

- ***READ Philippians 3:13-17*** Back in high school and college I worked in a grocery store, and if you have ever worked in one then you have probably gotten in the habit of wishing people a good day. I couldn't even begin to count the number of times outside of the grocery store that I wished someone a good day and instinctively followed it up with, *"and come back to see us."* Well wishes are certain a good habit to have in my estimation, but we must recognize that well wishes are not always fulfilled.
- As much as I many have wished everyone a good day with a *"have a good day!"*, that doesn't mean that every person left and actually had a good day. The truth is that the fortunes of a day are not completely in our control. Things happen in life that can put us in a place of sadness and despair, yet does that mean that we are hopeless and our live will only be determined by the luck of the draw of each day as to whether or not we can find joy and happiness in this life?
- I don't believe this is the case at all! In fact, I would say that sometimes instead of just being handed a good day...we have to make a good day. If we're being honest with ourselves then we will have to admit that some days are better than others and some days are just flat out bad. It seems as if everything that can go wrong goes wrong, but I want to speak for a few minutes tonight as to how we can make those bad days into good days. I am convinced there are some strong spiritual implications to how we approach and respond to each day we are blessed with on this earth, and we would do well to have the right type of mindset as we approach each of the days given to us. Paul was someone who saw his unfair share of bad and difficult days, and I believe there are some great lessons that we can learn from him in this regard as to how we can make a good day out of the bad days that we know will happen.

I. Bad days will happen...

A. They will happen because that is just the nature of this life.

1. There are some people we meet that we might think to ourselves, *"well that person has never had a bad day in his/her life!"* They might be described as a very happy-go-lucky person. They might always have a smile on his/her face and a pep in his/her step. Do you know anyone like that? I can think of a handful of individuals that might fit that description from what we can tell from the outside, but let me suggest that even those people actually do experience bad days.
2. I am convinced of this because the Preacher of Ecclesiastes seems to believe that this is the case. In **Ecclesiastes 9:11**, the Preacher writes, *"I again saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift and the battle is not to the warriors, and neither is bread to the wise nor wealth to the discerning or favor to men of ability; for time and chance overtake them all."* The point? Life just happens from time to time. Sometimes good fortune falls upon us and sometimes it does not.
3. As they say, the only certainty is uncertainty, and I believe the Preacher would agree as He next writes, *"Moreover, man does not know his time; like fish caught in a treacherous net and birds trapped in a snare, so the sons of men are ensnared at an evil time when it suddenly falls on them."* (**Ecclesiastes 9:12**) We don't know what type of events a day will bring. Sometimes our days are fine and full of enjoyable experiences, but sometimes they're just difficult and full of many trials and problems. That is just the way this life works.

B. They also happen because Satan wants for us to experience difficulties in life.

1. I am firmly of the belief that Satan is absolutely at work in this life doing whatever he can to cause us difficulties that he hopes will lead to us abandoning our faith and trust in God. Its not as if Satan doesn't already have a track record of doing such a thing...take for example what he did to Job. After God singles and commends Job out for his blameless living, Satan wants to prove to God that afflicting Job would lead to him cursing God. (**Job 1:8-11**) We know the rest of the story...Job losing everything and yet he holds on to his integrity before God in the face of unspeakable tragedies and loss by falling down and worshipping the Lord. Yet...Job isn't the only man that we can see Satan going after in the Bible.

2. In **II Corinthians 12:7**, we learn that Paul has been afflicted with some sort of struggle in life that he refers to as his thorn in the flesh. He even goes on to say that it was *"a messenger of Satan to torment me."* Where as we might seek to give God praise and honor for all of the blessings in this life, we might also recognize that the difficulties of life could very well be as result of Satan doing whatever he can within his power given to him by God to destroy us and our faiths. We know that He is a lion lurking around to destroy any soul he can (**I Peter 5:8**), so it only makes sense to me that many of the bad days we experience are a result of the evil one trying to devour and destroy us. He longs for our destruction, so why wouldn't he make his job easier by making this life as difficult as he can for us? I certainly see him at work because bad days do happen...

II. But we can make the bad days into good days!

A. Bad days don't have to ruin us.

1. I was recently speaking with a family member about life, and she was telling me about how difficult things seemed to be in her life at the moment. She was all stressed out about school and her boyfriend who lives in another state. My conversation with her could basically be boiled down to life is hard and there was nothing good to look forward to.
2. Yet, as I spoke with her, I tried to remind her that life wasn't really as bad as she was making it out to be. Sure this past school year had been difficult for her because she was very new to the college experience and she was taking some pretty tough courses...and yet she passed every one of them and was ready to move on to her next year. Yeah...her boyfriend was hours away and they didn't get to see each other all that much, but they both seemed willing to work through and tough it out. From where she was sitting, everything looked bleak and hopeless, but that was simply because she was allowing the bad days to ruin her at the moment! Which by the way...is exactly what Satan was wanting to happen! He wants us to be doubtful and to lose trust in the goodness of the Lord in this life.
3. My advice to her was the same advice that I often give myself or other people who seem to be going through a rough patch...focus on the positives of what is going on right now. So many people look at other people's lives and they see happiness and joy and they act as if they are getting short changed in some way. They wish for nothing more than to get lucky and be in that person's shoes, but they are not seeing that those people have had the bad days, too...they just chose to get past them. My friend Jordan Shouse once said wisely, *"The grass is greener where I want it."* The good news is that we have the power to make bad days into good days, and that power resides in the attitude that we will have as we endure difficult days.

