

The 3Cs_David Yeh, 14 Oct 2018

Have you seen the word 3C? What does it mean?

If you go to electronic stores 3C stands for "computer, communications, and consumer electronics."

I am not here to promote this this morning but I am going to talk about another 3Cs which I heard from a non-Christian husband when I was having house visit to a Christian sister and her daughter not long ago.

He mentioned that in life there are 3Cs as well

Challenge, Change, Chance

When we face Challenge or hardship in life, if we are willing to Change our attitude or the way we live, the hardship can become our Chance or opportunity to our life.

As soon as I heard this an inspiration of Joseph came to my mind. So this morning I would like to share the 3Cs in Joseph's context.

Genesis 37:3-11; 23-28;

1. **Challenge (Genesis 37: 23-28)**

Suddenly his beautiful life was stripped off him. The coat that showed his status of favourite son, he needed to strip off that security. The coat that he was proud of, all needed to be stripped off him if he was to be used by God. He was sold to the Midianite slave, he fell from the most favourite to nothing, he was totally crushed. He was taken away from home, from his security, from his loved ones, from the mother and father he loved and from their love. He was taken to a place that was unfamiliar to him, strange language and custom. Where there was no love but cruel treatment as slave.

What are the things you trust? What are the self-confidences that you depend on? What are the things you hold to?

You might be facing a challenge right now, may be your health or someone close to you suddenly became ill, or some financial crises suddenly came upon you, or some relationship problem suddenly came upon you. Something unexpected suddenly came upon you like a tsunami. Like recent situation in Palu, Indonesia over 2000 people have died in a few minutes. Family are lost, homes are lost, lack of food and water to survive.

What should be our attitude? How should we face these situations?

2. **Change (Genesis 39:1-4)**

When challenge comes, it is opportunity for change. We can choose to stay the same way and suffer or use this opportunity for the better. Often it is our attitude and the way we see things that need to change.

In Egypt Joseph was sold to Potiphar, Pharaoh's captain of the guard (Challenge). There is no record of his complaint but we know that when Joseph saw his brothers again in Egypt, Joseph was ready to forgive them.

There is a sign that he changed his attitude to live in that cruel environment. He was God fearing, he did not murmur against God and just give up, he did well in his situation and God blessed him.

Even though he was away from home, where his father and family were not there to make sure he followed God, he still was faithful to God and followed God's way. When Potiphar, master's wife, try to seduce Joseph to sleep with her, Joseph said "How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" Genesis 39:9

Joseph might have thought his dream has come to the end. His life will never be the same, away from his father that loved him, away from the family and the land he was familiar with. He might have thought "My life was over, I am going to be a slave forever. There is no way out of this." Little did he know, God was preparing him to be Prime Minister of Egypt and save his family. The story is much bigger than ourselves. Our problem is nothing in comparison to the bigger picture of our life that God is preparing for us.

Even right now another wave of persecution is on the churches in China. Hundreds of crosses on church buildings are being torn down and President Xi's and Chairman Mao's photo have to be placed at the front of the church. Everyone is watching how this will turn out. During the past Cultural Revolution in China, the Chinese leaders said, "Do not pray for persecution to be removed from us, but pray that we might have grace and strength to stand in the persecution." As we know the churches in China grew so much that it has become one of the largest numbers of born-again Christian in a nation in the world.

When my late wife past away I thought this is it, because she was so perfect, I would never be able to have a good marriage again, because she was a great pastor, and wonderful partner in ministry, I would not be able to have a good ministry again. We used to run pre-marriage counselling course and marriage counselling course and we used our marriage as an example of we can live together even though we were so different, and told many stories of our failures and successes, but now I would not be able to use our marriage as examples in the marriage counselling class.

During those hard time, I didn't complain or have bitterness against God. Some new Christians in my church even asked me, "How are you able to continue to serve God even you faced something so disastrous like this? I would just give up," they said.

