

WHAT DOES CHRISTIANITY HAVE TO OFFER THE WORLD?

The answer I have today is **HELP**. Last week Eldon talked about Christianity offering the world **HOPE** in Jesus Christ. Next week he is going to talk about **HEALING**. This week I want to talk to you about how we can help the world.

Christianity can and does offer the world help in very practical ways
practical help of building schools and hospitals
practical help of feeding, educating, and healing people...

Today, I want to talk about a different kind of HELP today
but first I want to ask you a very heavy, heavy theological question-
How many of you like Krispy Kreme donuts?

Let me tell you about how Krispy Kreme donuts get to be Krispy Kreme donuts.
First they are tumbled into dough.
Then cut into ball shapes.
They are shot with a blast of piercing air that creates a hole.
Then they ride up and down in on a elevator in high heat and humidity.
Then they are boiled in hot oil.
And after surviving this, they pass through a waterfall of icing.

Despite all that trauma, they come out pretty sweet.

Did you ever imagine what a Krispy Kreme Donut goes through to be a KKD?

Have any of you ever felt like a Krispy Kreme Donut?
I mean have any of you ever felt like you been tumbled, turned, and twisted
beaten, blasted, and boiled on this bumpy ride called life...

And you've come out sweet, by that I mean better and blessed.

It happens. Many of you bear witness to that.

Well, how have you done that, been tumbled, turned, and twisted...
beaten, blasted, boiled and come out sweet.?

Really God only knows but we know God had something to do with it.

I would bet your response to the stress had something to do with how you thought about the experience.

There is no question that many of us have experienced that stress in life, you hurt and you may be hurting today.

If there is anyone here today that has not experienced some kind of stress or struggle in their lives I'd like you to stand. That is what I thought.

Again I would be willing to bet that the way you got through it in part depended on how you thought about it.

I'm not trying to minimize or cheapen your pain...it came at great price.

You didn't enjoy and want to get sick or get picked on.

It hurt to lose a loved one or lose your job .

It was no fun fighting with love ones or fighting with the bill collector.

There is always the agonizing questions about the kids.

How do we to help them deal with debts, divorces, and their discouragement?

Add to those anxieties the drama of the daily news.

It's not encouraging to hear the temperature is up again today and the stock market down.

And it is really discouraging to hear that soldier and civilian casualties have risen. while peace plans fall by the wayside.

Really any change, conflict, criticism, concern, crises, any thing on the calendar or that has to do with dollars and cents can create stress.

Do you worry about what the future holds?

The key is trusting who holds the future.

That will determine how do we think about it.

That I believe is what Christianity has to offer the world-another way to think about life. Christianity can offer people help in simply thinking about life's experiences.

My friend Paula Cape calls this reorganizing our thinking.

It's not just wishful thinking...It's wise thinking.

If we reorganize our thinking we experience less anxiety and we'll become more functional.

You see our thinking, emotions, and behavior are all integrated.

The problem is we usually let our feelings of despair and discouragement, anxiety and worry, hopelessness and helplessness, drive our thinking and our behavior.

Treva Fishbach and I were talking about the problem of parking for Dave's funeral. Some were concerned...She was grieving and could have become very discouraged with the situation but She said, "you know if this construction was volunteer labor, David would have been right out there working.

She completely reorganized the process...instead of her grief and emotions driving her thinking, she let her thinking drive her emotions or grief.

As people of faith we can reorganize this cause and effect process.

We can let our thinking dictate our behavior
and that behavior than can drive our feelings.

This concept is not unique to us, our culture, or our world.

To the ancient people, the wise, well sometimes wise Solomon put it in Proverbs 23.7, "*For as a man thinks, so he is...*"

And to the early church of Rome the apostle Paul writes,

"do not be conformed to this world,

be transformed by the renewing of your mind...

then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is...

In 50 AD the question was asked, “Since Jesus, the Prince of Peace has come, why is there still no peace? They were pretty discouraged too.

