

Problems – Study 9 – Self

I think most of us have heard about David in the Old Testament. You know, he's the one who slew Goliath, the giant. But there was a time when King Saul chased David week after week and month after month, seeking to kill him. David had to live the life of a fugitive and sometimes he had to hide in caves and other hiding places. It was a very difficult way to live.

It's one thing to be a fugitive, and it's another thing to be an innocent fugitive. David had done nothing wrong. He was not guilty of any crime. It would have been quite different if David had murdered the king's son or stolen the king's gold, but David was innocent. He was being chased without a cause, so what did David do?

Well, often when David was chased by King Saul, he did the right thing. You see, he was chased more than once. He did the right thing on many occasions. He trusted the Lord and kept his eyes on his God. We learn of David's wonderful trust in God as we read many of the psalms that he wrote, but there was one occasion when David did the wrong thing. He took his eyes off the Lord and began feeling sorry for himself.

In I Samuel 27:1, the Bible says: *And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand.* David said, "I'm going to do this and Saul won't be able to find me. He won't worry about me anymore. He won't chase me."

Well, David was all concerned about himself and so he decided to have his own pity party.

He refused to believe that the God who had taken care of him in the past would continue to take care of him in the future. His pity party lasted for a long time and resulted in much trouble for David. But finally, he got his eyes back on the Lord. In I Samuel 30:6, the last part of that verse says, *But David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.* He once again trusted in God to take care of him.

But, you know, David is not much different from us. There are many times we do just what David did. There are times when we get our eyes off the Lord and we start feeling sorry for ourselves. This is called self-pity, and this is what I would like for us to look at today, the subject of self-pity.

What is pity? The word "pity" means to have compassion, to feel sorrow, be concerned for someone and be sympathetic, in other words, to put yourself in someone else's shoes and feel with them and suffer, in a sense of suffering with them. Pity is something that is good and something that God wants us to have. God wants us to suffer as such, not to suffer to the point of death as such, but He wants us to suffer with another person and to feel with them out of compassion and sorrow and deep concern. God even commands the believer to have pity. It says in I Peter 3:8, *Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.*

Our God is a God of pity. He is a God of mercy, and He is a God of compassion. Romans 9:15 talks about that. And when the Lord Jesus saw the crowds of people, He was moved with compassion, according to Matthew 9:36.

We have a Savior who feels with us and who sympathizes with us and who knows what we go through. We have a High Priest, the Lord Jesus, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities and weaknesses. There is a God in Heaven who pities man on Earth.

Well, what about the wrong kind of pity? The wrong kind of pity is something that God does not want us to have. There is a pity that is very good, and that pity is a God-given emotion, but when pity is turned towards self, then it becomes ugly and sinful and destructive. Self-pity is taking that compassion and pity and concern and turning it the wrong way towards self. Pity should reach out toward others. Self-pity does not reach out in a healthy way at all. The believer who indulges in self-pity is complaining about what God has allowed to come into his or her life.

The Bible does not use the word “self-pity,” but there is a word in the Bible that carries this idea. Psalm 37:1 talks about fretting. The self-pitying person is the person who frets. It says there in Psalm 37:1, *Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.*

I realize that many times, at least in my life I've looked on that word “fret,” and it seemed like that it would be someone who would be sitting around, biting their fingernails and being real nervous, but the Bible definition there is not the one who does that, but the word “fret” means to be angry. It means to burn up with passion, to fill sorrow for oneself, in other words self-pity to the point of being very upset and bent out of shape.

The word's also found in Psalm 37:7-8. It says, *7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. 8 Cease from anger,*

and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

A person who frets is the person who gets all heated up and burned up and irritated and disturbed, and this person gets all agitated and disturbed.

In Psalm 37:1 we read there, there are two things that God tells us not to do. He says don't fret and don't be envious. To fret means to burn up with passion. To envy is to burn up with jealousy, feeling sorry for oneself because of another's advantage or prosperity.

Well, there is a right and a wrong pity and this is exhibited many times, and the right kind of pity and sorrow is that which will seek to solve and fix my own problems and reach out to the ills and aches of others. There is a right kind of pity and sorrow and there is a wrong kind of pity and sorrow.

Second Corinthians 7:9-10 says, *9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.*

In II Corinthians 7:9-10, those verses I just read, we read about the two kinds of sorrow, the healthy kind and the unhealthy kind. The right or the healthy kind of pity is sorrow to repentance. It says there in those verses I just read “for ye were made sorry after a godly manner.”

The wrong or unhealthy kind of sorrow, this is the sorrow of the world, and it says there in that verse, in verse 10 of II Corinthians 7, it worketh death. The right kind of sorrow can produce something that will make me a better

person. It can help me to solve my problems. It can produce a true repentance, a genuine change of mind and change of heart that will lead to a change of life. The wrong kind of sorrow is the sorrow of the world. It only produces death.

In Matthew 27:3-5, it says, *³Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, ⁴Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. ⁵And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.*

Did Judas have sorrow? Did he have the right kind of sorrow? No. Did he have the right kind of sorrow that he should have had? No. Did he really fix his problem? No. Did he turn to the Savior? No. He felt sorry for himself to the point of ending his life. The sorrow of the world worketh death.

Many times during this time of year as we approach Christmas, I suppose there are many people who will kill themselves, who will commit suicide as people have done in the past because they have pity parties. They feel sorry for themselves because possibly they can't buy the many hundreds of dollars' worth of gifts that they want to buy or they feel they have to buy, or maybe they haven't received what they think they should have received. Well, that's pity for themselves.

Instead of having that, we need to turn our pity toward those who have not and share with the individual who does not have what we have. Now, I'm not talking about socialism. I'm talking about helping that person who is in need, having pity on the person who has nothing.

We can keep looking and thinking about this word "pity." Remember, there's a right kind of pity, and that right kind of pity for ourselves produces repentance. "God, forgive me for doubting You for not being able to take care of me as I think You should have. Forgive me, Lord, for doubting that You are my God."

As we turn our eyes upon the Lord, we need to realize that He's here for us. We need to realize that He is such a great God. He's given us salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ. He sent His Son to die on the cross for me, for you, for this world, for the people of this world, and we need to have pity on those people who have never trusted Jesus Christ as Savior. We need to have pity in the sense of sharing Jesus Christ every opportunity we have. We need to take our self-pity, that pity that we have for ourselves, and turn it to others and have pity for them, that they need Jesus Christ as Savior.

One of these days, if they do not receive Jesus as Savior, they will die and go to a devil's hell to burn forever, to be tormented forever, and I personally want to do what I can to help others know Jesus Christ so that instead of going to Hell they will go to God's Heaven.

How about you? Do you know Jesus as your Savior today? Why not trust Him right now by saying, "God, I know I'm a sinner. I know I can't save myself. I'm sorry, Lord. I have a sorrow this morning, this time in my heart, that I need to get rid of, and that sorrow, Lord, is not knowing Jesus Christ as my Savior. Please come into my heart. I want You as my Savior right now. I'm willing, Lord, to do what You would have me to do, and I know You've done everything on the cross in order for me to go to Heaven. All I need to do is receive Jesus as my Lord and Savior." If you'll pray a prayer something like that, God says He'll save you.

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

The right kind of pity is that pity first of all that is turned toward others and then that right kind of pity produces repentance. "God have mercy upon me, a sinner."

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reminding you it's a good life living for the Lord.
May the Lord bless you richly is our prayer.