



WITHOUT ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING

FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

JOHN 15:1-8



INTRODUCTION

- THERE'S A CERTAIN EXCITEMENT TO BEING A MISSIONARY...
- WHEN PEOPLE COME ALONG TO FIND OUT ABOUT 'THE MISSION FIELD', THERE'S A CERTAIN NOVELTY TO IT ALL!
- THE BIG TEMPTATION FOR US, IN TIMES LIKE THESE, IS TO TALK ABOUT '***THE THINGS THAT "WE" ARE DOING IN VANUATU...***'

INTRODUCTION

- WHEN, OF COURSE, IT'S NOT THE THINGS THAT WE ARE DOING, AT ALL!
- **IT'S THE THINGS THAT GOD IS DOING!**
- [AND NOT DOING!]

INTRODUCTION

- **2015 HAS BEEN A BIG YEAR FOR US!**
- **ONE TRUTH THAT WE'VE BEEN FIRMLY BEEN CONFRONTED WITH HAS BEEN OUR COMPLETE POWERLESSNESS IN EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE...**

POINTS

- 1. THE DELUSION OF CONTROL**
- 2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS**

I. THE DELUSION OF CONTROL

- **UNDER THIS FIRST POINT, I WANT TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT 3 THINGS THAT WE CANNOT CONTROL:**
 - 1. I CANNOT CONTROL THE WORLD I LIVE IN!**
 - 2. I CANNOT CONTROL OTHER PEOPLE!**
 - 3. I CANNOT 'CONTROL' MYSELF!**

I. THE DELUSION OF CONTROL

- **POWERLESSNESS IS A SCARY THING...**
- **CYCLONE PAM** ALERTED US TO THE REALITY OF THAT STATEMENT...

I. THE DELUSION OF CONTROL

- **CYCLONE PAM** WAS A RELENTLESS, RAGING STORM – THE WORST EVER IN THE PACIFIC REGION, AND THE 3RD WORST EVER IN RECORDED HISTORY...
- IT TORE OFF ROOFS, FLATTENED BRICK WALLS, UPROOTED MASSIVE TREES, DESTROYED YACHTS, DECIMATED CROPS, TOOK LIVES, STRUCK FEAR INTO A NATION.
- AS WE LAY IN OUR BEDS, WITH THE SOUND OF A JET ENGINE OUTSIDE, THE GROUND SHOOK, THE WALLS SHOOK, WE FEARED FOR OUR LIVES...

I. THE DELUSION OF CONTROL

- SOMETIMES IT TAKES AN EVENT LIKE THAT TO GALVANISE IN YOUR MIND THE TRUTH THAT **'I CANNOT CONTROL THE WORLD I LIVE IN!'**
- **I CANNOT CONTROL THE WORLD I LIVE IN...!**

I. THE DELUSION OF CONTROL

- SECONDLY, I CANNOT CONTROL OTHER PEOPLE!
- *ISN'T IT FUNNY THAT WE THINK WE CAN CONTROL OTHER PEOPLE...?*

I. THE DELUSION OF CONTROL

- THE PEOPLE OF VANUATU ARE MOSTLY EXTREMELY SUBMISSIVE...
- YOU ASK A YOUNG GUY TO HOP IN THE TRUCK TO SPEND A FEW HOURS COLLECTING FIREWOOD WITH YOU, AND HE'LL JUMP IN WITHOUT HESITATION...

I. THE DELUSION OF CONTROL

- ***BUT WHAT ABOUT WHEN IT COUNTS...?***
- **WHAT ABOUT WHEN A FEMALE MEMBER OF THE CHURCH IN HER EARLY TWENTIES SHOWS UP TO CHURCH WITH A 'BUMP' AND YOU FIND OUT SHE'S BEEN LIVING WITH A GUY FOR 6 MONTHS...?**