Today as then, Jesus has come,
we’ve asked for forgiveness and accepted him as Savior and Lord
and yet we have not let him transform our minds,
we have not let him reorganize our thinking.

That is the key,
what we see, hear, and think needs to be brought under the control of the HS

Christianity can offer the world that kind of help...
but first we need that for ourselves.

James wrote a letter to those under his pastoral care in the first century.
They too were anxious and afraid, burned out and busy,
persecuted and put down, struggling and stressed.

His HELP-
He tells them **WHAT TO THINK,**
He tells them **HOW TO THINK**
And **HOW NOT TO THINK**

Let’s check it out

James 1.2-3, “*Consider it joy brothers when you face trials of any kind because you know the testing of your faith develops perseverance.*”

WHAT? That certainly is another way to think about our suffering and sorrows,
to consider them joy...but, but

GOD, would you consider it joy if you faced the kind of trials and testing we do?
I’m not sure of God’s answer but he might just mention the circumstances of his
children. There is so much hate and hostility between them on all of the
continents.

There are people stealing from one another and taking advantage of one another.

He might remind us that His Son died, “*Jesus endured the suffering and sorrow for the joy that would be found.*”

The word for *joy* is charis, it is word for grace, God’s grace...
so trials bring more joy, more of God’s grace.

You know I really know how that works. I live with Charlene. The root to her name means joy too; God’s joy, God’s grace. So I have plenty of that grace and joy in my life already. It is just part of my life.

Now when I’m sad frustrated or frustrated, hurt, or feeling hopeless Char says something encouraging or does something nice.
Thus, I’ve experience more grace, more joy.

So, just think about having the indwelling presence of joy in your life. You carry it with you and when you need it, you get more.

Remember we have a choice when confronted with trials...we can consider them as fresh grace or greater frustration.

And just WHY should we consider trials and testing-joy...because that testing and testing means proof...proof of one’s character, it is a term for coins meaning they are being purified.

The women in a Bible Study read about their character being refined by the fires of faith. One of the gals wanted to check it out.

She went to a silversmith and asked why, “do you hold the metal over the fire?”
He said, “To burn the impurities out.”

“Well, how do you know when it’s done?”, she asked.
When I can see my image in the metal.

James goes on to say that *testing of your faith develops perseverance.*

Perseverance means patience, remaining under duress, not checking out.

And what does that perseverance do, *it must finish it’s work...*
it’s work, *making you mature and complete*, making you like Christ,

not lacking in anything.

That is the goal for us as people of faith, to be like Christ, *to be mature and complete*, just as the gold or metal refined becomes complete.

You have heard it said God cares more about our character than convenience or comfort...how we deal with trials develop our character.

I love the old story about the farmer and his old donkey.

One day the donkey fell into a hole. The farmer and friends tried to think of a way to get the donkey out of the hole but to no avail. Whatever they tried didn't work.

So, instead of letting the suffering go on longer and longer the farmer started to pitch dirt into the hole thinking he would soon bury the donkey putting him out of his misery.

At first the donkey brayed louder and louder, he howled for hours until finally he was quiet.

The farmer thought that the donkey had given up or died but in reality the donkey had reorganized his thinking.

As each shovel full of dirt fell on him, he shook it off, stepped up, and packed it down.

The donkey continued to do this until he could step out of and off the hole.

Here is the thing, each shovel full of dirt dropped was intended to **bury him**, but actually **made him better**, and made the circumstances better for him, too.

Brother James told us WHAT TO THINK-JOY,
now he tells us HOW TO THINK AND HOW NOT TO THINK

He says, *"If any of you lack wisdom...*
Wisdom is practical common sense, what to do.

The word for lacks means an overdrawn bank account...in the world of finances you're bankrupt. If we're talking about emotions or our spirituality, we're burned out. He didn't have much going for him.

if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously
generously, the picture is to pour in what will be poured out...
in other words, the input matches the output...it is continuous pouring as well

who gives generously without finding fault...isn't that nice...no blame
There is no dumb question or request for God.
God loves you and wants you to ask

But there is a condition...
verse 6, *but when he asks, he must believe and not doubt*
doubt means to separate and in this context, it is like separating yourself from
God,
the source of resources.

