

# CIRCUMSTANCES, God has a better way..

In talking with some of our fellow brothers and sisters lately, (hearing the stories of what God is doing in their lives) I have identified a common thread among most Christians that I think needs to be fixed. I thought to myself listening to them talk, cant we do better? Isn't the Christian life supposed to be better than this? YES

I COR 12:31

This is a story of a modern day pagan named Bill. Bill believes in and worships all of the ancient greek gods and lives his life according to their rules. Bill wanted a new car and he prayed to the god Hermes to show him which car he should buy. Just as he looked up from his prayer, he saw a nice SUV for sale in the Auto Trader magazine. The price was a bit too much, so he told Hermes that he would offer only what he could afford, and if the seller agreed, he would know this was the car was the one Hermes wanted for him. The seller did agree and he told all his friends about the SUV that Hermes had given him. 2 weeks after the sale, the engine blew up and he had to take out a loan to pay for the repairs. Bill knew that this was a judgment from Hermes for not being thankful for his provision of the car in the first place.

Bill was coming of age and desperately wanted to get married and have children. He spent many nights on his knees praying to the goddess Aphrodite and asking her to find him a wife. He trusted Aphrodite and knew that she had a specific woman already prepared for him. One day, he was walking into the bank and saw the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. She seemed to be lost and he decided to go and help her. He asked Aphrodite to give him a sign if this was the woman that had been prepared for him. Just then, she laughingly said, "are you coming over to save the day and help me find my destination?" When Bill replied, "yes," She told him that he was an answer to her prayers. It was then that Bill knew that she was the ONE. She was the answer to HIS prayers. They were married within a year.

They had trouble conceiving a child and they both prayed to the goddess Demeter to help them have a child. Night after night they prayed and the months went by with no success. One day, Bill saw a piece of paper on the sidewalk and stopped to pick it up. It was a business card to a fertility clinic. He knew that this was a sign from Demeter. She wanted Bill and his wife to go there. They had their first child 9 months later with the help of artificial insemination, and he dedicated the child to the goddess Artemis and asked for her protection and blessing on the child in a formal ceremony.

Bill lost his job a couple years after this and the family was struggling to make ends meet. His pagan priest told him this was Zeus' way of getting his attention. He begged. Zeus to help him find a new job. He had 2 interviews and really wanted one specific job. He told Zeus that if he gave him that job, he would give him all the praise and give an extra offering in thanks when he got his first paycheck. The interview went well and he waited for days to hear anything back. When the call came, it was bad news. He didn't get the job. Just as he hung his head in sadness, Bill's phone rang again. It was other company he had interviewed with. They gave him the job! Bill knew this was a sign from Zeus, the timing couldn't be a coincidence. Even though he was making 10k less per year than the other job and had no benefits, he knew he was working right where Zeus wanted him to be.

On Bill's 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, he went to the doctor for a routine checkup. The next day, the doctor called him and wanted him to come in immediately to discuss his test results. It was then that Bill received the horrible news – he had only 1 month to live. He had a terminal brain tumor. He was crushed and cried with his wife. 2 days later as Bill was thinking about his demise, he felt like the spirit of Apollo was giving him a prophecy. Apollo said that if he believed, he could be healed. He knew that he should pour olive oil on his head and pray to Asclepius and his brain tumor would disappear. 3 weeks later, as Bill was gasping his last breath, his wife asked him why the gods hadn't healed him. She asked Bill if he didn't have enough faith because she remembered the prophecy of Apollo. His gasping reply was, "no honey, it is time for me to be called home." The gods are finished with me here.

Now we shake our heads in holiness at silly Bill and his pagan gods, but do we as Christians do any better? Change the greek god names and insert God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit and you have the story of the average Christian life.

Christians are just like Bill bouncing through life trying their hardest to find the finger of the divine in and through their circumstances. Christians analyze their circumstances and try to figure out the will of God end up frustrated and confused. Popular message – Find God's will for your life. What does God have in store for me? What is God's plan for me? How do I get the Lord's blessing on my life? Christian mad! One is pagan god and the other is the True God! What if God doesn't care what kind of car you drive. You are putting God into a box and denying His power. PSA 37:23 Steps of a good man are ordered..... Really, how? Is God leading you around by the nose and making every decision for you? What about free will? How does he order them? Through fuzzy feelings and circumstances?

We make deals with God to get what we want. "if you do this for me, I'll give you all the praise and glory father!" This is people who have been wrongly taught that they are a part of either Israel's Old or New Covenant trying to make a personal covenant with God. Glad Spirit makes intercession. (Rom 8:26)

He orders us through His Word. His Word for us in this dispensation revealed to our Apostle Paul places very little importance on physical and earthly things.