I. THE DELUSION OF CONTROL

- THAT'S WHEN YOU RE-DISCOVER 'THE DELUSION OF CONTROL'...
- WHEN YOU REALISE THAT SOMEONE THAT SEEMED TO BE **A MODEL OF SUBMISSION** IS ACTUALLY DOING WHATEVER SHE WANTS...
- WHEN YOU REALISE (AGAIN) THAT I **CANNOT CONTROL OTHER PEOPLE!**

I. THE DELUSION OF CONTROL

- **I CANNOT CONTROL HOW MANY PEOPLE COME TO YOUTH GROUP ON FRIDAY NIGHT...!**
- **I CANNOT CONTROL THE PROBLEMS IN THE CHURCH IN MALEKULA OR TANNA...!**
- **I CANNOT CONTROL OTHER PEOPLE!**

I. THE DELUSION OF CONTROL

- THE REALLY SCARY ONE IS REALISING THAT WE CANNOT EVEN CONTROL OURSELVES...
- **THIS IS WHAT I MEAN:**
- **WE CAN ACKNOWLEDGE POWERLESSNESS OVER (1) WORLD EVENTS AND (2) THE LIVES OF OTHERS, BUT WE SOMEHOW THINK THAT WE RETAIN SOME CONTROL OVER OUR OWN LIVES...!**

I. THE DELUSION OF CONTROL

- YES, WE WILL BE ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD FOR THE THINGS WE DO AND DON'T DO!
[Eccl. 12:14]
- YES, GOD DOES REQUIRE US TO HAVE THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT WHICH IS SELF-CONTROL! *[Gal. 5:23]*
- BUT WE CANNOT SAY, “*TOMORROW, I WILL DO THIS AND THIS...*” *[James 4:13-14]*

I. THE DELUSION OF CONTROL

- THERE ARE DAYS IN VANUATU WHEN I FEEL LIKE I'M SPIRITUALLY **ON TOP OF THE WORLD** – BECAUSE I'M JUST SO THANKFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY THAT GOD HAS GIVEN ME...

I. THE DELUSION OF CONTROL

- BUT I ALSO EQUALLY REALISE THAT GOD **JUST DOES NOT NEED ME** TO BUILD HIS CHURCH IN VANUATU [OR ANYWHERE ELSE, FOR THAT MATTER]!
- AND IF HE WANTS TO TAKE ME OUT OF THE PICTURE THIS VERY MINUTE, HE WILL DO SO, AND HIS WORK WILL GO ON!
- **THE REALITY IS THAT I DO NOT EVEN HAVE CONTROL OVER MYSELF – MY OWN LIFE!**

I. THE DELUSION OF CONTROL

- **SO THERE IT IS – THE DELUSION OF CONTROL – THE REALITY OF OUR POWERLESSNESS!**
 1. **I CANNOT CONTROL THE WORLD I LIVE IN...**
 2. **I CANNOT CONTROL OTHER PEOPLE...**
 3. **I CANNOT ‘CONTROL’ MYSELF...**

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

- *SO WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE US?*
- *IF WE REALLY DON'T HAVE CONTROL OVER OUR LIVES, HOW DO FIND MEANING IN THE MIDST OF IT ALL?*
- *HOW DO FIND **PEACE** AS WE COPE WITH THE REALITY OF OUR OWN **POWERLESSNESS**?*

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

- THE ANSWER, OF COURSE, IS FOUND IN THE BIBLE – GOD’S WORD TO US!
- AND THE ULTIMATE ANSWER IS: **JESUS!**

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

- THE ANSWER IS FOUND IN OUR READING
– ***JOHN 15:1-8***, AND PARTICULARLY VERSE
5...



I AM THE VINE, YOU ARE THE BRANCHES. HE WHO ABIDES IN ME BEARS MUCH FRUIT; FOR WITHOUT ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING.

John 15:5

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

■ **WHAT DOES JESUS TEACH US IN THIS PASSAGE?**

I. **HE (ALONE) IS THE TRUE VINE!**

- **ISRAEL REGARDED ITSELF AS THE TRUE VINE...** [**Psalm 80:8** – “You have brought a VINE out of Egypt; You have cast out the nations, and planted it. You prepared room for it, and caused it to take deep root, and it filled the land.”]
- **HOWEVER**, although Israel **COULD** lay claim to that title, their rejection of Jesus meant that a greater prophecy would come to fruition...

