

Monday, June 29, 2020

Devotional Thoughts from Pastor Jim Murr...

"Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him."

James 1: 12

Have you ever received a crown? I mean from the dentist. Many of us have. Karen is currently wearing a temporary crown on one of her teeth. The "permanent" one will be ready in a week or so. Her previous "permanent" one had to be replaced. So much for the "permanent" crown. I've gotten a crown 3 times. Two times were the originals, and then one had to be replaced.

It's a good thing to be able to get a crown on one of your teeth. It's better than having an empty place where a tooth should be. But the process of getting a crown isn't what you would call ... pleasant. The tooth needs to be filed/drilled down to a "nub" in order to provide a resting place for the crown.

In the reading above, James exhorts us to "remain steadfast under trial, for when (we have) stood the test (we) will receive the crown of life." The crown that James is referring to is eternal life! It's our place in heaven in the presence of God. But before we receive that crown, we need to endure a few things, much like receiving a crown in your mouth. The tooth that the crown in your mouth will sit on needs to first be prepared. The things that we experience in this life are not just random and for no purpose. They help to form our faith. They help our faith to become mature. They get us ready to receive the "crown of life."

Just think about what it would be like if someone was sitting in the dentist chair while the dentist was preparing the tooth that the crown was going to be placed on, and about halfway through the drilling or filing down process the patient said, "That's enough! I can't take it anymore!" And he/she just got up and left. The tooth wouldn't be rightly prepared for the crown. It would be incomplete.

God doesn't want you and me to quit halfway through the trials of this life, where we give up on trusting in Him. He wants us to "remain steadfast." That's another way of saying, "Hang in there." Life is certainly hard. At times, it can be harder than usual. God wants you and me to hang in there. Stay in the chair. We're being prepared for the "Crown of life!" The "Crown of life" is received through faith in Jesus. Don't walk out on your faith in Jesus. Some things in life are unpleasant, but if we hang in there to the end, God will give us the "Crown of life" – eternity in the glory of His presence. The Holy Spirit is in you to sustain you in your faith.

God's peace!
Pastor Jim