

When Life Slips you a Lemon

Lets go to the book of James and think about when life slips you a lemon. James 1:2-12

Intro: Have you ever had any lemons in your life? You know, those trials and struggles that you thought might work out well, but as you moved through the situation you started to develop a sour taste in your mouth. How can we salvage the situation and make lemonade instead of having only sour lemons all around us.

If we were all so eager to grasp the lemons, or trials we get in life, think of the lemonade we could get and the progress we could make? To do that, lets think together about the following things that might help us in the process.

I. The reality

The reality is that every life will have its own share of lemons. *V 2 Dear brothers and sisters, every time trouble comes your way, let it be an opportunity for joy.*

Man was made for trouble - if he doesn't get it, he will make it. Yes, the reality is, some lemons will eventually roll or drop into our lives but you can look at it this way " Trials are not bad - there's a special place reserved for those without trails - it's called a cemetery

II. Our basic choices

As I see it we can respond in a couple of basic ways.

We can pucker and pout or we can praise and produce lemonade. **Remember**, He who has no clouds sees no rainbows. *So the question becomes*, Next time a lemon or trial rolls into your life will you **pucker and pout**, or **praise and produce**? It has been said this way: The same sun that melts ice hardens clay. How will it affect you my friend?

III. Steps to the lemonade stand

A. See your lemons through joyful eyes. They are really pretty if you look at them. Look at your blessings with both eyes and your troubles with one.

When looking at the lemons that come into your life, do you see them as sour, or as something that God wants to use to complete you, not deplete you Notice V 4 *So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be strong in character and ready for anything.* God gets his best soldiers from the highlands of affliction.

B. Squeeze the lemon, don't let the lemon squeeze you

When the lemon does the squeezing, it will cause you to look only at the sour nature of your trial. When you do the squeezing you will see the trial as a refreshing part of growth when it is finally all over with. In your life trials, have you been squeezed or are you the squeezer?

Have you noticed that much of the furniture polish today contains lemon. What does furniture polish do? It brings out the beauty of the wood so that the craftsmanship can be observed. Ephesians 2:10 says *For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.*

Some of life's sour moments and circumstances, rather than polish us up, often leave us with a face that is screwed up tight enough to make us look like a prune don't they? If we can begin to see these sour, lemon like, experiences as a polishing agent, being used by the Lord to bring out the beauty in us, it would help us tremendously.

Then notice there in James 1: V 3,4 that these lemon like experiences have a particular purpose. They help us learn patience and work toward making us complete. Evelyn Underhill writes that a lot of the road to heaven has to be taken at 30 MPH.

We need to look at our lemons through joyful eyes and do some squeezing compared to being squeezed, but thirdly we need to

C. Sweeten the lemonade

First, we can sweeten it with prayer and say to the Lord I am going to believe that you want something good for me.

Secondly, we can sweeten it with patience V 4 *And let endurance (or patience, persistence, or dogged determination) have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.* Patience is a tree whose root is bitter but whose fruit is very sweet.

Thirdly, we can sweeten it with praise. Be sure to concentrate on your blessings not your distresses

Finally,

D. Be sure to share your lemonade

II Corinthians 1:2-6 says *May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you his grace and peace. All praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the source of every mercy and the God who comforts us. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When others are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. You can be sure that the more we suffer for Christ, the more God will shower us with his comfort through Christ. So when we are weighed down with troubles, it is for your benefit and salvation! For when God comforts us, it is so that we, in turn, can be an encouragement to you. Then you can patiently endure the same things we suffer.*

Think of trials as the desert, and some travelers are dragging themselves along, dying for a drink of hope for their situation. Now you come along on your camel, fresh off a victory from the Lord in a trial you just faced. You ride up to that traveler and look down from your seat high up between the humps and say, sorry pal that you are in such bad shape and then ride off how good would you be?

Rather, according to this passage in II Corinthians why not reach down and grab your lemonade filled water bottle, filled with the lemonade of hope and say, Here my friend, drink of what the Lord just finished giving me. He helped me get the victory when all seemed lost. Drink deep of the hope this bottle carries and hang on because you will make it. *You see, the greatest enemy of man is not disease - it is despair*

We give up in situations when we feel there is no hope. So let them drink deeply of the hope the Lord placed in your life. Now some folks may not take the offer but that should not prevent your sharing. *It is our responsibility to share the hope, not do the drinking for them. And a word to the weary traveler, Learn from the mistakes of others - you will never live long enough to make them all yourself.*

IV . The bottom line

Lets review a moment

1. All of our lives will have their share of lemons
2. God allows them so we can be completed not depleted
3. When they come into our lives we need to start squeezing them in preparation for success and refreshment, not just let them make you pucker
4. We need to let God add the water of the HS along with the sugar of praise, prayer, and patience

5. And finally, when we get a sip of the sweet lemonade of victory, share your glass with other weary travelers.

So the bottom line is, when the lemons of trials come into your life you can either **pucker and pout** or you can **praise and produce some lemonade**. God wants you to enjoy the lemonade stand, out of the harsh sunshine of life in this old sinful world . We do have to spend some time out there but we don't have to live in that harsh heat all of the time.

Remember, there is no sunshine without some shadow. Thank God that the weather is never always the same. How you handling the lemons in your life? Are you praising and producing some lemonade or are you just puckering and pouting?

In closing maybe you are a weary traveler through life, one that has lost your way. You are dying for lack of a drink. If you will read just a few more lines and do what they say, you can have a drink of the refreshment that only God can give.

Realize you are a sinner (A dying of thirst traveler) Romans 3:23

Understand that the payday for sin is death or eternal conscious separation from God.
Romans 6:23a

Know that there is a way of escape for you. Romans 6:23b and John 1:12

Desire to escape and pray this or a similar prayer.

"Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I am truly sorry for my sins, and I confess them all to You [name them]. Lord Jesus, forgive all my sins and come into my heart as my Saviour and Lord. I receive You right now. Help me from this time forward to live for You. Thank You for hearing and answering my prayer. In Jesus' name. Amen."

On the _____ day of _____ I became a Christian by inviting Jesus Christ into my life to forgive my sin.

Signed: _____

If you have further questions or have chosen to do this, be sure to let us know so we can help you, pray for you and encourage you in your new life.

You can reach us at lapeerchurch@gmail.com Subject line: (Salvation)