

DON'T QUIT!

C. Annette Watson

SCRIPTURE:

Psalm 73:28

“As for me, I get as close to Him as I can! I have chosen Him; and I tell everyone about the wonderful ways He rescues me.”

FOCUS:

People are changing. Family values are changing.

Politics are changing. Health issues

The world as we knew it 10 years ago no longer exists.

WHAT IS THE ANSWER?

TRUST GOD!

& DON'T GIVE US!

DON'T QUIT!

PRAY!

Someone has said,

“Life is hard;

and all of life's music is not in perfect harmony.”

What starts out to be a symphony becomes a cacophony; & discordant notes often dominate the score.

The fairy tales of our childhood
which taught us that everybody lives happily ever after
have been slightly misleading.

If we are not careful,
when the unexplainable descends upon us,
we will wonder –

What on earth is God doing!
Where is God in all of this?

The writer in Psalm 73 experienced all of this and more.
He had seen enough of life
to be bewildered by what he had seen
that his finite mind could not explain..

Now, we don't know ALL that happened to the Psalmist,
but we DO know that he simply
could not understand
(1) the prosperity and good fortune of the wicked
(2) and the hardships
being experienced by the righteous.

It simply did not FIT his scheme of things.

His thinking was –
Goodness and good fortune SHOULD go together;
and suffering and wickedness
SHOULD operate together.

If not, the Psalmist concluded,
keeping the faith and serving God
was a sheer waste of time.

Have you ever had similar feelings – expressed or unexpressed?

Let's seek to answer one of life's basic challenges:

HOW DO I KEEP GOING

WHEN EVERYTHING & EVERYBODY
ALL AROUND ME IS YELLING, "QUIT!"

Well, one song writer from the 40's puts it this way:

*"You've got to accentuate the positive,
eliminate the negative,
& don't mess with Mr. In-between!"*

But, on a more spiritual note,
some insights from Psalm 73 will help us
as we struggle to answer this question.

Concentrate on two words – PROBLEM & PERSPECTIVE.

I. PROBLEM

The problem is as old as history.
It seems that
the wicked prosper; and the good suffer.

PEANUTS cartoon:

Lucy to Charlie Brown:

“I hate everything. I hate everybody.
I hate the whole wide world!”

Charlie Brown:

But I thought you had inner peace.”

Lucy:

“I do! But I still have outer obnoxiousness!”

As we strive for inner peace,
things about us and beyond us can,
if we are not prayerful,
leave us with the exact opposite – bitterness.

Life seems to break its promises;
and many people come to the place
where they’re unwilling
to trust another human being
and even become suspicious about trusting God.

ANYONE can view life through the lens of despair.
ANYONE can look for answers that are flawed.

BUT, the Christian’s view of life says:

**Not only are we living now!
we are living forever!**

THE POET Robert Browning:

*“If I stoop into a dark tremendous sea of cloud –
it is but for a time.
I hold God’s lamp close to my breast,*

*its splendor soon or late will pierce the gloom;
I shall emerge one day.”*

THE PSALMIST (73:28)

**“As for me, I get as close to Him as I can!
I have chosen Him!
I will tell everyone about the wonderful ways
He rescues me.”**

We must ALL come to this conclusion –
and the sooner the better!

Everybody struggles with life’s chaos:
fires, earthquakes,
calamities, unkept promises,
the death of a loved one,
& people who let us down;

but we MUST, as did the Psalmist,
hold on and emerge
from our struggle with
total trust and confidence in a Sovereign God!

Take one good look at the problem
then give it to HIM
who is able to do exceeding, abundantly, above
all that you can think or ask!

DON'T NURSE IT!
DON'T CURSE IT!
DON'T REHEARSE IT!
REVERSE IT!

Yes, there are problems, but victorious we will be!

Our second word has to do with –

II. PERSPECTIVE – the way one views life

You feel it in Psalm 73.

The writer realized that he had lost his perspective.
He was focusing on the problems
& not the Problem Solver!

AND, he realized, that
if he continued to do so,
he would suffer a total loss of faith.

What did he do?

You won't believe it – HE WENT TO CHURCH!
That's right!

He went to church
in order to get a better perspective!

He said:

**“I'll take my chances with those
who are lifting mind and heart
to God in worship and prayer**

**rather than cast my lot with the wicked
who are prospering and living
as if there are no tomorrows.”**

Psalm 73:28

“It is good for me to draw near unto God.”

(I'm gonna get as close to Him as I can!)

The secret of life is not what we HAVE,
but WHOSE we are!

Not what we possess outwardly
but what we have inwardly!

If we keep our eyes on the problem,
we'll suffer despair,
depression,
discouragement
& abandonment.

Friend, our strength is not found
in our hurt and anger
about life breaking its promises;
BUT, OUR STRENGTH IS FOUND
IN OUR NEARNESS TO GOD!

**He is stronger than our pain;
and He is a light
brighter than any darkness!**

The Psalmist:

**“My perspective – the way I view life – needs changing.
So, I’ll go to church. I’ll draw near to God!”**

IN CHURCH 3 THINGS HAPPENED!

**1 The Psalmist saw clearly that
the present is not permanent! HALLELUJAH!**

It has been said: “This too shall pass.”

If you’re going through hell – DON’T STOP!
You WILL come out on the other side!
Don’t give up!

