

# KEYS TO THRIVING IN ADVERSITY

## Our Riches in Christ : Study in Ephesians, Part 9

Ephesians 3:1

Sermon Notes

July 22, 2012

- I. What can we learn from Paul's perspective on his imprisonment?
  - A. He considered himself a prisoner of *Jesus Christ*. (3:1)
  - B. Paul did not view himself as being "*under*" his circumstances. (cf. Phil. 1:12-14)
  - C. Six keys to thriving in adversity:
    1. *Recall your identity* in Christ. (e.g. Eph. 2:19-22)
    2. *Pray for strength and insight*. (cf. Eph. 3:14-20)
    3. Make the promise of Romans 8:28 *personal* and a matter of *praise*. (cf. II Cor. 12:9; I Thess. 5:16-18)
    4. Look for God's "*fingerprints*" in your adversity. (Phil. 1:12-14)
    5. Be *patient*. (cf. Eph. 4:2; Is. 55:8-9)
    6. Don't ever forget this world and all that is in it is *temporary*. (cf. I Cor. 7:31; Rev. 21:1-4)

### Growth Group Questions

1. What from this message spoke to you the most?
2. Do you think that God has done a work in you with the resulting "lasting benefit" that you are able to comprehend your identity in Christ? (cf. Ephesians 1:18) Why or why not? What connection is there between your answer and praying for this "lasting benefit"?

3. Typically, do you view yourself as being at the whim of circumstances ("under" the circumstances) or in your daily living do you see yourself as being under the sovereign hand of God? What daily actions bear out your answer?

### *Six Keys to Thriving in Adversity...*

4. When in adversity are you more prone to feel "set aside" ("sanctified") or cast aside? What life experiences have shaped your answer? What Biblical truths have shaped your answer? Which, life experiences or Biblical truth, has had a greater impact on your attitude in adversity?
5. When in adversity, is your first response to "talk to God" or "reach for the aspirin bottle"? In other words, do you rely first on your own strength and insight or God's? What practical steps might one take to improve one's reliance on God?
6. When in adversity, can you suggest some ways that you can make Romans 8:28 personal and a matter of praise?
7. Do you have a "God's fingerprints" testimony? Share it with the group.
8. Are you more inclined to be patient or impatient? Has your patience level grown over the years? What can one do to become more patient? How might patience and trust in God be connected?
9. What evidence is there in your life and the management of your possession that would reveal a heartfelt belief that this world is temporary? Or is there more evidence in your life practice that you think this world is all there is? When in adversity, what relief or hope can come from realizing the truth that this world is temporary?



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