

Series: Connected #3

Message Title: Circuit Breakers

Message & Scripture Highlights:

Have a few people read the following scriptures:

Ephesians 1:4-5

He chose us in Christ [actually picked us out for Himself as His own] before the foundation of the world, so that we would be holy [that is, consecrated, set apart for Him] and blameless in His sight, before Him in love,

⁵ He predestined and lovingly planned for us to be adopted to Himself as [His own] children through Jesus Christ, in accordance with the kind intention and good pleasure of His will—

Ephesians 1:18-19

[I pray] that the eyes of your heart [the very center and core of your being] may be enlightened [flooded with light by the Holy Spirit], so that you will know and cherish the hope [the divine guarantee, the confident expectation] to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints (God's people),

¹⁹ and [so that you will begin to know] what the immeasurable and unlimited and surpassing greatness of His power is in us who believe ...

Discussion Part 1:

First of all, isn't it amazing God's love for us - planning so elaborately to adopt us and call it His "good pleasure"? Notice where the light is to emanate from, and discuss how "knowing the hope" correlates with knowing His unlimited power.

S.Marshall thoughts:

God's power working in our lives is always according to the power working in us (Ephesians 3:20). First inside, then outside. It's God's way. His order; His faith connection. He moves from the invisible to the visible. The carnal side of mankind doesn't like this, or accept it. We want to see it, then we believe it.

Have someone read:

Hebrews 13:5

I will not in any way fail you *nor* give you up *nor* leave you without support. [I will] not, [I will] not, [I will] not in any degree leave you helpless *nor* forsake *nor* let [you] down ([relax My hold on you])! [Assuredly not!]

⁶ So we take comfort *and* are encouraged ...

Discussion Part 2:

If God has promised to never leave us, forsake us, or relax His hold on us, why do so many Christians struggle with feeling left, forsaken, and discouraged?

Stephen Marshall Thoughts:

I learned a long time ago - God never fails and God cannot lie. It seems hard to take responsibility for what's wrong in my life, but the moment I do (knowing He never fails) is the moment the faith connection streams power. Excuses are for the religious. Blame is for the victim. I've been both, and desire neither. This is part of denying myself and picking up my cross ... it's not about me, it's all about Jesus! The moment I get my eyes off myself and onto Jesus I'm comforted and encouraged.

Life Application:

Be honest in your group about any loneliness or discouragement you feel. Don't let condemnation in. Many great leaders have struggled with clinical depression and anxiety. When taking responsibility you don't condemn yourself. You simply own a wrong belief or failure so that you can confess it at the cross of Jesus. You can't repent of something that's not yours. If you're bitter at someone - own it so you can deal with it at the cross (NOT to 'beat up' on yourself). If you're lonely, lay down the darkness in your heart and invite Jesus' light. Jesus can only give support to those who NEED support. Independence doesn't help you.

Now Pray The Word:

Get someone (or a few people) to lead out in prayer based on the Truth talked about. Pray according to the above scriptures:

"I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto each one of us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of our understanding being enlightened that we may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe (according to Ephesians 1:17-19). You will never fail us, give us up, or leave us. What a comforting and encouraging promise Father God. (Continue to pray for one another ...).