

"UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES"

Phillipians 4:9-13 (11)

"State" = "Set of Circumstances, situation, predicament, plight" - as long as it is for Christ and His cause. (See Phillipians 3:7-8)

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Most of us at one time or another have heard or used the expression "**under the circumstances.**" (Whether in getting or giving free advice.)

1. A "*power of positive thinking*" preacher was once heard to say, "A Christian should never use the expression "under the circumstance." ???

2. **His reasoning** was that a believer should always live "**above**" the circumstances of life." ?? In theory it sounds great - BUT, I question his theology behind such a statement.

B. I wish, I really wish that I could agree with him, but I can't!! ***So I'm going to preach on "Under The Circumstances."***

1. I know by experience there are **forces** that work, against every believer to get them down.

2. Believers **do get** "*under the circumstances*", because this world and the god of it, are not friends to grace, and so we can't always stay on top, ***sailing smoothly through life. Amen??***

3. I have **also found** that **believers may not be responsible** for all the unfortunate things that happen to them!

4. However, ***sometimes they are due to a lack of prayer and fasting, and a failure to hear the voice of God.***

C. **Apostle Paul** is an **example** of one who found himself "*under the circumstances*" and that **through no fault of his own.**

1. If there was **ever a man** who had the **spiritual power** to live above the **circumstances of life, He did!**

2. Paul shares just a few of the things that happened to him as a Christian **in II Cor. 11:24-28.**

a. Paul was not responsible for being "**under these circumstances.**" Most of them came from outside forces, and from those who wanted to harm him or wanted to put him to death.

The Devil wanted to stop his ministry. He will try to stop your's and mine too!

b. *Life was not one long, sweet song for him!!*

3. As Paul looked back over those circumstances from his prison cell, he said, "*I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*" *Life is a continuous learning process!*

II. BIBLE CHARACTERS "UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES"

It's important to notice two things: their reactions and God's response. Our reaction often determines God's response!!

A. **Abraham**, this man was called "*a friend of God.*" (It was *not a one sided relationship.*)

1. **One day God did** what might be considered **an unbelievable thing**. He told Abraham to take his only son Isaac, **whom he loved**, to a mountain and offer him up as a sacrifice unto Him. *Which meant taking his life.*

2. His friendship with God had not ceased. Nor had he sinned nor rebelled against God.

3. Abraham found himself **thrust "under the circumstance."** - Circumstances which he did not create. *He was not at fault.*

4. **Notice His reactions:** He **remained faithful to God**. Under those circumstances, **obeying Him**, he went to the place and laid his son on the altar, and raised the knife.

a. BUT, God cried out to him, stilled the hand that held the knife, and provided another sacrifice in the place of Isaac. *He remained faithful to God and:*

5. **Abraham found God faithful "under the circumstances."**

a. If we will be faithful and obedient, we too will find Him to be faithful "under our circumstances."

B. **Job**, a godly, happy, and wealthy man. He had a large and loving family (7 sons and 3 daughters). He had many servants, sheep and camels.

1. **One day**, in order to prove that Job served and loved God out of love for God alone, and not for what He had done for him, Jehovah allowed Satan to test him. **WHY?** God was proud of him. *As the events of this testing unfolded...*

2. Four-darked robed messengers told Job of the destruction of his oxen, his donkeys, servants, sheep, camels, and then the saddest news of all, **his children had been killed in a storm.**

a. Surely Job was "*under the circumstances*" through no fault of his own! He was an upright man, he eschewed evil, feared God and was perfect.

3. **Job's reactions** to his circumstance is *summed up in his profound statement*, "*The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*"

a. **HOW DID HE DO IT??** **Job's faith sustained him!** *Our' faith will sustain us every time, if we will but place it in our loving, faithful Heavenly Father and*

hold fast our confidence.

Heb. 10:35-36 "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward..."

4. **Later**, Job was smitten with boils from head to foot and his wife, seeing him "under the circumstances" said, "Why don't you curse God and die?" **Job's reaction is seen again in his renown answer, "Though He slay me, yet will I serve Him."**

5. The time came when God came through in Job's circumstances and honored his faith and trust in Him, and gave him more precious children and more property than ever before. ***He stood the tests and proved himself faithful and found God to be faithful.***

a. The time will come when God will come through in our circum-stances and supply our need or give us more, as we honor Him with our faith by trusting Him completely. ***Just be faithful!!***

C. **Daniel** -- several times he found himself "under the circumstances."

1. Perhaps the **most notable one** was when his jealous peers persuaded the king to post a decree that **no one could pray to anyone except the king for a period of thirty days.**

a. If they did the penalty for violation was to be cast into a den of hungry lions.

