How to Feel Good When "Bad" is All Around You

Last week we talked about the inner child within us. It's often difficult to approach subjects like this because the Christian community, particularly the African American Christian community, has long held the belief that such subjects are taboo and off limits. But with the growing number of Christian people with conditions like depression, loneliness, and mental illness, we can no longer cast aside the subject of emotional and mental illness without addressing it. Not that long ago, women with post partum depression were not medically diagnosed, but believed to be taken with a demonic spirit. They were either sent to an insane asylum or left to deteriorate to only a shadow of their former selves. We can no longer be keepers of the secrets of emotional and mental challenges. It's time to come to grips with the fact that none of us are perfect. We all have some baggage, and if truth be told, some of us who claim to cast out demons have a few of our own to boot.

In Hosea 4:6 KJV, God's Word tells us "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Who is God referring to in this verse? He said "My people..." Therefore you and I must deduce that He is referring to us—those of us who are saved and born again through His grace. As a Christian, what you do not know can destroy you or cause you great harm. When you know better, you then have the potential to do better. This is what knowledge does. It brings light into a dark place. Once you gain an understanding about something, you can strategize and begin to work your way out of it through the healing process of God's love.

These days, a whole lot of us feel bad because we don't know enough of God's Word to feel good. We want to put on a brave face. We want to smile even though our hearts are breaking, but we have allowed the pain to go untreated for too long. Sure, we might feel good on Sunday morning, but we fall to pieces the rest of the week. It is because we have refused to educate ourselves and become proactive about our own mental and emotional health.

As a Daughter of Zion, you have a responsibility to be a wise and compassionate counselor, friend, mother, relative, and Sister-in-Christ. This means that you understand a little bit about emotions and how they can really bring your other brothers and sisters to their knees. Emotions can be very powerful, and we are the ones to give them this power. We give them too much power in fact because we have not learned how to take authority over them through Christ.

Most of us develop a habit pattern of treating emotions like triggers. For instance, sometimes we will become agitated by another person's opinion. If there is a verbal exchange or
disagreement, emotions can run so high that an argument ensues. Things could even become physically violent. This happens because the person allowed his or her emotions to trigger an impulsive and inappropriate response. To take authority over your emotional life means that you recognize that YOU are in control, not the way you feel. Your base of power is not anchored in your feelings. Knowing this one central truth ought to pave the way for the light of God's Word to really minister to your mind and heart.

In both the Old and New Testament, we can find instances of God telling His people to "be strong". He didn't say "feel strong"; He said "BE strong!" The Word of God has to be the number one authority in your existence. When we lose it or become emotionally unglued because we don't have a husband or the one we have isn't acting right, then we are not engaging the action of being strong. We are not utilizing the authority that we have received through Christ. Instead, we are allowing situations and circumstances to become lord. We are giving situations and circumstances the power to control us. When you are caught in this trap, you must take a good long look at your armor, because reacting impetuously, immaturity, and unconstructively signals that you have left an area of your spiritual life exposed to the tricks of the devil.

When this happens, we must make a greater commitment to honor ourselves through the Word. Philippians 4:8(NKJV) says "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things." This is a choice. You can either meditate on those things that bring you good feelings of faith and gratitude, or you can meditate on things that cause your mind and heart to be more undisciplined and out of control. It isn't easy to always focus our minds on the positive, but it is a requirement of the faithful in Christ. It is a worthy endeavor and like anything else, you must be committed to practice it in order to witness the results.

The most important thing that you can do for yourself is to recognize what feeling bad means. It's a signal that something is going on inside your feeling center, and you need to address it. You cannot do that by blaming people or things that are in your external environment, because nothing in your external environment has the power to bring love, light, and life to your soul. Everything that your eye can see is corrupting moment by moment. It's here today and gone tomorrow, so these earthly things have no power. They cannot restore you, so to feel sad, bad, and downtrodden because of anything external is to focus our energy in the wrong place.

To address what is going on in your feeling center, the core of your being, you have to first recognize that those feelings of sadness signal that you are standing somewhere near the perimeter of hopelessness. You are at a place where you know that there's a deep abyss of darkness, and if you don't refocus and step away, you just might fall in. This is where Martha was in John 11. She and her sister, Mary, had just lost their brother, Lazarus, and they were of
course very sad about his death, but you see, Jesus Christ didn't want them to get stuck in that place of hopelessness. He wanted to demonstrate something very powerful to them.

The Word of God tells us that Jesus was very fond of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, but although he was nearby, he did not make haste to visit Lazarus, even though he knew he was sick. Those of whom Jesus walked and talked with daily had witnessed him perform many miracles, but even so, they still had a very limited way of looking at things. In John 11:14,15(NKJV), he told the disciples "Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him."

Jesus knew that Lazarus had already died. He was not glad about this, but the Holy Spirit had already revealed to him that his friend's death would provide an opportunity—an opportunity for the disciples and others to gain a greater revelation of God's love. He knew that once they witnessed the transformative, restorative, up-close and personal demonstration of what he was about to do, they would never be the same. They would have a stronger reservoir of emotional and mental strength from which to draw courage and faith.

Let's look at what Martha said to Jesus in John 11:21, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." Martha gave Jesus Christ an "if" and a "but", neither conveyed that her mind was quite where it needed to be.

**John 11:21-25(NKJV)**

23 Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.”
24 Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”
25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”
27 She said to Him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

Do you see this? Do you see how Jesus Christ helped her to pull it together. He reminded her of who he was and what is really important. Yes, we all have our times to feel down every now and again, but even then we have to keep our eyes on the prize. Jesus Christ wanted Martha and Mary to see firsthand that it is not wisdom to build upon those things that disappoint, but to build upon those things in which we cannot be disappointed. Only God in Christ fits that bill. Jesus Christ never, ever disappoints. He didn't disappoint Mary and Martha, and He won't disappoint you either. He raised Lazarus from the dead and brought life to a situation that seemed impossible. This is the reality of our blessed Savior. He steps into a situation and brings the power! He brings the light! And this is why you can feel good when bad is all around you, because Jesus Christ lives in you! ●