

August 15, 2021

Viewpoint from the Valley Grove Church Of Christ

Your Defining Moment

By Wilson Adams

Defining moments... We all have them, they are often related to suffering, and once faced, you will never be the same again. Somehow you will be moved. You may move backward or forward but you will be moved. Defining moments are not normal. They knock you into abnormality leaving you battered against the ropes. They leave you with the same sick feeling you experienced when you fell on the playground as a youngster and had the wind knocked out of your lungs. You wondered for a moment if you would ever breathe and live again. Yet although shaken and scared, you survived. And you will survive now, but you will be different.

I think of the three Hebrew boys, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego whose story is told in Daniel 3. Those young men stood their ground against the evil Nebuchadnezzar who ordered them and everyone else to worship before his image of gold. As a result of their refusal, they were cast into a furnace of fire. Do you remember their words to the Babylonian dictator just prior to what everyone thought would be their death? Daniel 3:17-18 *"If it be so, our God whom we serve*

is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and he will deliver us out of your hand O king. But even if He does not, let it be known to you . . . that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up."

That was a defining moment. The moment was defined further when they later appeared unharmed. I can say from human experience that the three boys who came out the other side of the fire of testing were not the same. And never would be. Defining moments change us. It changed them . . . for the better.

Or take Peter. I believe the night of his three-fold denial was a defining moment. Such a scar would have destroyed most of us. But by the grace of God, Peter was able to translate failure into progress. One moment he is left alone in a darkened corner heaving sobs of heavy regret; and days later he is preaching for all of his life (literally!) to some of the same ones who had demanded that Jesus be crucified. Peter had turned a defining moment into an opportunity for God's grace to shine. And so can you.

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Perhaps you are currently in the cave of your defining moment. You see no way out; no end in sight; and no way God can use this for His glory. Don't be so sure. *"For I know the plans for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope. . . Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to me, and I will answer . . "* (Jer. 29:11-12). Although it was a prophetic message to the remnant of God's people in the Old Testament, the principle remains in effect still today (Rom. 8:28).

These defining moments are not disturbing interruptions on the path of our progress — they are the path to our progress. Through them God molds our hearts and shapes us into the kind of men and women He wants us to be. Your faith will help you through a crisis for sure but, more than that, your faith will enable you to come forth with a whole new perspective about life. You will not be the same. Ever. You will be better.

And that is your choice: to become bitter or better. It is a choice that all of us make. I cannot choose my circumstances but I can choose my response and attitude toward them. Sadly, I have known several who marched to the beat of self-pity, drew the shades, and sang the woe-is-me refrain to as many as would listen (usually a very small crowd). On the other hand, I have known those who have faced the worst of human tragedy and who have emerged as shining examples of the strength that only God provides. Those people inspire me.

Bitter or better... Which will you choose?

Point To Ponder

By Lance Bowman

Luke 10:25-37 parable of the "good Samaritan". Jesus placed emphasis on the actions of the Samaritan and tells the lawyer, "Go and do likewise" (v. 37). The lesson Jesus taught is that loving our neighbors requires involvement with our neighbors.

Have you considered how the man from Jerusalem must have felt as the experience unfolded? He surely would have been disappointed with the priest and Levite when they did not stop and render aid. He quite possibly felt alone and helpless as he lay there. However, it is also likely that he felt encouraged and thankful when the Samaritan arrived on the scene.

We all have opportunities to be a neighbor to someone else. Let us try to think less about how our involvement might impact our own lives and more about how it might influence someone for good and lead them to God. That's what being "salt and light" Christians is all about.

Disciplined Disciples

By Lance Bowman

At a certain point during His ministry, as great crowds followed Him, Jesus turned to them and said, “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple” (Lk. 14:26). By making such a bold statement, Jesus was trying to impress upon the many people how difficult and costly it is to be a true believer. It was no accident He chose to call his followers ‘disciples’. The original word translated ‘disciple’ has as its root a word defined as “thought coupled with endeavor”. Not only is a disciple one who learns from another, but he is one who gives great thought and effort to adhere to his teacher’s instructions.

The English word ‘disciple’ is closely related to the word ‘discipline’. Discipline is the practice of training one to obey rules or a particular code of behavior. So, to be a disciple, a person must give great thought and effort to learning his teacher’s instructions (i.e. codes and rules), then sticking to them. This is exactly what Jesus was instructing His potential disciples.

In Luke 14:25-33 Jesus gives instructions concerning the requirements of being His disciple. From the context of the passage, it is evident that many of the people were following Jesus impulsively. Whether

it be their interest in what Jesus could do for them physically or because of their fascination with His interesting and somewhat unconventional method of teaching, the people were distracted and did not fully understand the requirements of discipleship.

Jesus
says being
a follower
requires one

***Being a disciple may
bring humiliation
upon us.***

to bring his mind and body into subjection to the will of God. Interpersonal relationships may have to come to an end when we decide to be a disciple. Being a disciple may bring humiliation upon us. Following Christ might possibly even bring about death. He says it is not possible to be His disciple unless you are willing to denounce everyone and everything (v. 33).

Jesus further teaches that discipleship involves resisting the urge to follow Him without full commitment. It takes mental discipline to weigh the costs versus benefits of being His follower. We may tend to underestimate, or even ignore, the great costs involved. The benefits of being a disciple, outlined in the scriptures, are incomparable, immeasurable and cannot be denied. In light of this fact, it seems we could never waiver in our commitment to Him. However, He knows our instinct of self-preservation is powerful. That is why He instructs us to employ discipline to bear our own cross, renounce all, and follow Him wholeheartedly.

He Leads The Way

He does not lead me year by year
Not even day by day
But step by step my path unfolds
My Lord directs my way.

Tomorrow's plans I do not know,
I only know this minute;
But He will say, "This is the way;
By faith now walk ye in it."

And I am glad that it is so,
Today's enough to bear;
And when tomorrow comes,
His grace shall far exceed its care.

What need to worry then or fret?
The God who gave His Son
Holds all my moments in His Hand
And gives them one by one.

— Author Unknown



***Character is not
built in times of crisis;
it is only exhibited then.***



The backslider in heart will be
filled with his own ways, But
a good man *will be satisfied* from
above. — *Proverbs 14:14*

August Birthdays:

The 7th Betty Hinds
The 17th Annette Kellett
The 21st R. T. Pike

***Visitors — We pray that you
benefit spiritually from our
worship together and hope
to see you again.***

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Sunday

Bible Study . . . 9:30 A.M.
Worship 10:30 A.M.
Worship 5:00 P.M.

Wednesday

Bible Study . . . 7:00 P.M.

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