

UNMOVED IN YOUR MIND

- A. Introduction: Troubles come to us all. They're part of life in a sin damaged world. If we don't learn how to deal with trials in a godly way, they can move us to be angry at God because of our circumstances or move us to be jealous of others who have it better than us. They can move us to justify sinful attitudes and actions. They can even move us to waver and doubt the reality of what we believe about the Lord.
1. I Cor 15:58--The great apostle Paul wrote to Christians that we're to be steadfast, unmovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord because we know our efforts, as we live this life, are not in vain. There's a lot in this verse we aren't going to talk about right now, but note these points.
 - a. Steadfast comes from a word that means to sit and, by implication, to be immovable. Unmovable is the word movable with "un" attached to it. Movable means to move away.
 - b. Work means to work as an effort or occupation. We automatically think of working for the Lord as having a ministry or working in the church. But we got that idea from our culture, not from the New Testament. This is a lesson for another night, but consider these thoughts.
 1. The people Paul wrote to were ordinary people who lived before there were church buildings, Sunday School programs, or helps ministries. Working for the Lord has to be something every Christian in every generation can do no matter what their lot in life. Col 3:22-24
 2. Our work is to trust God and obey Him, to desire His glory and the good of others above all. Our work is to know Him and to show Him to those around us through our character and behavior as we live in submission and obedience to the Lord.
 2. Back to not being moved. Two people can encounter the same circumstance, but one stands strong while the other is moved. Becoming unmovable has to do with how we see things or with our perspective. Consider two incidents.
 - a. In one instance, the prophet Elisha and his servant both saw that they were surrounded by an enemy army that had come to get them. Elisha was confident, but the servant was terrified (II Kings 6:13-18). In another instance, Jesus and His disciples encountered a horrific storm while crossing the Sea of Galilee. Jesus was confident, but the disciples were terrified, doubting God's care for them (Mark 4:35-41).
 - b. From these examples, we can see that it's not the circumstance itself that moves us, it's our view of reality. Both Elisha and Jesus knew there was more to reality than what they could see and feel in the moment and it affected how they dealt with the troubles they faced. They were not moved.
 - c. To remain unmoved by the hardships of life we must know where the real battle is. It's not with what you see. It's with how you see what you see. That's what we want to focus on in this lesson.
- B. In the Epistle to the Hebrews the apostle Paul wrote to Jewish believers who had accepted Jesus as the Christ, the promised Messiah. Their fellow countrymen who did not believe Jesus was the Christ were pressuring these people to abandon their faith in Christ, repudiate Him, and come back to Temple worship.
1. These people had already experienced ridicule, beatings, and property loss because of their faith in Christ (Heb 10:32-34), and the pressure on them was increasing.
 - a. The whole purpose of the epistle was to encourage them to stay faithful to Christ, no matter the cost, because it's worth it in the end. Paul employed a number of approaches to remind and encourage these people to not be moved. His exhortations give us insight into how to become unmovable in the face of trouble.
 - b. Heb 12:1-3--Paul encouraged his readers to run with patience or endurance the race set before them looking unto Jesus. He told them to consider Jesus so you don't grow weary in your minds.
 1. Minds is the Greek word *psuche* which refers to the immaterial portion of man. This is more than physical tiredness. It is mental exhaustion.
 2. v3--So that your souls may not wear out with despondency (Berkeley); lose your purpose or courage (Phillips); get tired and give up (Beck).

