

## 47 A Spring In Our Step!

It's that time of year again .... November! The clocks have gone back, the trick-or-treaters have been and gone on their not-so-merry way, the weather is dreary, the shops are filled with jolly Santas, and next comes a very solemn Remembrance Sunday. All in all the Lord's people could be forgiven for being rather "down in the dumps" at this time of year!

But for those "in the Lord", what is going on out there, around and about us, need never touch our inward state of thankfulness and joy.

Paul could write that he had learned to be content (Phil 4.11) - in spite of all the buffetings he experienced over his years of ministry. If you have become a bit rusty over what Paul went through, just look again at 2 Corinthians Chapter 4.8-end and Chapter 11.21-end. What a life he lived! - never knowing what each day would bring in the way of successes or failures, steps forward or steps back, good news from afar or bad, welcome or opposition, comfort or discomfort, safety or danger.

There were certainly times when he seems to have become ground down by it all (for example in Acts 18.9-10, and in some of his epistles to the many new churches for which he was responsible), so while he was certainly an extraordinary Christian saint, in himself he was no superman.

But in the Lord's hands, see what he became! What kept him going, and content, and joyful (Phil 4.4) and thankful (1 Thessalonians 5.18), come what may, was his utter confidence in the trustworthiness of the Lord, and in the absolute truth of the Christian Gospel. No wonder he could write that for him, "to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil 1.21). No wonder he could write that he even longed to die, so that he could be fully and finally with the Lord.

These are the words of a battered old Christian who had learned the hard way that the Lord is utterly faithful, unchanging, and trustable, through thick and thin. Paul's deep faith and confidence in the Lord steadily deepened over the years, forged on the anvil of tough experience. So no wonder that he could respond to the prompting of the Holy Spirit to write to the Christians in Rome, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall "this, that or the other" NO! In all things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us .... NOTHING shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"! (Romans 8.35ff).

What assurance! What joy! What plain, old-fashioned Good News! - true for all who will humbly put their trust in Christ as Lord, and live out that discipleship simply and cheerfully day by day. Yes, as those seeking to be Christ's faithful sheep we are totally involved IN this needy world. But in the midst of that involvement, be it pleasant or unpleasant, easy or hard, NO-ONE and NOTHING alters what really matters - the deep, unseen, untouchable peace with Almighty God which we have been given by faith in the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ (eg Romans 5.1).

So come on November, or come on sunny June - Jesus Christ is Lord! No wonder we can have a spring in our step, and a song in our hearts.

We praise Him.

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