But it was those times that I found God was so close to me, it was those times that I felt I have no one else and nothing else to depend on but God himself. Yes, my life is different. I had to make a choice, to remain in a nonexistent old life and

didn't want to let go of the past feeling and past life, and think that God is someone who is punishing me for my sin, that he is a cruel God, or to believe that God is a God who wants us to grow through our suffering, believe that God is a loving God and he has a better plan for me, even though I couldn't see it right now.

For those who feel regretful of your past sin, or suffering in your pain and hardship, I want to say something to you. When Jesus died on the cross. You believe he forgave your past sin, present sin and future sin? In the same way He has carried your past present and future pain. God has already carried your future pain, your future hardship, your future burden on the cross. So you can face tomorrow with hope and confidence.

Our suffering shows us that we are sinners that need God's redemption. It shows us we are weak, we are not in control of our life.

2. Chance (Gen 39:21-22; Gen 41:39-43)

Nokia was one of the biggest cell phone companies in the market during 1990s and early 2000s. It was very competitive as new various companies started to come into the competition. Like Samsung, Sony Ericsson, Panasonic, Motorola, Alcatel. Nokia actually developed a new technology called touch screen, but the management level didn't adopt this new technology, it was too risky, they didn't want to change when they faced the challenge. Other companies adopted the new technology like Apple, which later developed iPhone and iPad and the rest is history for Nokia, which just lingered in the phone market, and iPhone which became the best and most sold phone in single model.

If we are willing to "change" then the problem and hardship could become our "chance" or opportunity.

We see that where Joseph was placed in, he was faithful in what he did. When he was in Potiphar's place God was with him, Genesis 39:2-4

Then he was put into prison for the crime he didn't do, as I mentioned earlier, he was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife that Joseph tried to sexually violate her. While he was in prison he didn't just give up and waste away his life away, but he served very well.

Gen 39:21-22

One day God used him to interpret the dreams of the Baker and cup bearer of Pharaoh and both dreams became true. Joseph pleaded with the cup bearer when he is restored to his position and served before Pharaoh, he was to plead for Joseph's freedom because he was innocent, but Joseph was forgotten. The days just went on and on.

When it seems all hope was gone, when it seemed it can't be worse, God lifted Joseph out of the pit after two more years in prison. Joseph had the opportunity to explain the dream Pharaoh had and gave wise advice to what it needed to be done. The result was...

Gen 41:39-43

When our life is so down, when it seems God has forgotten us, when situation can't be worse, God will lift you up. God can use your pain and suffering to make something beautiful to your life.

The story is told of a group of salmon fishermen who gathered in a Scottish inn after a long day of fishing. As one was describing a catch to his friends, his arm swept across the table and knocked a glass against the wall, shattering it and leaving a stain on the white plaster surface. The man apologized to the innkeeper and offered to pay for the damage, but there was nothing he could do; the wall was ruined. A man seated nearby said, "Don't worry." Rising, he took a painting implement from his pocket and began to sketch around the ugly stain. Slowly there emerged the head of a magnificent stag. The man was Sir E. H. Landseer, Scotland's foremost animal artist.

Landseer made the mess on the wall into opportunity to make a wonderful picture on the wall. In the same way it could be your sin or your own mistake that brought disaster, then turn to God and repent from your sin. It could be something not of your fault, but it just happened, don't keep on complaining but have hope in God. God can make your problem and broken life into something beautiful and blessing to your life.

After 5 years of being a widower, God did provide me with someone very gentle and wise, unique in her ways, who makes me laugh every day. She has been a wonderful helper to my family and my ministry. We are beginning to build our experiences so that we can share with other couples. God is using our experience to bless others. Genesis 39:5; Gen 39:23.

New hope has come into my life!

"Jeremiah 29:11 ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

When **Challenge** comes, trust in God and use this opportunity to **Change** your life, build your relationship with God and you will see that the suffering, pain and hardship is **Chance** for you to become a better person and God can use your life to become a blessing to others.