2. To help them combat weariness of mind Paul directed them to consider Jesus. Consider means to contemplate. Contemplate means to consider carefully and for a long time, or meditate: Give thought to him (Basic); consider Him carefully (Norlie); take your standard from him (Knox)
 - a. Paul gives a very specific example of what he means. He referred to the fact that Jesus endured the Cross. Endured (verb) is the same word translated patience (noun) in v2. It means to remain or persevere with cheerful endurance.
 1. Paul says that Jesus endured because of the joy set before Him. Joy comes from a word that means to be “cheer”ful. It’s not an emotional response. It is a state of mind.
 2. We’ve discussed this word a lot over the past year. To be cheerful doesn’t mean to feel a certain emotion. It means to cheer or encourage yourself with the reasons you have hope or an expectation of coming good so that you can persevere or be unmoved.
 - b. The Cross was going to be a horrific experience for Jesus, and He knew it before hand.
 1. You may recall that the night before He was crucified, Jesus prayed to His Father: If it’s possible, let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not My will but Yours. Matt 26:36-45
 2. Jesus was clearly not unwilling. But His flesh recoiled at what He would experience: He would take our sin on Himself, be cut off from His Father, go into the death realm, etc.
 - c. But for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross. Jesus saw through to the end result and what was ahead helped Him endure. He did not grow weary in His mind. v3--Who, in view of the joy that lay ahead for Him (Berkeley) submitted to a cross, caring nothing for its shame (Goodspeed).
 1. Remember, we started our discussion of becoming unmoved with Paul who, in the face of impending imprisonment and death, said that none of those things moved him. Acts 20:22-24
 2. He took his own advice. He wrote much about keeping your focus on the end result as a way to hold steady in the storms of life. Rom 8:18; II Cor 4:17,18
3. Back to Heb 12:2--Paul exhorted believers to run with endurance the race set before us, “Looking away [from all that will distract] to Jesus, Who is the Leader and the Source of our faith (v2, Amp).
 - a. Becoming unmovable is directly related to what you do with your mind, where you focus your attention, how you see reality. Looking at Jesus will give you a faith (persuasion or confidence) that will hold you steady in the face of life’s challenges.
 - b. Looking means to consider attentively or to keep your focus on Him. There’s more to this than we can discuss now, but consider several thoughts.
 1. Jesus’ first disciples were influenced by spending time with Him. He “rubbed off on them”, so to speak. In Acts 3, Peter healed a lame man in the name of Jesus by the power of God.
 - A. When he and John were examined by Temple authorities as to what happened, the council was amazed by the two men.
 - B. Acts 4:13--When the council saw the boldness of Peter and John, and could see that they were obviously uneducated non-professionals, they were amazed and realized what being with Jesus had done for them! (NLT).
 2. Jesus has returned to Heaven, but we, too, can be with Jesus through His Word. The written Word, the Bible, reveals the Living Word, the Lord Jesus. That’s why I harp so much on becoming a regular reader of the New Testament (cover to cover, over and over). It is a supernatural book that will affect you in ways you can’t imagine.
 - c. You also have to realize that there are constant distractions: what we see, what we feel, unhelpful thoughts in our minds, etc. You have to choose to take your attention away from those things and focus on the author and finisher of your faith, on what the Living Word, through the written Word, says about you and your situation.
 1. “Looking away [from all that will distract] to Jesus, Who is the Leader and the Source of our faith (v2, Amp).
 2. This isn’t a formula or technique that, if you work it right, will bring an immediate end to your

troubles. It's changing your view of reality so that you see things as they really are according to God. And, consequently, you aren't moved by your circumstances.

A. Elisha the prophet knew he was protected by beings in the unseen realm. Elisha's servant saw only the enemy army.

B. Jesus knew His Father cared for Him and that He had power to calm a life-threatening storm. The disciples saw only the wind and the waves.

4. Paul concluded his epistle to the Hebrews with some remarks in chapter 13. Notice one point. In Heb 13:5 Paul told his readers to be content with such things as they have for God said that He will never leave or forsake us (the idea in the Greek is: never, ever, ever).

a. The word content in v5 means to be sufficient, to be possessed of sufficient strength, to be strong, to be enough. It's not an emotion. It's a view of reality. To be content means to recognize that I have what I need to deal with whatever comes my way because God is with me.

1. The statement "He will never leave thee or forsake thee" is a quote from Deut 31:6,8. God spoke those words to Israel when they were at the border Canaan, preparing to cross over and take the land. They were going to face walled cities, war-like tribes, and giant men.

2. These were the same obstacles that had persuaded their parents forty years earlier not to enter Canaan. Their view of reality (all of this is too big for us) kept them from crossing the border.

A. Only Joshua and Caleb entered the land. They saw reality as it truly is: God with them, for them. God Who is bigger than any obstacle they would face. Num 13:30; 14:7-9

B. The Lord told this new generation: Don't be afraid of these obstacles. I will go with you and I will never abandon you.

b. Paul quoted the Lord's familiar promise to his Hebrew readers (who would have been familiar with what happened at the edge of Canaan) to further encourage them to not be moved. Paul wanted his readers to understand that, even though it might not look or feel like it in the face of these increasing persecutions, you have what you need to deal with this because God is with you.