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

- **Jer. 2:21** *“Yet I had planted you A NOBLE VINE, a seed of highest quality. How then have you turned before Me into the DEGENERATE PLANT OF AN ALIEN VINE?”*
- **Isaiah 11:1 & 10** *“There shall come forth a ROD from the stem of Jesse, and A BRANCH shall grow out of his roots ...And in that day there shall be a ROOT OF JESSE, who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious.”*

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

II. TRUE BELIEVERS FIND THEIR LIFE IN THE VINE!

- A.** *The picture of the Vine and the branches ONLY MAKES SENSE as an illustration when the lesson is ‘THE VINE GIVES LIFE TO THE BRANCHES’! We can safely take from that that when we are connected to* [in a living relationship with] Jesus, we have life (v. 1-8).*

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

- B. The second lesson is that when we are 'IN CHRIST', we can also trust Him that He will enable us to survive and bear fruit.*
- ❖ *There is some confusion over v. 2, however, the context helps us. We read: "Every branch **IN ME** that does not bear fruit..." , which would indicate that Jesus is talking about Christians.*
 - ❖ *True Christians cannot be separated from Jesus' love (**Rom. 8:38-39**)...*
 - ❖ *...So, when we read: "...He takes away..." , we sense a problem!*

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

- *That problem is resolved when we go to the original Greek, and find that the primary meaning of $\alpha\rho\omega$ {AIRO} is 'LIFTS UP'...*
- ***What do vine-dressers do to enhance the ability of a vine to produce? They lift the sagging branches out of the muck and into the light 😊 so that they CAN produce fruit!***

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

- *The other problem is the idea of the vine being “pruned”.*
- *Again, the problem is resolved when we go to the original Greek, and find that the primary meaning of καθαίρω {KATHAIRO} is ‘CLEANSED’...*
- *When Noelene had apple trees in Bathurst, she would spray the branches with ‘white oil’ – so that they could produce MORE fruit!*

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

- C. NEXT, Jesus says that His WORD has already made us clean, which means that by His powerful Word, we are made righteous [‘just’ / not guilty, and therefore clean] in His sight (v. 3).*
 - The WORD become flesh [John 1:1].*
 - The WORD of Christ – the Bible.*

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

- D. LASTLY, Jesus reminds us [Christians] that we can only continue to have life and bear more fruit, as we 'ABIDE' in Him (v. 4).*

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

- THE THIRD PRINCIPLE FROM THE PASSAGE IS THAT:

III. UNBELIEVERS ARE NOT CONNECTED TO THE VINE [We see that in v. 6. Think about the results of ‘not being in fellowship with Jesus’: (1) taken away; (2) cast out; (3) withered; (4) gathered together; (5) thrown into the fire; (6) burned...!]

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

- **HELPING US UNDERSTAND IT BETTER:**
- IF JESUS IS THE VINE AND WE ARE THE BRANCHES, WE SIMPLY HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO REMAIN CONNECTED WITH HIM!
- AND THAT'S A GOOD THING!

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

- IF WE WAN'T TO DO ANYTHING FOR GOD, WE CAN'T JUST DO IT BECAUSE WE WANT TO DO IT – BECAUSE WE ARE CONNECTED TO JESUS AND WE THEREFORE DO WHAT HE WANTS US TO DO!

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

- AND WHEN WE DO BEAR FRUIT, WE DON'T SAY 'LOOK WHAT I DID!', WE SAY, 'LOOK WHAT JESUS ENABLED ME TO DO!'