You are putting the problem, the situation, the circumstances between you and
God
when in reality the circumstances should push you together.

Lets go on, "*because he who doubts is like the wave of the sea, blown and tossed
about by the wind*".

Talk about a traumatic and terrifying...feeling hopeless and helpless,
to be tossed about in water by the wind...

verses 7-8 "*that man should not think that he will receive anything from the
Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.*"

HOW TO THINK...BELIEVE

HOW NOT TO THINK...Don't **DOUBT** or be **DOUBLE-MINED**

Double-mindedness is translated two souls. Abraham Lincoln said a house is
divided against itself it FALLS. I think he got it from another wise man.

The picture is again of a civil war, dividing your resources, the inner resources

you need to deal with the external pressures.

This is the same concept for the words worry and anxiety in Matthew 6 and Philippians 4.

Matthew is reciting the litany of distress people have about food and cloths, and then says, "***SEEK ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.***"

Isn't that fascinating. When we worry or are anxious, that saps our strength, energy, and resources. We have less to work with and the solution is to seek God and it will work out.

Let me tell you about camp. We were way behind at the start, didn't know the camp and needed to find a way to take care of our 40 campers and co-ordinate with the other camp which had 2 counselors for 50 kids. That is just a little bit of stress, a little bit of a trial.

For a day and a half we struggled with this until Monday nights worship. Cindy Haskell sang, which we never do...have adults sing. She sang, "My Redeemer Lives." It was pivotal point in the camp...all of the sudden there was another focus.

Campers came with their concerns and expectations, counselors with theirs, camp staff with theirs.

Our concerns and confusion had caused us to lose our focus, our real purpose, we were being tossed about.

I don't think the campers knew what Redeemer meant but were drawn together.

But that is what seeking God does...

puts us on the right track, points us in the right direction...

and when Cindy sang those words and pointed to the sky, we heard and we were pointed in the right direction.

And what is the promise, "***Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all of these things shall be added unto you.***"

Seeking involves reorganizing our thinking, finding a new focus.

You want some more? Check out Philippians 4.6-9. We don't have time to take a good look at them. They deal with our anxieties, our worries, our stresses. It's faith lesson too is basically how we think about things and Paul who wrote those verses tells whatever we've learned, however you **HAVE LEARNED TO THINK NOW**, put into practice.

The world need to think of things in a different way, we need to think of things in a different way. **CHRISTIANITY CAN OFFER HELP WITH THIS.**

In this life we can expect to get tumbled, twisted, turned, beaten, blasted, and boiled. In the right hands you come out sweet, *“for he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion in Christ Jesus.”*

The operative words, **“IN CHRIST JESUS”**

This process, this thinking is not just some positive thinking theory... we can't deal with all this anxiety we have without fear unless we have Jesus

all this busyness without burnout, unless we have Jesus.

all these changes without crisis, unless we have Jesus.

all this stress without suffering, unless we have Jesus.

We need to be in him and he in us. We need to open our hearts and minds to him, we're going to pray for that today.

Kierra Zerr, one of our campers this week has prayed that and she will tell you, “I have Jesus in my heart and it feels good.” Let us pray asking him in or hearts.

Let us pray, Jesus, I know you're knocking at the door of my heart, tugging at my heart strings.

I have come to understand I need you. I need you to forgive my sins, to renew my mind, and to reorganize my thinking. You died for my sins and you were raised to new life on my behalf. Forgive me when I have hurt or harmed you or others. I surrender all to you. Come into my heart and be the center of my life. Help me to be your fully devoted follower who wants to serve you willingly and well. I thank you with all my heart. Amen.

If you have prayed that prayer please tell Pastor Eldon or myself.

Let's stand and sing. "IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL"