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Crossroads Community Church

Sunday April, 12th 2015

What a fabulous Sunday morning, the sun was shining, the birds were singing and the warmth of Jesus ushered us in to worship. Pastor Don shared announcements and prayed, ?Dear Father God, allow your Holy Spirit to rain down on us, open our hearts and minds to receive what you have for us, in Jesus precious name, Amen.?

We have all had those days when everything came crashing down at once, one incident after another to disrupt our sense of ?Life is Good? motto. When things go off track of our expectations we are tempted to think that something must be wrong. When we let that train of thought persist it creeps into our spiritual life and we can fail to see the hand of God in our circumstances. It is true life is often challenging and painful however God uses those times to stretch our spiritual muscles and grow our faith. He also takes these opportunities to reveal His presence to us and reassures us that He is always walking beside us even when we don't feel that He is. We are no different than the disciples, there were times the presence of the Lord was obvious as when they witnessed His miracles, (Luke 19:37-38). Then there were times when all hope faded away and the Lord's presence seemed to have vanished; when He was arrested, tried, crucified and buried. Oh but what a glorious day when Jesus rose again! No one knew; no one even suspected it. What a joyful surprise it must have been when Mary Magdalene was told that Jesus was indeed alive! ?Don't be so surprised. Aren't you looking for Jesus, the Nazarene who was crucified? He isn't here! He has come back to life! Look, that's where his body was laying,? Mark 16:6. Meanwhile most of Jesus' followers were still mourning over lost dreams and were tempted to leave Jerusalem, running away seemed like the thing to do. Two of the disciples who were afraid of persecution were headed to Emmaus. While walking there, Jesus suddenly was walking with them as they were recounting all the events of the last few days, but they did not recognize Him because Jesus didn't let them yet, (Luke 24:13). Their grief, disillusioned hearts and doubtful minds blinded them to the presence of Jesus. They wanted to rationalize what had happened; they wanted to understand and were trying to appease their confusion; an attitude not much different than we have when we face difficult and questionable times. We try to figure things out on our own or we get council from a friend to feel better but without God's perfect answers based on His word we are no further ahead. God understands our troubles and wants us to know that He is always there to guide and comfort us, reassure and strengthen us, (Isaiah 43:2-3). Jesus is always with us as scripture says that when two or three are gathered in His name, His spirit is in the midst of them,(Matthew 18:20). No experience can be too big to give God a reason to leave us, He didn't even leave Jesus when he was pleading with Him to spare him the cup of suffering and after sweating drops of blood God sent an Angel to strengthen him, (Matthew 26:39, Luke 22:43). Even when Jesus was on the Cross, God did not leave Him, he looked away but he was there strengthening His Son to endure the cross. When Jesus cried out My God, My God why have you abandoned me, Jesus was expressing the pain and anguish he felt when the sins of the world caused Him to feel separated from his Father, He wasn't doubting God, (Matthew 27:46).

When life gets overwhelming and prayers seem to go unanswered, I am sure we have all had moments where we asked, ?God where are You?? Certainly the disciples asked that same question as they were discussing what had happened to Jesus. Jesus already knew what was weighing on their hearts but in loving concern asked them why they were so sad, he wanted them to bare their hearts to Him. The disciples poured out all their shattered hopes and unfulfilled promises, they were distraught, so overwhelmed that even though it was proclaimed that Jesus had risen they didn't believe, they failed to recognize that Jesus told them he would die and rise again, (Luke 24:1-24). Jesus went on to guide the men into scripture to help them see the truth about Him and all that needed to happen to Him which comforted them and when the disciples asked Him to stay with them, he gladly agreed. As they shared a meal Jesus broke bread and their eyes were finally opened and were able to look past their disappointments and see Jesus, their faith was reignited! (Luke 24: 25-35).

Beloved, we much like the disciples, doubt and our faith can grow dim when our expectations are not met. They expected their Messiah to deliver them from a hard life failing to realize that their salvation was much deeper than a physical one. Today we still expect our lives with Jesus to be free from problems and challenges, we want resurrection but we don't want to die to our old ways, we can't take hold of a new life with Christ when we won't let go of the old one. When life becomes filled with disappointments we ought to trust God's word. He longs to comfort us and set our hearts on fire for Him and if temptation clouds our ability to see Him, He wants to lead us out of it and fan the flame of our faith, (2 Timothy 1:6, 7, I Corinthians 10:13). However we find ourselves tempted or distressed, Jesus is right there to give us the help we need, God is our refuge and strength, a tested help in times of trouble!

Call on Him today?..Asherey Shalom.