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

- IF WE ARE TO BE USEFUL TO GOD (THE VINEDRESSER [v. 1]), WE HAVE TO BE CONNECTED, AND **REMAIN CONNECTED TO JESUS!**

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

- I'VE USED THE WORDS '**REMAIN CONNECTED**' JUST TO CHALLENGE OUR THINKING A LITTLE!
- THE TRANSLATORS HAVE USED THE OLD-FASHIONED WORD 'ABIDE'. THE VERSES TALK ABOUT US '**ABIDING**' IN JESUS, AND HIM '**ABIDING**' IN US!
- THAT WORD '**ABIDE**' REALLY MEANS THAT **WE'RE WILLING TO STAY, AND HE'S WILLING* TO STAY!**

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

- THINK ABOUT THE MOST INTIMATE AND WONDERFUL HUMAN RELATIONSHIP ON EARTH – MARRIAGE:
 - **THE MOST WONDERFUL THING* IS THAT YOU GET TO STAY!**
 - **THE MOST DIFFICULT THING* IS THAT YOU HAVE TO STAY!**

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

- AND SO WE COME TO TERMS WITH THE REALITY THAT WHENEVER WE ARE TOTALLY **COMMITTED TO SOMEONE / INEXTRICABLY CONNECTED TO SOMEONE / 'ABIDING' IN (OR WITH) SOMEONE**, THERE IS AN ELEMENT OF **POWERLESSNESS!**
- AND **WHEN WE ARE CONNECTED TO JESUS, THAT POWERLESSNESS IS COMPLETE!**

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

- ***HOW DO WE RECONCILE OURSELVES TO THAT LACK OF CONTROL?***
- ***HOW DO WE FIND PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS?***

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

- **WE DO THAT BY EMBRACING OUR POWERLESSNESS!**
- **WE DO THAT BY REFUSING TO ACCEPT THAT OUR POWERLESSNESS IS A BAD THING!**

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

- WE DO THAT BY ACCEPTING JESUS' WORDS – SO THAT WHEN HE SAYS: “**WITHOUT ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING**”, WE RESPOND BY SAYING ‘**ACCEPT THAT, AND I THANK YOU, LORD! I KNOW THAT I AM POWERLESS TO CHANGE THIS WORLD I LIVE IN! I KNOW THAT I AM COMPLETELY UNABLE TO BUILD THE CHURCH THAT YOU HAVE PLACED ME IN WITHOUT YOU! I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT I MAY NOT EVEN HAVE ONE MORE HOUR ON THIS PLANET! AND SO I EMBRACE MY WEAKNESS, AND REST IN YOUR ALMIGHTY POWER!**’

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

- **THE APOSTLE PAUL ESSENTIALLY REPEATS THIS MESSAGE IN 2 COR 12:8-10 {READ}.**
- ***WE READ THESE VERSES, BUT DO WE REALLY EMBRACE OUR WEAKNESS AND HIS STRENGTH?***

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

- I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BUT I FIND IN MYSELF A THIRST FOR 'SUCCESS', A DRIVE TO COMPARE AND COMPETE, A DESIRE FOR THE APPROVAL OF OTHERS...
- **THAT IS NOT THE ROAD TO PEACE...**
- **THAT IS THE ROAD TO HEARTACHE AND SORROW.**

2. FINDING PEACE IN POWERLESSNESS

- **AND SO, IN ORDER TO FIND PEACE IN OUR POWERLESSNESS, WE HAVE TO:**
 - **REDEFINE THE CONCEPT OF SUCCESS...**
 - **REJECT THE IDEA THAT WE HAVE TO BE 'BETTER' THAN THE PASTOR / YOUTH GROUP LEADER / WOMEN'S STUDY LEADER THAT CAME BEFORE US, OR WHO SITS NEXT TO US...**
 - **FIND OUR APPROVAL IN THE COMFORT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT...**

CONCLUSION

- *I WANT TO BE AS CONNECTED TO CHRIST AS A BRANCH IS TO A VINE...*
- *I WANT TO EMBRACE THE WORDS OF CHRIST: “**WITHOUT ME YOU CAN DO NOTHING**”...*
- *WILL YOU JOIN ME?*
- *IF SO, I AM CONFIDENT THAT, TOGETHER, WE WILL FIND PEACE, EVEN IN THE MIDST OF POWERLESSNESS!*



*“Unless the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain
who build it.”*

PSALM 127:6