2. **What was Daniel's reaction?** He refused to go without prayer for a period of time, so three times a day he continued to open his window toward Jerusalem, kneel and pray.

a. Naturally his enemies ran to tell the king, and **though the king loved Daniel**, he had to carry out his decree. It was the **Law of the Medes and Persians**, which could not be changed.

3. *Upon being seized and carried toward the lion's den*, Daniel found himself **"under the circumstances."**

4. **Daniel's reaction to this threat** was to trust God. He knew that even under these circumstances there is a God in Heaven who loved him and was faithful.

A. God honored Daniel's faithfulness in prayer and trust, and shut the lion's mouths, and gave Daniel a peaceful night's rest.

a. **Do you need a peaceful nights rest?** God can give you one even in a lion's den. Just pray and trust Him.

5. **Daniel's Outcome** -- The king proclaimed that Daniel's God was the living God, to be worshipped by all people, and **Daniel prospered** even more in the kingdom. Daniel's persistence, and confidence in God paid off.

D. **JESUS** -- There came a time when even the Son of God came **"under the circumstances."** He did so although He had been:

1. Going about doing good, ²giving sight to the blind, ³hearing to the deaf, ⁴new bodies to cripples, ⁵life to the dead.

2. He was seized by an angry mob, // rushed from one unjust trial to another, // beaten, // spit upon, // humiliated and disgraced.

a. Worse of all, he was nailed to a cruel Roman cross, where He endured the most excruciating death that could be inflicted upon a human being.

3. **His reaction** under these circumstances was not to call for legions of angels or for God to find another way.

a. He looked from that cross and saw what the world could not see. He saw millions marching into Heaven because of His death on the Cross.

a. He saw a boy in a little church on a rainy Sunday morning, giving his heart to God and becoming the greatest preacher of modern times, his name was Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

b. He saw a monk by the name of Martin Luther, finding the truth in the Bible that *"the just shall live by faith,"* and bringing about the Protestant Reformation.

c. He saw a shoe clerk named Dwight L. Moody finding Christ as his Savior and later turning two continents toward God.

d. He saw a North Carolina dairyman's son being converted and going around the world to preach to more people than any other man has ever done. -- **his name is Billy Graham.**

e. Yes, He saw you and me as He conquered the circumstances under which He found Himself ***and made it possible for us to conquer our circumstances through Him.***

Romans 8:36 "...we're more than conquerors through Him that loved us and gave Himself for us."

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Are you proud of your reactions to your circumstances?

1. Have you stood the test? Have you been faithful? Trusting? Loving? Serving? Prayerful?

2. Have you failed God?? If so, come and pray, God will forgive you!!

B. **What circumstances do you find your selfunder?** Is it trouble of some kind? Then just "wait on the Lord" and trust Him. He will bring you out in His own good time.

C. Is it sorrow? Many have been brought closer to God through their sorrow. Be thankful that you aren't as those who have no hope.

D. Is your's hard times because of financial needs? Remember, "God will take care of you, through every day, o'er all the way."

1. David said, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor His seed begging bread." ***Be faithful in tithing and giving!!*** God ahead a prove Him.

2. Paul said, "*My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*"

E. Have your friends forsaken you? Remember, Jesus is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother whatever the circumstances.

F. Let me ask you an important question, "What will you do under the circumstances when you find yourself facing death?"

1. Will you be able to look back over your life and thank God your sins have been covered by the blood of the Lamb, and know that whatever comes, it is well with your soul? **Will peace be yours "under the circumstances?"**

G. In Hebrews 11 we read the words, "***by faith***" over and over again. The men and women of the Bible overcame their circumstances of life by faith and so may we!!

1. We are just to "*trust and obey, for there is no other way.*" The faithful come out on top because "under the circumstances" they look for a city whose builder and maker is God. They believe God is faithful that promised.

2. You and I must look up, knowing God has something better waiting for us. It is only then that we can be content in our state.

3. If you don't have confidence in your set of circumstances, then come and pray and take new courage, for God is faithful.

G. If it's not well with your soul

1. If you're backslidden, the way of the transgressor is hard.

2. If you're **lukewarm**, then you're in danger of being spewed out at Christ's coming.

3. If you've lost the joy and there is no song in your heart come and let God give you back the song or a new song!

4. Come and pray. Prayer changes things. Let me pray for you and with you.

5. God will deliver and change the circumstances. He will sustain you.

6. How you react to this altar call could very well determine God's response to you

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