

Murray shared with us this morning some pretty gloomy facts on the state of the world and what is going on around us. I am going to talk tonight on how we as Spirit-filled Christians can live in this troubled world and yet not be brought down by what's happening. The state of the world will affect us all in different ways but regardless of the impact it has on us we can ALL walk in the life and hope and power that has been given to us by Jesus.

In fact, when the world is in the state it's in, we should be excited by that. Why? Because it provides us with more opportunities to be salt and light to those around us. Everyday we have choices in how we are going to respond to life and we have people watching us make those choices.

"The circumstances of life, the events of life, and the people around me in life do not make me
the way I am,
but reveal the way I am." (Mary Glynn Peeples)

So what is happening around you is not going to make you a certain way, it will just reveal what is already there... good or bad!

The Very Old Lady (author unknown)

A very old lady looked in the mirror one morning. She had three remaining hairs on her head, and being a positive soul, she said, "I think I'll braid my hair today." So she braided her three hairs, and she had a great day.

Some days later, looking in the mirror one morning, preparing for her day, she saw that she had only two hairs remaining. "Hmm, two hairs... I fancy a centre parting today." She duly parted her two hairs, and as ever, she had a great day.

A week or so later, she saw that she had just one hair left on her head. "One hair huh...", she mused, "I know, a pony-tail will be perfect." And again she had a great day.

The next morning she looked in the mirror. She was completely bald.

"Finally bald huh," she said to herself, "How wonderful! I won't have to waste time doing my hair any more."

For us to respond well to what life throws at us we need to have a look at our mindsets. Do we separate our natural lives from our spiritual lives? Do we have a 'Sunday perspective' and then put on a worldly one on Monday?

What would our lives look like if we always looked at them from a heavenly perspective rather than a natural one?

On that note, did you know that in the Hebrew scriptures there is no word for “spiritual.” Jesus didn’t talk about his ‘natural life’ and His ‘spiritual life’. For Jesus, all of life is spiritual and He saw everything through that perspective.

John 18:36 - Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."

What about us? We can say well Jesus is different. He was sent here for a specific purpose. He completed what He was sent for and then went home. Are you sure it’s any different for us?

John 17:15-19 Jesus’ prayer to the Father: “I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they (you and me) may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.”

Jesus doesn’t see us as being of the world anymore than He was but rather, we are of His kingdom, and yet because we are *in* the world He prayed for our protection. Why?

Imagine going to Israel. For some of you that will be easy – you’ve been there. As long as you are part of an organized tour with guides, and you stick to the touristy parts you’re relatively comfortable. What happens if you leave the tour party and go wandering through the local streets on your own? You would soon notice that you were in a very foreign place. Foreign language, foreign food, foreign culture, foreign customs – not what you are used to. It would soon become very clear to you that though you are *IN* that country, you are not *OF* that country.

We are still in the world, but we’re not of it! We live in this place that does sometimes see us as a bunch of weirdos! What kind of response do you get from your workmates when you go out with them and you aren’t interested in boozing? Or if you’re in a relationship but you’re not living together or sleeping together. Isn’t that a bit strange and old fashioned? Are you normal?

Pray everyday for our teenagers. They are treated like freaks at school if they are not sleeping around. Back in my day it was the minority who were, making the rest of us the normal ones. Times have changed so much that if you aren’t sleeping with your girlfriend/boyfriend you are the minority and you are ridiculed. It is expected. Pray for them. And young people, **you are too valuable to let the world tell you how you should live.** God has set you apart – be proud of it (in a ‘good’ proud way of course).

It's hard out there! The Lord knew that it would be like that for us. That is why He prayed for our protection. He also sees that regardless of what is happening around us we can have the full measure of His joy within us.

To live out God's values, not the world's, we need to keep one eye on heaven. That's our true home, and that's where our life counts.

So if we're not of this world, why are we here? Jesus said: "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world." (v18)

So here's a thought:

What if... *you and I were born to be a living link between Heaven and earth?*

What if... *you and I were born to partner with God's Spirit?*

If you believed that would it affect the way you see what's happening around you? Would it change the way you respond or relate to people?

