

AN ENCOURAGING WORD FOR TROUBLING TIMES #146 (by Rev. Dr. Alice Wolfe, 1/13/21)

“Enjoy what you have rather than desiring what you don't have”

On Monday, Buckeye fans were saddened when The Ohio State University Football team did not win the National Championship. As sad as I was, I couldn't help but be proud of our team. They faced great adversity this year and overcame. They faced problem after problem and overcame. Though they had a short season, they were undefeated. They won the Big Ten Championship. They won the Sugar Bowl (and quite well, I might add!).

In life, we are tempted to focus on what we don't have instead of the blessings we do have. Remember what happened to Adam and Eve? God blessed them with everything they could ever want or need—a close walk with God, each other, life in the beautiful Garden of Eden, and all they needed. God said they could eat the fruit of any tree in the Garden except one, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. What happened when Eve focused on and became obsessed with the one thing she didn't have?

“...the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate.” (Genesis 3:6, NRSV)

Unfortunately, because of Eve's obsession of the one thing she didn't have, she lost sight of and lost all she did have. Because Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they fell into sin and became separated from God. They were cast out of the Garden and lived the rest of their lives in less than the perfect circumstances they had.

Like Adam and Eve, we are tempted to focus on what we desire instead of being grateful for what we have. Many years ago, I focused so much on what I desired (a husband and children), I began to lose sight of all the blessings I had—a loving Lord, family, friends, and the many blessings God had provided for me. Through the darkness, depression, and dashed dreams, Jesus reminded me that he is all I need. True joy can only be found in him. Instead of focusing on the one thing I wanted and didn't have, I needed to thank God for and enjoy the many blessings I did have. Solomon learned the same:

“Enjoy what you have rather than desiring what you don't have. Just dreaming about nice things is meaningless—like chasing the wind.” (Ecc. 6:9, NLT)

We will never get everything we desire, and Ohio State won't win the National Championship every year (though that won't stop us from hoping and cheering them on!). However, we can thank God for and find joy in the countless blessings God has given us. Will you?

PRAYER:

Merciful and loving Father, thank you for all the blessings you have given us, especially Jesus! Forgive us for the times we lose sight of you and obsess on the things we want. Remind us that true joy can be found only in you and living for you. Help us to live in you and your joy every day—so that others will see you and your joy in us! Amen.



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