

Living on Saturday

Every Easter season, I try to quote Tony Campolo who points us to the cross of Christ and celebrates His glorious resurrection, "It's Friday, but Sunday is coming." And, it is true. It was Friday and Jesus, the Savior, entered into the most holy place, once and for all, obtaining eternal redemption by means of His death (Heb. 9:12). And then, Sunday came! The resurrection of Christ from death on Sunday was God's glorious Amen to the salvation already achieved on Friday. All of this came from God, so that we who have been united to Christ by faith can boldly say, "*Where, O death, where is your victory? Where, O death, where is your sting?*" *But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*" (1 Cor. 15:55-57). It was Friday, and Sunday came. Hallelujah!

Through faith in Christ, we are recipients of the realities of God's glorious Friday and Sunday. We, who are saved by God's work on Friday, are sustained by the hope of Sunday. Yet spiritually, there is a sense that we live in between those glorious realities. For while we live as people saved to the uttermost by Friday, we have not yet participated fully in the victory of Sunday. One day when Christ comes again, "*There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain...*" (Rev. 21:4). Yet for now, we must linger between what was achieved by God's Friday and what will be celebrated by God's future Sunday. Spiritually, we live on Saturday. Sometimes living on Saturday can be difficult. What is our Hope for Saturday living?

The Apostle Paul knew all about living on Saturday. Paul wrote from a Roman jail cell to a group of Christians in Philippi. Amidst Saturday living he pens, "*I want to know Christ...*" (Phil. 3:10). **Primarily, Saturday-living calls for single-mindedness.** "*But one thing I do...*" (Phil. 3:13). The secret of Paul's success on Saturday was one thing; he declares, "*I want to know Christ...*" (3:10). "What is our chief end?" the Catechism asks, "To glorify God and enjoy him forever." Jesus said it this way, "*Seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well*" (Matt. 6:33). Saturday-living calls for one thing: a single-mindedness that seeks to echo the mindset of Jesus when He said, "*I always do what pleases the Father*" (Jn. 8:29).

Secondly, Saturday-living cries out for self-awareness. Paul says, "*I want to know Christ... Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect...*" (Phil. 3:10, 12). C. S. Lewis said, "If you think being good is easy, you have never tried it." Saturday-living flourishes as we understand that we humbly live before a Holy God whose standard is perfection. "*Search me, O God, and know my heart...*" (Ps. 139:23). Not until we "*search our ways and examine ourselves*" (Lam. 3:40), can we revel in the glory and grace of God's forgiveness.

Thirdly, Saturday-living is confident of whose we are in Christ. "*I press on to take hold of that for which Jesus Christ took hold of me*" (Phil. 3:12). Paul's confidence and ours by faith is that God has hold of us. Jesus says, "*My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand*" (John 10:27-29). On Saturday, we succeed and fail, yet we press on as Paul says, "*to take hold of life*", confident that Christ has hold of us. As the Golden Gate Bridge was being built, 23 people fell to their death. The contractors responded by building a safety net. After the safety net was erected, only nine more men fell, and not one of them died. Productivity was increased by 25%. In much the same way, our safety net is our confidence that Christ has taken hold of us.

Fourthly, Saturday-living in Christ confirms that we are forgiven. We no longer have to live life bound in the chains of the past. Paul says, "*Forgetting what is behind...*" (Phil. 3:13). Paul had a lot to forget for he had watched and celebrated the stoning of Stephen; a leader in the early church (Acts. 7:58, 8:1). He had zealously sought to stamp out the Christian movement entirely. Paul was an enemy of Christ. Yet, he could say, "One thing I do, forgetting what is behind." How? The answer for Paul's past and ours is Friday. He could live on Saturday with the hope of Sunday, because the Exalted One who confronted Him on the Damascus Road was the Crucified One who took the penalty of His sins. Therefore, he would be the one who wrote, "*In Christ we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in*

accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us... (Eph. 1:7, 8a). Friday achieved forgiveness which leads to living with freedom on Saturday. *"Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead..."* (Phil. 3:13).

Fifthly, Saturday-living commits to Godly living. Paul didn't just forget what was behind. He strained toward what was ahead. He said, *"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me..."* (Phil. 3:14). Knowing the freedom of forgiveness, and the imputed righteousness of Christ (2 Cor. 5:21), he desired to live out that life of righteousness with steadfastness and perseverance. Twice he says in a few sentences, *"I press on..."*

Lastly, Saturday-living is compelled by the glorious Sunday that will come. *"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus"* (Phil. 3:14). We live on Saturday. We are confident of God's work on Friday and are compelled by the hope of Sunday. Yet, we have to strive, train, and stretch on Saturday. It can be a grueling process. It can be agonizing, difficult, and painful. But, we press on, compelled and constrained by the anticipation of Sunday—the reality of Heaven, *"Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"* (Matt. 25:34).

Great Peace in the Lord,
Eddie