I'm going to read you an excerpt from a book that is being released next month called 'You Were Born For This', by Bruce Wilkinson, author of 'Prayer of Jabez'.

Read 'The Everyday Miracle Territory'. (http://www.randomhouse.com/waterbrook/pdf/YouWereBornForThis_Chapter_One.pdf?ref=external_CMS_YWBFT_BWFP_0809)

So to have that heavenly mindset – where everyday is a miracle waiting to happen in someone's life, and you and I are that link between heaven and earth, what do we need to do? 3 keys:

1. See every difficulty as an opportunity.

An opportunity for what? For the revealing of Jesus to you, and to the people around you.

James 1:2-4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

John 11:3-4 (Lazarus had just died) So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." When He heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it."

Nothing is a surprise to God. Sure He doesn't orchestrate every bad thing that happens around us, but He knows it is coming and you can be certain He has worked out just how to reveal Himself in it and how to get you through it.

Have you ever thought about your life in terms of parables? Jesus used parables all the time to teach God's principles. A parable is just a fictitious story that teaches a moral or a spiritual lesson. It is generally about normal everyday people in normal situations, their responses to those situations and then the outcome of their responses.

Jesus is not here on earth anymore, but does that mean He has stopped teaching in parables? Perhaps every situation we face is just another parable that God is using to teach us something. Using the natural to teach the spiritual.

Most of the shadows of this life are caused by standing in one's own sunshine. ~*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

We get in the way! God is trying to shine His light on something, and we stand in the way, casting shadows over the very situation that He is wanting to reveal Himself in! Get out of the way!!!

We have to remember when stuff is going on that:

Is 55:8-9 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

There's always something bigger going on than what we can see with our natural eyes.

So embrace the difficult times and look for God in them. He IS there!

2. Read the manual on 'how to have a heavenly mindset'.

Read your Bible! We read the road code to learn to drive; we read the manual when we get a new appliance – they even generally have a 'trouble shooters' guide in them. Our manual is not just a trouble shooting guide, or a history book, it is: (Heb 4:12) Living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Now show me another manual that has that kind of power!

Even if you're reading your Bible and it isn't meaning a whole lot at the time – it is still God's Word going in and He promises that His Word will not return void. The more we read it, the more we are filling our hearts and our minds with life and hope and truth. And it's amazing what pops into your head just when you need it – but it has to have 'gone in' in the first place.

Two Wolves

One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people.

He said, "My son, the battle is between two 'wolves' inside us all. One is Evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. The other is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, "Which wolf wins?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."

~author unknown

This is basic stuff but if it is so basic how come so many Christians don't spend enough time in it?

3. Spend time with the King

I talked earlier about choosing your response. The Bible teaches us to take every thought captive, and it is so life changing when we learn how to do this. But it also takes a lot of work. It takes making constant decisions on how we are going to think or react. There is an easier way.

We've all heard the saying, 'You are who you hang out with'. If we are hanging out with God who has nothing *but* a heavenly mindset, don't you think that would rub off a little? I believe that the more time we spend in His presence, the more likely it is that our responses to situations will be just like He would respond. They would come out of a heavenly mindset rather than a worldly one, without making a conscious decision to do so.

We need to be regularly allowing the Holy Spirit to fill us and refresh us. Even cars need refueling.

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

When we receive the Holy Spirit we receive power. What for? To witness to those around us. Does that mean just verbally? No. We need God's power to 'live out' our faith in God in hard times, revealing Him to others in our lives.

When we live in the natural only, we forget that there's actually spiritual stuff happening around us all the time, and we forget that we carry the overcoming power of the Holy Spirit.

Having a heavenly mindset isn't all about being superspiritual. It's about being naturally spiritual. It's not about separating the two, it's about walking in the fullness of what God has placed within you.

I want to finish by reading out a passage of scripture from Isaiah 40:21-31. As you read it with me, let it sink in that this is the God that we serve and that He is so much larger than us what is happening around us.

Is 40: 21-31