

Thriving in Dark Times

Lesson 04 of the series, "Thrive"

A. Jesus came to give us new life so we can thrive.

"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." John 10:10 (NIV)

B. Four reasons we can thrive even in dark times because of Jesus.

1. We thrive in dark times because Jesus is always with us.

"...be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:20 (NLT)

"Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand." Isaiah 41:10 (NLT)

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." Psalm 23:4 (NIV)

Note: Because of Jesus Circumstances don't determine our joy.

A mob quickly formed against Paul and Silas, and the city officials ordered them stripped and beaten with wooden rods. They were severely beaten, and then they were thrown into prison. The jailer... put them into the inner dungeon and clamped their feet in the stocks. Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening." Acts 16:22-25 (NLT)

Note: God is always more ready to listen than we are to pray.

"...the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness. For example, we don't know what God wants us to pray for. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. Romans 8:26 (NLT)

2. We thrive in dark times because we have each other.

"Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken." Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (NLT)

"The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results."

James 5:16 (NLT)

"Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2 (NLT)

3. We thrive in dark times because this world is not our home.

"Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. John 14:1-3 (NLT)

"For this world is not our permanent home; we are looking forward to a home yet to come." Hebrews 13:14 (NLT)

4. We thrive in dark times because dark times provide opportunities for Christ's light to shine out through us.

"Suddenly, there was a massive earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors immediately flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off! The jailer woke up to see the prison doors wide open. He assumed the prisoners had escaped, so he drew his sword to kill himself. But Paul shouted to him, "Stop! Don't kill yourself! We are all here!" The jailer called for lights and ran to the dungeon and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with everyone in your household." And they shared the word of the Lord with him and with all who lived in his household." Acts 16:26-32 (NLT)

“For God, who said, ‘Let there be light in the darkness,’ has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. “We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves.” 2 Corinthians 4:6-7 (NLT)

“You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.” Matthew 5:14-16 (NLT)

Note: Our culture needs the love found in Jesus more than ever.

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