

Remaining Unraveled When Life Unravels

Life has the tendency to unravel at times. We rarely have a clue or a warning that it's coming. Everything is going fairly smooth & routine one minute, and before the second hand clicks through the next, something significant has changed. Just because life can become unraveled doesn't mean life has to unravel us. The way to hold together is the focus of our thoughts in today's Templates of Truth.

The start of a normal work day can be relatively the same for years, until an appointment with the boss one morning reveals, "We've taken a hard hit with the economy, and we're going to have to let you go." Perhaps it is the doctor who reports, "We found something serious on the scans." Like a car that seems to zoom out of nowhere and broad sides us with a disabling impact, life can take a sudden turn just that fast. We are left shocked & disoriented, and the uncertainty we confront leaves us fearful, confused and overwhelmed with insecurity. For the believer, these times can be among the greatest challenges to our faith, trust and dependence on God. To believe that God will take care of us in spite of the prospects is part of what living by faith is all about.

In his letter to the church at Colossae, Paul explains that Jesus existed before anything, and that by Him and for Him everything was made (1:16-17). Because of this surpassing truth, Paul declared – *in Him all things hold together* (1:17). This means that the power and authority of Jesus Christ enables all things to stand firm, consist or be suspended in their operational effect so as to serve His plan and purpose for everyone and everything. If Jesus didn't have this supreme control, the entire universe and all creation would come unraveled at the seams to disastrous proportions. So, Paul established that Jesus already possesses all preeminence and priority over all the created order.

One of the purposes for which Christ has been given this supremacy and authority is *so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything* (1:18). In a very practical sense, that comes down to a choice by you and me. If He has first place in our life, it is because we make Him and give Him that place of priority. This requires that we abandon our own will, our own desires and our own demands in favor of His will, His ways and His plan & purpose for our life. Only then can Christ hold all things together for us. As long as we are trying to hold life together with our bank account, our educational degrees, our expertise, intellect, charm or good looks, Christ is not the sustainer. Those things will eventually fail us; Jesus never will!

Giving Christ this kind of preeminence in life requires obedient surrender & submission. We have to resist a lot within us to make that kind of choice. Most of us have opinions about what is right and what is wrong (at least for us). We define our own set of values & convictions which ultimately manifest themselves in our choice of friends, activities & behaviors. To keep our life in submission to God's will & ways, we have to be mindful of and obedient to the truth & commands of Scripture – ALL of Scripture (not just the portion that doesn't condemn our values

& choices). God's Word is the only standard to which our lives should be measured, and what we believe & accept about the Word of God will dictate our opinions, attitudes and choices concerning everything else in life. For the believers at Colossae, Paul prayed that they would *be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding...increasing in the knowledge of God* (1:9-10). God's Word is the source of such wisdom & understanding, and in order for us to be increasing in that knowledge, we have to make the Word of God a daily passion & priority of deep, diligent study. Giving Christ first place in our life demands that we give His Word first place as well. One cannot work without the other.

When these things are true in our life, the unraveling of life will not unravel us. Our circumstances may look bleak, our situation grave, the prospects few and the conditions they create may be seriously affecting our resources & security; but, our emotional and spiritual composure can remain stable and virtually unaffected. In the midst of such uncertain places of life, we can experience a *peace which surpasses all comprehension* (Philippians 4:7). Through it all, God will show Himself to be faithful to all His promises, and we will face life's unraveling with confident faith that we will endure and celebrate the victory of His protection & provision, while holding it all together for us.

That's today's Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide in Christ. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in the Lord Jesus.