see us, he drives us crazy. If he could talk, he would be saying, *“Oh, Oh!! You’re finally here!! Come here and talk to me, pet me, pay attention to me!!!”* It’s maddening. When you’re sitting down — even at the dinner table — Rocket will quietly saunter up and force his nose under your arm and then look at you with those big black eyes that seem to say, *“I really am your friend, even though you’ve told me to leave you alone 16 times so far.”* He’s extremely annoying. Yet, I cannot help but like him.

Rocket’s an optimist. He never gives up. Like all optimists, he tends to see only the bright side of things — or at least, he’s in constant search of something that will make his day better. Even if it means driving someone crazy. I’m almost a human Rocket, although I don’t want to be as annoying as he is. Optimistic people don’t have to be annoying. After all, the Bible presents an optimistic view of life — the gospel is good news and its message is that eternal life is available to all. It’s sad that many seem to ignore or minimize this aspect of God’s word and even criticize those who emphasize it. Sometimes, it’s under the guise of “fire and brimstone” preaching and if don’t do that regularly you are “soft.” But when it’s all fire and no light, it’s not the gospel that’s being preached.

Warnings are important and necessary but I learned a long time ago that if you speak only about the problem without presenting a solution, you are presenting an incomplete, and potentially damaging, picture. Preach about hell, but give ‘em heaven; end on a positive note because Jesus died for our salvation.

Who wants to be around someone whose attitude is primarily pessimistic, anyway? In one church we attended, a man who was often assigned to head the Lord’s table prayed, every single time, *“help us do this in a way that we don’t eat and drink damnation to our souls.”* It’s true that the King James Version says, *“For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body”* in I Corinthians 11:29. That’s an important warning but when that’s all you focus on every time you lead a prayer, you seem to be missing the point. It’s hard to maintain such a negative view of the gospel (and the Lord’s Supper) and also be “faithful unto death” (Revelation 2:10). It is *good news*, after all. That man eventually fell away from Christ.

Optimism is not necessarily viewing everything through the proverbial “rose-colored glasses.” Some people are so optimistic that they overlook real problems and are just silly. A reasonable optimist is one who, as a rule, tries to find the bright side of any situation and is a “hope addict.” Helen Keller said, *“keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadow.”*

Our optimism has been challenged more severely during 2020 than at any time I can remember. But what good does it do to think negatively? Look at the texts below; they promote an attitude that seems well worth cultivating.

John 16:33

“These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

Psalms 71:5

“For You are my hope;
O Lord God, You are my confidence from my youth.”

Psalms 52:8

“But as for me, I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the lovingkindness of God forever and ever.”

Psalms 125:1

“Those who trust in the Lord
Are as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved
but abides forever.”

Psalms 25:4-5

“Make me know Your ways, O Lord;
Teach me Your paths.
Lead me in Your truth and teach me,
For You are the God of my salvation;
For You I wait all the day.”

Psalms 56:4

“In God, whose word I praise,
In God I have put my trust;
I shall not be afraid.
What can mere man do to me?”

Micah 7:7

“But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the Lord;
I will wait for the God of my salvation.
My God will hear me.”

Romans 15:33

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

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