B. The defining point will be our attitude.

1. This is what we saw back in our opening text of **Philippians 3:13-17**. Paul is speaking of himself getting past the bad days of his past life that were a result of his rebellion against God, but he was determined to press on forward towards the goal of being like Jesus in all things. What was the key to his success? He says that the key is having the proper attitude.
2. Paul says that those who are perfect or mature in their faiths will come to possess an attitude that allows for them to get past the bad days and even turn those bad days into good days! Paul knew that his approach to life was the right approach to life for he says, *"Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us."* (**Philippians 3:17**)
3. Paul's mindset was one of endurance until the end through constantly reminding Himself of different things that could and would motivate him to make each day a day that was good and beneficial to him in his faith and service to God and others. There are three different things that I see Paul mentioning and doing in this letter to the Philippians that can help each and every one of us to be able to make every day a good day, and we will finish by looking at those three things.

III. Make a good day by:

A. remembering who we are.

1. *"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself."* **(Philippians 3:20,21)** Even on the worst of days, Paul remembered that he was a child of God whose citizenship rests elsewhere than in this old broken down and beaten up world.
2. When I thought about this point, one of the first things that came to my mind was the song, *"Remember Who You Are."* Most of us probably recognize this song for the pause in the chorus that trips us up if we are not paying attention, but the words of this song are quite wonderful and about as encouraging as they come.
 - 1) ***In His image God created you; In new birth He gave you life anew; and His matchless love you now proclaim; You must live to glorify His name. Christian remember who you are today; as you follow Him along the way. Those the way seems dark and the journey far, strength comes when you remember who you are.***
 - 2) ***You were bought at such an awful price. Christ redeemed you by His sacrifice. You obeyed Him and were free from sin, peace and hope and joy and love within. Christian remember who you are today; as you follow Him along the way. Those the way seems dark and the journey far, strength comes when you remember who you are.***
 - 3) ***Let your light be bright and ever true; live so others will see Christ in you. In your life a sermon sinners see what the Christian life is meant to be. Christian remember who you are today; as you follow Him along the way. Those the way seems dark and the journey far, strength comes when you remember who you are.***
3. Did you catch the portions of the song that can help lift us up on the most difficult day? We are a people made in the image of God, and we have been granted a second chance at life that will lead to heaven with God for all eternity if we will remain faithful. This is all made possible by the sacrifice of Jesus. I wonder...what bad things in this life can outweigh the fact that we have eternal glory waiting for us in the next life? Sure we will suffer some bad fortune and bad days in this life, but nothing we suffer can compare with the glory awaiting us. Let's make a good day by remembering how blessed we are to be a part of God's people! Every day in Christ is a good day!

B. serving others.

1. Secondly, we can turn some bad days by getting our minds off of our bad day by making someone else's day better through acts of loving service. We know well from **Philippians 2:6-8** what Jesus sacrificed in coming to earth to die for our sins. I can't think of a worse day to have than to be killed on a cross as a completely innocent man. But Jesus endured that very day, and He did so because He was serving us in the process.
2. Jesus was able to endure the literal worst of days into a good day by thinking of others more than Himself. *"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility to mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus."* **(Philippians 2:3-5)**
3. Surely we have all seen this at work in our own lives. When we are putting our focus on others then our minds are taken off of whatever worries we might have because we are able to brighten the day of someone else. Selflessness can most certainly be a wonderful remedy to a bad day, and we can make a good day when we serve others.

C. learning contentment.

1. Finally, Paul teaches us in **Philippians 4:12** that we can turn any bad day into a good day by learning contentment. *"I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need."* No matter the type of day that Paul found himself having...whether he was enjoying a great day of ministry or if he was on the run from wicked men or chained up in prison, he was going to be content with his portion and the reason for this was that he knew he could endure all things with Christ strengthening him.
(Philippians 4:13)
2. Sometimes we have bad days because we are under the assumption that we can only have good days or find happiness when our lives are up to a certain standard. We think we can only find joy when everything in life is exactly as we want for it to be...and yet when is life ever truly exactly as we want for it to be? Therefore it is imperative that we adopt this attitude of contentment from Paul and gain the ability to make every day a good day through making the best of whatever the circumstances might be that we find ourselves in.
3. *"Well that's easy for Paul to say...he's an Apostle!"* While this is true...let's also remember that Paul is in prison during the writing of this letter, and that only further demonstrates the attitude of contentment that Paul possessed. Even in prison, which would be the humblest of means, Paul was content and took these circumstances to do what he could to strengthen the kingdom through the writing of this most encouraging letter. Paul made the worst of days good and productive days by being content and doing the best with what he had.

I'm going to make a bold prediction that I hope doesn't come true, though it probably will...someone in attendance right now is going to have a bad day this week. It could be anyone of us. It could even be me! So the challenge for us after this study is simply this: let's make a good day out of that bad day that we might be having this week. Instead of allowing ourselves to be defeated by the bad day we might be having, let's remember who we are as children of God. Let's remember that we serve a great God that will strengthen us to overcome any bad day, and that we can do so through serving others and learning contentment. May God be praised and honored in our lives as we seek to make everyday a good day through our faith and service to Him because every day is a good day when we are in Christ.

PRAYER *Our loving Father in heaven...we come to you at the close of this lesson in great humility recognize that You are the one true and living God through whom all blessings flow. We are mindful, this evening, of the difficulties of life and how somethings life can cause use to become doubtful and discouraged. We pray that You would strengthen us to have the same mind and attitude as the Apostle Paul to remember the blessings we have in Christ. Help us to take our minds off of ourselves and focus them on loving and serving others. Help us to learn contentment and to lean upon Your Son for strength in every circumstance. As we go throughout this week and come up upon bad and difficult days, we ask that You would strengthen us to make them good days, and may those victories bring glory to your name. We love You so much for the blessings You provide...especially the blessing of hope that has come through the giving of Your Son. It is in His name that we pray these things...amen.*