

Acts # 93 “Remaining Positive in a Negative World”

Acts 23:12-35 ; John 15:18-21

Demon influence is all around us and it invades the soul, mind, emotion and self-consciousness of far too many believers today but it certainly doesn't have to be that way.

Demon influence is the infiltration of satanic thought, not necessarily expressed in outright evil but most often expressed in the idea of improving this world by doing nice things for fellow man and supporting fleshly motivated crusades to promote the good of mankind.

Unbelievers are protected from demon influence and possession by adhering to God's established laws designed to protect and preserve humanity and believers are protected from demon influence by biblical truth only!

As the leader of all fallen angels and ruler of planet earth, Satan has been able to formulate an intricate system which is an ideology of thoughts, opinions, speculations, false doctrines and panaceas found in various categories of deceit by which he seeks to control the world he rules.

Remaining positive does not mean we never have a bad day.

But Job didn't do as too many believers do in giving up and reverting to their former coping skills to deal with their problems; he took it to God, the Source of all blessing and truth.

Job was able to come to his senses, to that wonderful place of extreme serenity that very few experience.

Job knew something that the apostle Paul knew and we should know also: when everyone else deserts us, God forever remains with us; when everything we try on our own fails, God's methods succeed.

When the world is caving in around us, God gives us a peace that passes understanding, He walks with us and carries us when we can't stand up ourselves through every heartache and disaster we face.

To the extent that we follow Jesus Christ, we will face persecution as He did.

We have three enemies as believers in Jesus Christ; two are external and one internal: Satan himself and his world system from the outside and our genetically reproduced sin nature from within.

Every normal human being knows that God exists and all reach God-consciousness when they know He exists and at that point, they have to decide whether they want to know more about God or reject Him and worship the creation with its creatures rather than its Creator.

So, when Jesus says those belonging to the world will do these things to us, it's because of who He is not who we are.

These were highly religious people and like all religious people, they were eager to prove themselves; in this case by destroying Paul who at this time is isolated from human help for the most part but nonetheless he is greatly encouraged by the Lord Jesus Christ!

The night had passed without any word from the Jerusalem church where Paul had just brought a timely offering; they weren't praying for him, attempting to contact him or encouraging him in the least.

Paul is faced with nothing but anger, persecution and pressure but the Word of God will carry him and it will carry us through any disaster we may face, period.

The greatest opposition for disciples of Jesus Christ always comes from religious people.

The Jerusalem church is steeped in legalism with no concept of grace Bible teaching and so, it has rejected Paul and rejected the biblical truth he teaches which has come to Paul directly through God the Holy Spirit.

These events will form the basis for the letters that will eventually be written by Paul in Rome to the Corinthians, the Thessalonians and others.

This is the devil's demon influenced world and in it there'll always be conspiracies against grace.

Human viewpoint always finds a way of setting aside grace to justify itself.

As long as God has a plan for Paul's life, nothing or no one can remove him from this world and when that plan is completed, nothing can keep him here either.

And although Paul is deserted by the Jerusalem church putting him in a most discouraging situation in life; rejection from his own, he's been encouraged by the Word of God because biblical truth carries us when everyone else heads for the hills; just like it was for the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross.

Moment by moment, Paul was living out Romans 8:31 'If God is for us who can be against us?' and we need to remember that when face situations when we're literally hated by our enemies.

How many times do we read in Scripture that God's people are surrounded by their enemies and yet with God in the mix, they are a majority that wins out in the end!

And we're certainly not always talking about miraculous deliverance; that's the exception.

Yet we still cry out to God begging that He'll remove all our pain immediately but often God wants us to remain in the pressure cooker so we can learn to relax and trust Him.