

Optimism

(Philippians 4:13)

Introduction:

1. Several times in his letters, the apostle Paul instructed Christians to "follow" [imitate] him as he followed Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17a).
2. As we examine Paul's life, we see that he possessed a number of characteristics that are worthy of our imitation.
3. One particular characteristic is revealed in Philippians 4:13 -- "optimism."
4. Even when Paul served the Lord under difficult circumstances, he always maintained a spirit of optimism.
5. Since we are to follow Paul's example, this evening we are concentrating on a number of passages and principles that relate to "optimism."
6. In dealing with this subject it is necessary for us to approach it in a negative as well as a positive sense.

Discussion:

- I. TO BE OPTIMISTIC, WE MUST ELIMINATE MURMURING
 - A. The opposite of being optimistic is being negative, critical, and pessimistic.
 - B. This kind of disposition is often demonstrated by murmuring.
 - C. The Bible teaches that murmuring is a sin.
 1. (Philippians 2:14) "*Do all things without murmurings and disputings.*"
 2. 1 Corinthians 10:10
 - a. This admonition is based on a mistake made by the Israelites.
 - b. (vs.1-4) God blessed the Israelites as they traveled to the Promised Land.
 - c. However, vs.5 shows how God was not pleased with many of His people.
 - d. Some of their sinful activities are listed in vs.6-10.
 - e. One sinful activity was "murmuring."
 - D. Let us examine several occasions when the Israelites murmured.
 1. Keep in mind that the Israelites had seen God demonstrate His power by afflicting the Egyptians with the 10 plagues and by parting the Red Sea.
 2. Even though they had seen God demonstrate His power, the Israelites:
 - a. murmured at Marah because the water was bitter (Exodus 15:23-24)
 - b. murmured because they were hungry (Exodus 16:2-3)
 - c. murmured because they were thirsty (Exodus 17:3)
 - d. murmured after hearing the report of the spies (Numbers 14:2, 26-29)

- e. murmured after God punished those involved in the rebellion led by Korah (Numbers 16:41).
- 3. The murmuring of the Israelites indicates that they were not optimistic.
 - a. They did not trust that God would take care of them.
 - b. They were lacking in patience and perseverance.
 - c. They did not look ahead to the blessings they would receive in Canaan.
 - d. They developed a bad habit of constantly complaining.
- E. We need to learn a lesson from the Israelites' mistake (1 Corinthians 10:11).
- II. TO BE OPTIMISTIC, LET US IMITATE THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL
 - A. Keep in mind that Paul wrote Philippians 2:14 and 1 Corinthians 10:10.
 - B. He faced many difficult experiences, but he did not react like the Israelites.
 - C. Instead of murmuring, Paul maintained an optimistic spirit.
 - D. Let us examine several occasions when Paul faced difficulties (Acts 14:19-22; 16:22-25; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; Philippians 4:11-13).
 - E. Unlike the Israelites, Paul's reactions indicate that:
 - 1. he trusted that God would take care of him
 - 2. he had an abundance of patience and perseverance
 - 3. he looked forward to receiving a home in heaven
 - 4. he had developed the custom of constantly giving thanks
 - 5. he maintained an optimistic spirit (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

Conclusion:

- 1. People in the world need to see us as being optimistic.
- 2. If we will imitate Paul's example, we can face each day with the spirit of optimism expressed in Psalm 118:24.