5. Phil 4:11--Paul, a man who was not moved by the many trials he faced, said of himself that he had learned to be content. Before we discuss what Paul meant, notice the verse that follows: I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

a. This was not a religious cliché to him. Paul lived his life looking unto Jesus and considering him who endured the Cross. This was Paul's view of reality and it gave him confidence or faith.

b. Paul wrote this epistle when he was in prison in Rome, facing possible execution. He wasn't executed at that time; he was released. But when he wrote the epistle he didn't know his fate yet.

1. Back to v11--Although this Greek word translated content is different than the one Paul used in Heb 13 the idea is the same: competence, sufficiency; a contented satisfaction or self-sufficiency based on the fact that I have all I need.

2. Paul's view of reality was: I have Almighty God for, with, and in me. Nothing can come against me that's bigger than God — including death.

c. Phil 4:11-13--Do not think that I am saying this under the pressure of want. For, however I am placed, I, at least, have learnt to be independent of circumstances (20th Cent) ...I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me — I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me, [that is, I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency] (Amp).

d. Last week we discussed the fact that I Cor 15:58 (one of Paul's exhortations to believers to be unmoved) was written at the conclusion of a long passage on resurrection of the dead. Being unmoved by the hardships of life is directly related to understanding resurrection of the dead.

1. We have more to say about resurrection in upcoming lessons, but consider one point now.

Life's biggest threat is gone. Not only is there life after death, death has been conquered and reversed through recovery and restoration of the body (resurrection of the dead) for all who put faith in Jesus. Therefore, whatever the cost, it's worth it to serve the Lord.

2. Paul knew that fact. It shaped his view of reality and it made him unmovable even in the face of execution and death.

C. Conclusion: To become unmovable in the face of life's challenges, you must recognize that the real battle is in your mind. It's a real battle but it is won through learning to control your mind. Consider these points.

1. Controlling your mind, first of all, means changing your view of reality or the way you see God, yourself, and the world. This comes through regular reading of the Bible, particularly the New Testament. It takes time, but it's worth the effort.

- a. Regular reading of the New Testament will help you recognize that there is more to your situation than what you see and feel in the moment. It will make you confident that nothing can come against you that is bigger than God.

- b. The examples we've cited of men who weren't moved by their circumstances (Paul, Joshua and Caleb at the edge of Canaan, Elisha, Jesus, in His humanity) didn't work a formula or a technique.

They responded based on the way they saw things (as do we all).

2. Controlling your mind also means realizing that when the storm is raging and you see the challenges and feel the emotions stimulated by what you see, and your mind is racing with all kinds of thoughts of failure, defeat, etc., you must be able to regain your focus.

- a. I encourage people to have an SOS phrase, a Sight On Savior phrase, that will help you put your attention back on reality as it truly is. I myself, know and can quote multitudes of Bible verses. But I, like you, also know what it feels like to get devastating news and to be faced with something insurmountable. I've experienced the swirling emotions and the wild thoughts.

1. In those times, the first words out of my mouth are: "Praise the Lord" (not as an expression of glee, but as an acknowledgement of Him and a recognition that He is my help) and "This isn't bigger than God" (not as a technique to get me some immediate help, but as a recognition of reality as it truly is).

2. I refuse to let anything come out of my mouth—or take control of my mind and drive my actions—that is contrary to God and His Word. I refuse to be moved.

- b. Note one more statement Paul made in Phil 4:6-8. He admonished believers not to be careful or worried about anything. The Greek word translated worry means to be distracted. Get your focus back on God and the way things really are through prayer and thanksgiving.

1. When you do that, the peace of God (tranquility of mind) will guard your heart and mind. It can be a battle to get to that place, but it can be done.

2. Then Paul instructs believers to think on or "let this be the argument of your thoughts" (Knox). Whatever is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous, and praise worthy, think about those things. Only God's Word covers every one of those categories.

3. To be unmoved in your mind you must read the Bible and become aware of what happens in your mind when the storm hits. Then, by the power of God, take control of your mind. More next week!