

Freedom and Fun

Christianity and religion (for that matter) is an interesting cat. People on the outside think it's boring, serious, and rigid. They could all say it's legalistic and about rules and laws. Funny enough, it is! Yet, there is tremendous freedom in religion. It seems so hard to believe that. I don't think I've ever met a non-believer who thought religion was about freedom and fun. It reminds me that even some Christians have a face that looks like they were weaned on a pickle. In Christian circles they talk a lot about Joy and peace. One pastor said he would rather have peace if he had to choose. Many people think we have to choose. You can't have both?

I have had the best of times as a Christian. Has it been all been joy and peace? Well, no but it has been wonderful. That seems to be contradictory. The other night a friend was angry as we talked about following God appointed authority. As I have been reading through 1 Samuel it occurred to me that David honored authority almost neurotically. Even as that authority tried to kill him, David tried to honor who God appointed over him. It seems nuts. My friend was angry because we were telling him to respect and honor those who make poor decisions. Is there peace and joy in that?

Where is the peace and joy in honoring those who lead poorly? How can we be happy with bad leadership? I think there are a few things to consider. The first thing to consider is: are you right? Is your view of leadership, correct? What if God was telling them to lead that way? What if God appointed the leadership we deserve? Instead, we have an opinion. We have better ideas. Do we? One of the reasons people hate the Christian faith is Gods seemingly poor judgments. He allows sin to run amuck. He let His own Son die. God kicked us out of paradise for eating fruit. I could go on and on. Our thoughts on holiness and judgment don't really ever line up with God or those He puts in leadership.

What does God have to say? James 1:2 “*Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds.*” Let’s look at one more. Philippians 4:7 “*And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*” God gives us knowledge and perseverance. He gives us strength by knowing how things work. That in-turn brings joy and peace. It’s odd but that’s how it works. The non-believer hopes it will work out. They use their own wisdom to win. What happens when they lose? The Christian can look at the cup half full. If we lose then God will win later. If we win then God has blessed us with perseverance and blessings. God never wants the Christian to fret. Believe it or not but God does not consider losing a thing. He does; however, want us to have peace and joy in all things.

2 Corinthians 3:17 “*Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.*” I could equally say that where God is winning: understanding and good choices reside. We were not meant to lose. We were not meant to worry or get angry. God has this! Now trials make it look like were not winning. Yet, to the Christian winning is just a matter of the Lord’s timing. I was divorced and poor. I got in an accident and all seemed lost. I met my wife a week later. We lost a trip to Greece from Covid. It looked like the credit was lost. Then I got an email asking if we wanted to use our lost credit still? Yep, were going to Greece. The wife got cancer and the wife got healed. God does not like to lose.

This week I have had trials at work. I still wonder if I will be disciplined for my mistake. Friday my work was done before I got there. I immediately worried that they were replacing me to suspend me. As it turned out, they did my work by mistake. Yet, that is not what I immediately thought. Did I think it was a blessing or help from the Lord? Was my first thought that God was working it out for my good? No, I thought all was lost. I was wrong yet again.

The real answer to freedom and fun is in that darn cup. All through the Bible are references to cups. Yes, some of those themes are about what we drink like death. Yet, to God the cup is always half full. Moses was backed up against the Red Sea. David was running for his life much of the time. Even when Jesus died His disciples thought all was lost. Remember, God does not like to lose. This generation smugly will reject God. I have seen the memes. People are pretty pessimistic towards our current times. This world is sick. Humans have been less than stellar lately. Yet, the human race refuses to let freedom and joy come. If it's from God then we veimently refuse. Why? Don't you hate to lose too?