

FINDING HOPE TODAY - Part 5 - Subversive Hope

April 8, 2022

Subversive Hope

April 10, 2022 • Palm Sunday

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This new kingdom is about adopting a new allegiance to ___ as Lord and King, making the love of God our highest goal, and submitting to the values of the kingdom for the daily living of our lives.

God has now revealed to us his mysterious will regarding Christ—which is to fulfill his own good plan. And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth.

—Ephesians 1:9-10 (NLT)

Just as Palm Sunday seemed like such a triumph for Jesus,

the reality was that though the people were *saying* the right things, they really didn't ____ what they meant.

[the multitude said], 'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!'

—Luke 19:38 (ESV)

Jesus' message, built upon God's message throughout the Old Testament, contradicted the ____ understanding.

The culture and even many Christians have typically seen the Bible as a collection of stories about how we can *save* ____ through moral living.

What the whole Bible, including the Old Testament, shows us is a single, coherent story about how *God saves* the world through Jesus Christ in what could rightly be labeled the Great ____ of everything we human beings have ever expected.

Jesus shows us a Messiah who comes *twice*, which isn't at all what anyone expected, and he shows us that this Messiah comes the first time not in *strength* but in ____.

Three Significant Implications:

- 1. We enter this new kingdom through the same ____ pattern.**
- 2. We live and grow and serve in this new kingdom not by *taking* whatever power we can get our hands on, but by following Jesus and, therefore, ____ power so we can forgive, sacrifice and serve.**
- 3. We see the whole world ____.**

Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to

shame those who are powerful. God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God. God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made him to be wisdom itself. Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin. Therefore, as the Scriptures say, 'If you want to boast, boast only about the LORD.'

—1 Corinthians 1:26-31 (NLT)

God Deals With Human Beings In Two Different But Ironic Ways:

- 1. The reversal of ____, where the desired successes of sinful living actually end up being curses.**
- 2. The reversal of ____, where God chooses the weak over the powerful and the foolish over the wise in order to bring salvation.**

The things this world seems to value as good and worthwhile, such as beauty, power, comfort, success and recognition, become curses when they are received ____ from God.

*Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles. So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise!
Amen.*

—Romans 1:21-25 (NLT)

Conversely, the hard things of this life, that have often seemed to be *curses*, such as weakness, deprivation, loss and rejection, yet when received with faith, trusting God to see us through, become true ____ of life.

That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.

—2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NLT)

Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. Each time he said, 'My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.' So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

—2 Corinthians 12:8-10 (NLT)

Each one of us lives along one of two paths, seeking either the things of this world, and discovering how they end up ____ us, or seeking God in Christ and finding a life that isn't always easy, but it overflows with the ____ of God for those who choose to see it that way.

When Jesus noticed that all who had come to the dinner were trying to sit in the seats of honor near the head of the table, he gave them this advice: 'When you are invited to a wedding feast, don't sit in the seat of honor. What if someone who is more distinguished than you has also been invited? The host will come and say, "Give this person your seat." Then you will be embarrassed, and you will have to take whatever seat is left at the foot of the table! Instead, take the lowest place at the foot of the

table. Then when your host sees you, he will come and say, "Friend, we have a better place for you!" Then you will be honored in front of all the other guests. 11For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.'

—Luke 14:7-11 (NLT)

There are the good things of this world, the hard things of this world, and the best things of this world—God's love, glory, holiness, beauty. The Bible's teaching is that the road to the best things is not through the good things but usually through the hard things, as Jesus himself shows us in Philippians 2:5-11.

—Tim Keller

These subversive, reversal patterns were created and embedded in ___ the workings of this world by our Creator and Redeemer.

We want the storyline of our lives to go from strength to strength, from success to success, and end happily ever after. But throughout the Bible we see something completely different—a persistent pattern of life through death or of triumph through weakness that reveals how God works in history and in our lives.

—Tim Keller

The story of David and Goliath is one of the best ___ of this reversal.

But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The LORD doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.'

—1 Samuel 16:7 (NLT)

How much more do I need to say? It would take too long to recount the stories of the faith of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and all the prophets. By faith these people overthrew kingdoms, ruled with justice, and received what God had promised them. They

shut the mouths of lions, quenched the flames of fire, and escaped death by the edge of the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength. They became strong in battle and put whole armies to flight. Women received their loved ones back again from death. But others were tortured, refusing to turn from God in order to be set free. They placed their hope in a better life after the resurrection.

—Hebrews 11:32-35 (NLT)

While the Gospel is freely offered to all, and all kinds of people will be saved, it isn't necessarily all that appealing to the privileged and powerful, because the common - and ___ - instinct of humanity is to take credit for every success in life.

We keep thinking we can control God through our good actions so that God will be pleased with us and even owe us, but the reality is that everything we have is a ___ from God, and it is only as we repent and put our faith in Christ that we can be saved, through God's sheer, undeserved grace.

SET ASIDE THIS WEEK TO PRAY for God to move powerfully, and even surprisingly, in our midst and across our land and world. And we even invite you, if you feel so led, to fast one day this week, and every time you feel a desire for that thing you're fasting from, pray for God to work in our midst, to bring revival, to bring the Kingdom of God into our midst, here on earth, as it is in heaven.

Next Week: The Great Reversal (Easter)