

THE CHALLENGE OF AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Perhaps Paul best describes life viewed from the perspective of an uncertain future when he said, II Corinthians 7:5... Wherever he preached the gospel it seemed that he met with opposition.

Inward, he had anxiety, perhaps over what he had written to Corinth, perhaps over Titus, to them becoming alienated from him, or that the false teachers would be victorious. All was uncertainty, and hew as filled with apprehension.

This morning I want to look at some contingencies which make our future uncertain, then look at scriptural objective that will prepare us for whatever the future holds.

- I. Some Perplexing Uncertainties we face in our time.
 - A. We are never certain what life may hold for us individually.
 1. Our good health may quickly give sway to debilitating disease, even death.
 - a. Job 1:9-11
 - b. Job 2:4-8
 - c. Personal examples we can think of.
 - d. James 4:14
 - e. I Samuel 20:3—but a step between me and death.
 2. Financial reverses may quickly devour our hard-earned savings of a lifetime.
 - a. Job 1:13-19
 - b. Matthew 6:19
 - c. Luke 12:19-21
 - d. Personal examples.
 3. Families, seemingly so firm and stable, may suddenly face conflicts that will tear them apart.
 - a. Matthew 19:3-9
 - b. I Corinthians 7:
 - c. Personal Examples
 - B. We are uncertain in what trials the church may undergo in the future.
 1. Internally, there are always problems we must anticipate.
 - a. I Cor. 6:6,7
 - b. Gal. 5:15,26
 - c. III John 9,10
 - d. It seems you always have to deal with hurt feelings, pride, gossip, cliques, opinions, and traditions in every congregation.
 2. We live in justifiable apprehension for impending apostasy.
 - a. I Tim. 4:1,2
 - b. Gal. 1:6,7
 - c. II Cor. 11:3
 - d. I Cor. 14:34,35—Women preachers today.
 - e. Eph. 5:19—some say optional matter.
 - f. Some are even making scriptural baptism an optional matter.
 - g. We are facing rejection of the scriptures.
 - h. No longer want to wear the name of the church.
 3. Think about the weapons Satan used in book of Revelation.
 - a. Persecution
 - b. False doctrine
 - c. Immorality
 - d. Indifference.
 - C. We are uncertain what tests our personal faith may have to endure.
 1. From evolutionists

- a. Gen. 1:1
 - b. I Tim. 6:20,21
 2. From humanists
 - a. Jer. 10:23 *"I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."*
 - b. Colossians 2:8
 - c. I Corinthians 4:6
 3. Purveyors of immorality.
 - a. Rev. 2:20
 - b. Media, internet, etc.
 4. There are people who evidently hate Christianity.
 - a. Other religions they do not seem to have a problem with.
 - b. They parallel Christianity to smokers. You can practice it as long as it is in private or away from every one in public.
 5. We resent adversity. We want no part of it.
 - a. "We easily get to demanding that all troubles be cleared away, fast, fast, fast, like aspirin for a headache."
 - b. Eccle. 7:2,3... learn more from failure and defeat than from success and victory.
 - c. Prov. 24:10
 - d. The strange thing is that troubles *make* some people and *break* others.
 - e. "It's not what happens to you, but how you react to what happens to you that really counts in the long run!"
 6. These are just a few of the uncertainties we face.
- II. To face any impending storm, we must put down some **anchor pins of faith**.
- A. We must know Him in whom we have believed, and be persuaded that He is able to keep us no matter what.
 1. II Tim. 1:12
 2. John 6:27,28
 3. Romans 8:38f
 4. The songwriter said, "I don't know what the future holds, but **I know who** holds the future."
 - B. The integrity of the bible is an anchor pin of faith.
 1. Psa. 119:89
 2. Psa. 119:160
 3. Unity
 4. Claim of inspiration
 5. James 1:21
 - C. The Deity of Jesus Christ, as the Son of God.
 1. Matt. 16:16
 2. I Tim. 6:12
 3. His life and his teachings.
 - D. The gates of hell could not prevail against the church.
 1. Matt. 16:18
 2. Eph. 3:9-10, 21
 3. Heb. 12:25-28
 4. There is no institution like the church of Christ.
 - a. Mission. . .Spiritual nature. . .Cost.
 - E. We must know that the trial of our faith worketh patience.
 1. James 1:2-4
 2. I Pet. 1:6,7; 4:12, 16
 3. I cor. 10:13

- F. All things work together for good to them that love the Lord (Rom. 8:28).
 - 1. Joseph's betrayal by his brothers led him to become the Savior of his father's family (Gen50:20)
 - 2. Paul's imprisonment led him to his desired destination—Rome
 - a. Romans 1:10
 - b. Acts 25:10-12
 - c. Philippians 1:12
 - 3. That apostle's thorn in the flesh kept him from becoming exalted (2 Cor. 12:7-10)
 - 4. Persecution caused the early church to spread rapidly (Acts 8:4)
- G. The Lord will never leave us or forsake us (Heb. 13:5,6).
 - 1. Even in the valley of the shadow of death we can trust the Lord to be with us (Psa. 23).
 - 2. Jesus has promised to be with us always (Matt. 28:20).
 - 3. When all men forsook Paul, the Lord stood with him.
 - a. II Cor. 4:9
 - b. II Tim. 4:16-18
 - c. Psa. 27:10
 - d. II Cor. 4:17,18...In comparison with the glories and blessings of heaven, suffering during this earthly life—no matter how great that suffering may appear – is light.

Concl: Many things of the future may be uncertain, but there are some things that are.

- ▶ Death (Rom. 5:12; 6:23; Heb. 9:27)
- ▶ Judgement (Eccle. 12:13, 14; Acts 17:30,31)
- ▶ Eternal life for the obedient and eternal damnation for the rebellious (Matt. 25:46).

May we never allow the uncertainties of life to call our attention away from the more important certainties of eternity (James 4:14; Job 7:6).

Some are going to let the uncertainties of life cause them to spend eternity in hell.

DON'T DO THAT! Remember 2 Cor. 4:18. Your soul is worth too much to risk losing it over an uncertainty. Prepare for eternity!

Note: This sermon is based on lesson I heard delivered by Clayton Winters!