**COL 3:1-3** . If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

**Paul prays for his fellow believers.**

**Col 1:9-12** For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; [10] That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; [11] Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; [12] Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

Our doctrine for today is to care about heavenly things, to worry about carnal matters and pray about carnal matters all the time is to miss the point of our lives! What is this point? What is the more excellent way? We have to get past a couple things before we can even think about a "more excellent way"

**#1 We need to understand that bad circumstances are a part of life.**

**WE ARE PROMISED TO HAVE TROUBLE** God's promise for our lives

**2 Tim 3:12** Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Your best life now – **2 Cor 11:24-27** [24] Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. [25] Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; [26] In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; [27] In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

**2 Tim 2:3** Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

Endure hardness. Stop being a baby and be a soldier

**WHY DO THESE THINGS HAPPEN?** To prepare us to help our fellow man to see souls saved and saints edified!

**Rom 5:3-5** [3] And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; [4] And patience, experience; and experience, hope: [5] And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

**2 Cor 1:3-5** [3] Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; [4] Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. [5] For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

### **The result of this preparation.**

**2 Cor 12:9-10** And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. [10] Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

The 5 things Paul Glories in is the content of most people's prayer list. (Mature Believer)

Growing in grace and minding heavenly things brings this maturity

Sufferings no big deal in the big picture

**Rom 8:18** For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

**2 Cor 4:6-9** For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. [7] But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. [8] We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; [9] Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

**WE NEED TO STOP WORRYING ABOUT OUR CIRCUMSTANCES, TRYING TO FIND GOD'S WILL IN OUR CIRCUMSTANCES, AND UNDERSTAND THAT GOD'S WILL ISN'T IN OUR CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT ITS IN HOW WE HANDLE AND RESPOND TO OUR CIRCUMSTANCES!**

**2 Cor 4:10-11** Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. [11] For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

When we understand **Rom 8:26** Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. and believe **Eph. 3:20** [20] Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

we STOP WRESTLING WITH OUR CIRCUMSTANCES AND REST IN GOD'S COMFORT AND HOPE.

### **NOW WE ARE READY FOR THE "MORE EXCELLENT WAY"**

I COR 12:31 Read and explain previous and following chapters.

Chap 12, 14 practical matters to be done away. Grow up 13:11

Charity Definition. Charity is the more excellent way! Get your mind off of yourselves and look toward others.

That which is perfect, revelation of the mystery.

**Col 3:14** And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

Charity is the bond of this new perfectness, the more excellent way.

**Romans 15:1-2** We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. [2] Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification.

## BACK TO BILL. A MORE EXCELLENT WAY

Wouldn't it be more excellent for Bill to listen closely for the sound of the engine knocking in the car he was going to buy rather than getting excited over his fuzzy feelings? Wouldn't it be more excellent for him to be thinking of his responsibility to make all men see (Eph 3:9) and take a tract with him when he went to go meet the guy he was buying the car off of?

Wouldn't it be more excellent for Bill to choose a wife based on a woman's belief in the Scriptures such as Eph 5, Col 3, Titus 2 & 1 Tim 3, rather than picking his life partner on some interesting happenstance? Wouldn't it be more excellent for Bill and his wife to look for other folks who were struggling with having children so they could share the comfort and grace they had found (2 Cor 1) and help them to be content (Phill 4:11) and to be thankful (1 Thess 5:18) that they have more free time to do the work of the ministry while they are waiting for a child. (1 Cor 7)

Wouldn't it be more excellent for Bill to realize that he lost his job because he was lazy (Rom 12:11) not because of God's judgment? And for him to find the best job he could for his family (1 Tim 5:8) rather than taking a bad paying job that can't even meet his bills because of the timing of a phone call?

Finally, wouldn't it be more excellent for Bill, when he got the news of his coming demise rather than spending his last weeks on earth holed up in his prayer closet, claiming healing promises for Israel and leaving his wife alone and confused after his death, to redeem his remaining time (Eph 5:16) to edify his friends and family with the comfort and grace that he is receiving while he is preparing to die (2 Cor 1) to teach his friends and family that while they may grieve his loss, that they have hope and peace in seeing him again (1 Thess 4) and to call on his unsaved friends and tell them one last time before he dies that Christ died for their sins and give them the gospel of his salvation. (1 Cor 15)

Let us move on from our concern with carnal things and trying to read the tea leaves of our circumstances in the hope of finding God's will, and grow into mature grace believers, setting our affections on things above, while practicing charity in order to see souls saved and saints edified to the Glory of God.