



❖ MESSAGE NOTES

MARCH MADNESS: Slam Dunking Life With Christ Week 2 - The Sweet Sixteen

*For the message about the cross is foolishness [madness] to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
~ 1 Corinthians 1:18 (NET)*

We're having fun with some basketball symbolism this month since the NCAA Tournament is going on with its own March Madness, that's where The Big Dance title came from last week and now this week we've got another NCAA Tournament inspired title, The Sweet Sixteen.

We're going to look at a couple of verses that are either a verse sixteen or a chapter sixteen today.

For this is the way God loved the world: He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. ~ John 3:16

I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In the world you have trouble and suffering, but take courage—I have conquered the world.”

~ John 16:33

For everything there is an appointed time, and an appropriate time for every activity on earth: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to uproot what was planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance. A time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to search, and a time to give something up as lost; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a time to rip, and a time to sew; a time to keep silent, and a time to speak. A time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.

~ Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

“How do I TYPICALLY handle adversity when it comes?”

One problem for many of us when life gets hard, when adversity comes, when the storms rise up to terrify us, is we tend to focus on the bad and forget about all the good still in effect in our lives. We get tunnel vision and only seem to focus on, be aware of, the adversity and we forget about all the blessings of God.

Now, here is one of the grand paradoxes of Scripture: it is in that moment, when you are at your lowest, that God is strongest in your life. It is in moments just like those that, literally, the only thing keeping you from complete and

utter collapse and devastation is the power of the Holy Spirit of God.

Paul once shared that he had been caught up to heaven in the spirit and had experienced profound visions. To keep him from becoming prideful about this he says God allowed something Paul called his "thorn in the flesh" to happen to Paul. In three different seasons of life Paul pleaded for God to remove it but each time God told him no, that God's strength was sufficient for Paul to persevere through it. Paul concludes,

Therefore I am content with weaknesses, with insults, with troubles, with persecutions and difficulties for the sake of Christ, for whenever I am weak, then I am strong. ~ 2 Corinthians 12:7b-10

I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In the world you have trouble and suffering, but take courage—I have conquered the world.
~ John 16:33

Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke on you and learn from Me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy to bear, and my load is not hard to carry. ~ Matthew 11:28-30

Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them is like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the flood came, and the winds beat against that house, but it did not collapse because its foundation had been laid on rock. Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, the flood came, and the winds beat against that house, and it collapsed—it was utterly destroyed!
~ Matthew 7:24-27

Adversity reveals five things about us:

1. The nature of my faith.
2. The strength of my commitment.
3. The level of my maturity.
4. The healthiness of my attitude.
5. The measure of my teachability.

Nothing in life reveals those things better than adversity.

Therefore since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest incapable of sympathizing with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way just as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace whenever we need help. ~ Hebrews 4:14-16

Jesus came to this world to talk **TO US ABOUT THE FATHER** and now He is in heaven talking **TO THE FATHER ABOUT US!** Jesus is interceding for you **RIGHT NOW**. He cares **ABOUT** you **AND** He's caring **FOR** you. He's taking your needs to the Father and He knows all about your needs because He's been there. He's walked where you've walked. He's felt what you have felt. He's seen what you have seen. He's heard what you have heard.

"For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His." ~ 2 Chronicles 16:9

... "We have heard from the law that the Christ will remain forever. How can you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?" Jesus replied, "The light is with you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. ~ John 12:34b-35

Notice He says "**WALK** while you have the light" not stand or sit or pout or complain or whine or freak out or backtrack or hide while you have the light. **WALK** forward while you have the light. Jesus is the light of course. Darkness wants to overtake you but don't you let it. Stay in the light. Stay in the light and walk in the light. We need to accept that we aren't going to have all the answers in life but we know the One who does.

I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In the world you have trouble and suffering, but take courage—I have conquered the world.
~ John 16:33

Sixteen of the things the Psalmist says about our Father God.

He's my Strength, my Rock, my Fortress. He's my Deliverance, my Shield, my Stronghold. He's my Support, my Savior, my Redeemer. He's my Shepherd, my Light, my Salvation. He is my Help, my Hiding Place, my Delight. He is my Refuge in times of trouble. He is my Strong Tower. He is my Comfort." YAY GOD?