

How many woke up this morning feeling radical...ready to change the world? We all have dreams, hopes and goals...things we desire to accomplish and bring about in our life.

But...change the world? How is that even possible? (I'm lucky if I'm ready to change my socks!)

If you have accepted Christ as Messiah, Lord and King...you have joined a revolution. A revolution (means a turnaround) involves change, upheaval and transformation. The disciples in the book of Acts (17:6) were accused of "turning the world upside down"...that's what disciples do...impact, change, transform...following the Master's example.

Listen to this quote by John Piper...

"But whatever you do, find the God-centered, Christ-exalting, Bible-saturated passion of your life, and find your way to say it and live for it and die for it. And you will make a difference that lasts. You will not waste your life." - John Piper, *Don't Waste Your Life*

The challenge for followers of Christ is to not to waste our lives, to invest our time, talents and resources to make an impact, a difference in this world. The bigger challenge may be to see how connected to God's will my own dreams/goals/hopes/passions are.

Whenever God moves forward, it is in direct opposition and conflict with many other forces in the world (spiritual and natural)...Think about it, hate does not surrender easily, evil does not surrender to good without a fight...when this happens...we have a collision, an impact. Those impacts...leave marks.

Paul, in the book of Galatians, said it this way...Galatians 6:17

"From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus."

When you embrace all that God has for you, His will, His ways, His mission...you are willing to bear the impact...and the marks...the suffering it may cause.

Which brings us to Revolution 1. I will embrace all God has for me! Philippians 3:10

"That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death."

Mother Teresa said this about suffering...

"Suffering is a sign that you have come so close to Him that He can kiss you."

Of course I hear this and I think...why does it often feel like a slap on the face...rather than a kiss? Could it be that we don't step out in faith, we don't embrace and hold tight to what God is calling us to because we're afraid of the collision...the personal pain it may cause?

How do we live a radical, transformed life without the fear of impact? So...How can we embrace all God has for us this coming year if we know it will involve suffering, pain and struggle...when I know life will leave a mark? We know we can't escape it but can we learn to accept/embrace it as part of God's plan?

*Corrie Ten Boom story - The book **The Hiding Place**, is the story of Corrie Ten Boom, her sister, Betsie, and their father who hid Jews in their home during World War II. They were eventually found out and taken to concentration camps to live under despicable conditions. The sisters were placed in Barracks 28, where Corrie soon despaired of hope. Betsie suggested that they give thanks—that it would encourage their hearts. Corrie said that she could give thanks for everything but the fleas, which were everywhere and horrible to live with. As the days wore on, Corrie and Betsie had the freedom to talk to other prisoners, read the Bible with them, and minister without interference. Then one day a prisoner asked a guard to settle a dispute, and the guard said, “That place is crawling with fleas. I’m not stepping through the door.” Corrie realized why they had been given such liberties in that place—even the fleas were instruments of God.*

Suffering without Christ is painful, but suffering with Christ is purposeful. God used fleas, and the suffering they make, the mark they make...to make room for the Gospel to spread in horrible conditions.

1 Peter 2:20-21

How is it to your credit if you are beaten for doing wrong and you endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. (21) For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His footsteps:

We don't choose suffering, we choose Him...we choose to be like Jesus and embrace God's will over our own. What we're talking about is a deep intimate relationship with Christ, which helps us understand that suffering is still painful with Him but it's also redemptive...it changes our heart, our character and makes it more like His.

That I may know him and the power of his resurrection...

Paul is not asking for more power but to know Jesus deeper. The Greek word here carries the idea of knowledge grounded in personal experience...in other words...relational!

Jeremiah 9:23-24

*Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, (24) but let him who boasts boast in this, that **he understands and knows me**, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.”*

The power released through Christ rising from the dead is the power to keep us from the power of sin. It's the power to overcome sin, the power to surrender and follow His ways and walk in freedom.

Romans 6:4

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

and the fellowship of His suffering...

The Greek word for fellowship means...community, communion, and joint participation...it speaks of a deep intimacy. Paul is asking for an intimate connection, one that goes beyond comfort or even safety. Paul understands that suffering is more difficult we think of it as surviving it instead of conquering it. It's the next phrase that reveals a powerful truth of God's plan and purpose for suffering.

being made conformable to His death...

Christ's death on the cross was the noblest expression of the Father's love for mankind. Paul is praying that his love be changed to look like that kind of love. What a radical way to change the world...to love like the Messiah does!

I will embrace all God has for me! (but how?) 2 steps to help...

Pause – Job 37:14

"Listen to this, Job; stop and consider God's wonders.

Slow down... sometimes you have to be quiet in order to hear God speak. Get rid of "soul clutter"...distractions, negative thoughts and be still in your spirit. Often we use noise to cover up our feelings, thinking, and seeing. Stop, make time to reflect on God, what He's done in your life...no agenda but to listen. (Have a notebook and Bible ready). Pray and ask God for clarity, for Scriptures that you can pray over yourself.

Follow - John 10:27

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me."

The Greek word for follow here means... to be in the same way with, it suggests a strong connection to follow as a disciple. When you hear His voice leading you...follow with passion. This is where we trade convenience for conviction, passivity for passion. When we get passionate about following God...we can trust our passions, dreams, goals and plans are directed by Him.

A revolution that transforms us is a Holy Spirit movement. It's not when we get our act together but when someone who is all powerful gets a hold of us and changes us from the inside out. That's how to be radical!

