



22 March 2024

I don't feel like celebrating!

This Sunday is Palm Sunday. We joyfully remember the huge, boisterous celebration of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Next Sunday is Easter, the great celebration of Jesus resurrection

Celebrations are not always happy. They can be the best of times and the worst of times. The reasons for this are many and varied: our personal experiences and memories, the state of our physical, emotional and spiritual health, busyness, losses, crises, all can be factors.



There are times, even now, when you may say, "I don't feel like celebrating!" If you ask others for advice, some will tell you "Don't celebrate if you don't feel like it!", while others will say, "Celebrate even if you don't feel like it!" What are we to do?

At the top, make sure you take into account the state of your physical, emotional and spiritual health along with the other factors. With that, move forward grounded in and following God and His truth in the Scriptures. Let's zero in on a few key Biblical truths.

God is in control.

God is sovereign, He is in control of everything. Nothing is out of His control. When your feelings and circumstances scream at you that everything is out of control, come back to the truth that your sovereign God is in control.

Psalm 103 declares, "The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all" (verse 19).

Psalm 115 states it succinctly, "our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases" (verse 3).

God loves you.

Sovereign God loves you. That is His determined, unchanging, unconditional attitude and action to You.

The Bible tells us that "God loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10; see also John 3:16).

Recall the apostle John's words, "see how great a love the Father has given us, that we would be called the children of God; and in fact we are" (1 John 3:1)

Then walk through, cling to Paul's grand question and answer,

"Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or trouble, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ... I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35, 38-39).

God is good.

God who is sovereign, who loves you, is good. So He is good to you. Period.

Psalm 107 opens "Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, for His mercy is everlasting."

The prophet Nahum opened his book with a statement of God's greatness and sovereign rule. Then he declared, "The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows those who take refuge in Him" (1:7).

So, follow the call of king David in Psalm 34, "Taste and see that the Lord is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!" (verse 8).

God will provide for you and give you the strength that you need.

God who is sovereign, who loves you, is good to you, *will* provide what you need, including the strength you need today.

Psalm 29 makes a direct statement, "The LORD will give strength to His people; the LORD will bless His people with peace" (verse 11).

So you can join in the prayer, "My soul weeps because of grief; strengthen me [God] according to Your word" (Psalm 119:8).

You then can also join with king David in testifying, "The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him" (Psalm 28:7).

Whatever you are facing today, however you feel today, keep your eyes fixed, focused on Jesus and take the next step forward with Him and His truth. Don't be concerned about what you think others may think. After all, God does not call you to put on a performance for others, but follow Him. Yes, as it is often said, at times it may be two steps forward and one step back. But keep moving forward with God.

Pastor Lyle