

A Promise of God

Let me begin by sharing an ancient Chinese story with you.

A farmer had one old horse that he used for tilling his fields. One day the horse escaped into the hills. When the farmer's neighbors heard about it, they sympathized with the old man over his bad luck. "Bad luck? Good luck? Who knows?" said the farmer.

A week later, the horse returned with a herd of wild horses from the hills. This time the neighbors congratulated the farmer on his good luck. "Good luck? Bad luck? Who knows?" said the farmer.

When the farmer's son attempted to tame one of the wild horses, he fell off and broke his leg. Every-one agreed that this was very bad luck, except the farmer. He replied, "Bad luck? Good luck? Who knows?"

A couple of weeks later, the army marched into the village and forced every able-bodied young man to go fight in a bloody war. When they saw that the farmer's son had a broken leg, they let him stay. Everyone was very happy at the farmer's good luck. "Good luck? Bad luck? Who knows?"

I have no idea whether the above story is true or not, but I do know that there is a good lesson in it for us. Sometimes it **seems** that things are going well, and at other times, things **seem** to be going poorly. However, the bottom line is that ***we really don't know!*** Things are not always as they appear to be, and the idea of good or bad luck is really nonsense biblically. We really don't know how things will work out in our lives – but God does! Circumstances that appear to be negative at first may turn out to be a great blessing for us. Circumstances that appear to be positive at first may turn out to be a curse for us. The problem for many is that they allow ***their perception*** of positive and negative circumstances to dictate their feelings and outlook on life. When things are going well, most folks are happy and think that God is with them. However, when things start going poorly, the temptation is to get discouraged and think that God has abandoned them.

It is unfortunate that many Christians allow themselves to be tossed about by their circumstances like this. We could all benefit from reflecting upon the words of the apostle Paul in Philippians 4:11- "I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content." Paul knew how to rejoice in ***any*** circumstances (cf. 4:4). He could be content when things were rough (he was in jail at the time of the writing the epistle). He could be content when things were going smoothly also. One of the great things about being a member of God's family is that we do not need to worry, whatever our circumstances! In fact, we are commanded to ***not*** worry (Matt. 6:25)! No matter what happens in life, faithful disciples have the hope that God will take care of them. They will realize that things are not always as they appear in life, and that God is in control!

Donald