The Spirit is encouraging us to
press into the Presence of the Lord!

CLING to HIM!

& HOLD ON! HOLD ON!

THE PRESENT IS NOT PERMANENT!

As the Psalmist worshipped,
he came to see things
in a better,
and definitely in a different,
perspective.

The second thing the Psalmist saw in worship is that

2 The Promises of God Are Adequate!

Out of the bitter despair that had engulfed him
he said:

“You love me.

You are holding my right hand.

You will keep on guiding me all of my life.”

Because we cannot know the future,
we need to have some certainty,
some things that we can trust,
some ONE who will stand
FOR us and WITH us!

& His Name is Jehovah God –
the Covenant Keeping God!

... Psalmist found that out:

**“Whom have I in Heaven but you?
I desire no one on earth as much as you.”**

We listen to the adages of the past,
The “old wives’ tales”
as if they were a proven reality

You have your list.
I have mine.

Here are a few of the old sayings I was raised on.

**A. “Laugh and the world laughs with you;
cry and you cry alone.”**

That’s not true!

Crying will always draw a bigger crowd
than laughter any day.

**B. “Every day and in every way the
world is getting better and better.”**

Your TV must have gone on the blink; or
you haven’t watched the evening news lately!

C. “There’s a light at the end of every tunnel.”

I was sharing my trial w/a friend and said,
“Oh, well,

She said: “Don’t count on it.

‘Cause it just might be the lights of an on-coming train!”

D. “Things are never as bad as they seem.”

Dream on, friend.

Things are often worse than they seem.

Dreaming will not alter that reality.

I am not a pessimist from Georgia!

I am a realist!

I can tell you that many of the things

we are trusting in today
are not worthy of our trust!

& ... reality of life is this:

ONLY GOD – who is sovereign and loving
can be trusted
wholly and completely!

We MUST be willing to trust Him
even when
we cannot penetrate
the darkness around us
or the HURT within us!

I believe our world is made and sustained
by a dependable God!
A God who has shown, and is showing,
that He will continue to
love you and me!

YOU GET A BETTER PERSPECTIVE
WHEN YOU GO TO WORSHIP!

YOU LEARN –
The present isn't permanent; and
the promises of God are adequate!

The Psalmist did something else.

3. He Made a Personal Decision to Trust in God!

What others do about God is not your affair.
You have a choice to make and to keep.
It's a personal decision.

And that decision must be -

TRUST IN GOD

& keep going!

The GOAL is in sight!

& the PRIZE is worth obtaining!

Annette, you don't know what you're talking about!

1958 Mother ran me away from home.
 Wheels on that Greyhound bus
 seemed to be saying:
 "Life is a bummer; & you're a loser."
 But, I went to church,
 trusted God & didn't quit!

1963 Cancer.
 Went to church. Trusted God. Didn't quit!

1973 Facial stroke.
 Went to church. Trusted God. Didn't quit!

1986 Eye condition – Blepher Spasm
 7 years wore adhesive tape.

Went to church. Trusted God. Didn't quit.

ARE YOU BRAGGING ON YOURSELF!

NO!!

I'M BRAGGING ON GOD!

And HE'S telling you & me

– DON'T QUIT!

“Greater is He that is in you” (I John 4:4)

“You'll hear a voice behind you” (Isa 30:21)

“The Lord is at your right hand” (Psa. 16:8)

“The Lord will go before you” (Isa 52:12)

“..... will be your rear guard” (Isa 52:12)

There are those who are throwing in the towel –
giving up –

But DON'T YOU GIVE UP!

“I've come too far to look back,
my feet have walked through the valley;
I've climbed mountains, crossed rivers,
desert places I've known;
but I'm nearing the home shore
all the saints are rejoicing,
all the angels are singing,
“I've come too far to look back!”

DON'T QUIT!
GO TO CHURCH!
JOIN IN THE WORSHIP!
TRUST IN GOD!

Consider the Persistent Politician!

ABRAHAM LINCOLN – biography of a failure.

1. difficult childhood
2. less than 1 year of formal schooling
3. 1831 – failed in business
4. 1832 – defeated for legislature
5. 1833 – again failed in business
6. 1834 – elected to legislature
7. 1835 - fiance' died
8. 1838 – defeated for Speaker
9. 1840 – defeated for Elector
10. 1842 – married, wife a burden
11. Only 1 of his 4 sons lived past the age of 18
12. 1843 – defeated for Congress
13. 1846 – elected to Congress
14. 1848 – defeated for Congress
15. 1855 – defeated for Senate
16. 1856 – defeated for Vice-President
17. 1858 – defeated for Senate
18. 1860 – elected President

Life is not always as we would wish it to be;

**But we have a CHAMPION, a SAVIOUR
Who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities!**

THE WORD DECLARES:

I Corinthians 15:58

“Therefore my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

Hebrews 10:36

“For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God you may receive the promise.”

Philippians 3:14

“I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

Isaiah 40:31

“But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run, and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.”

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

Psalm 23

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life”

YOU ARE IN A RACE FOR THE FINISH LINE!

**DON'T THINK
ABOUT HOW MUCH FARTHER
YOU HAVE TO GO,
BUT REFLECT ON
HOW FAR YOU HAVE ALREADY COME! GLORY!!**