

# Clippings

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We seem to be living in a roller-coaster world! The stock market rises and plummets; political parties and points of view do the pendulum thing; gas prices jump quickly, sink slowly; and the weather this winter has been a dizzying ride up and down the thermometer. It's enough to make your head spin!

Talk about a roller-coaster: look at the experience of Jesus' disciples during the last year of His earthly ministry. Especially Holy Week: from the giddy heights of Palm Sunday, buoyed up by the joyful accolades of "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes!", they came crashing down to the angry crowd in front of Pilate's Stone Pavement on Friday, with strident demands of "Crucify him!" And then back up, slowly, as the Sunday reports trickled in of people who saw Jesus alive again.

The apostle Paul wrote in Philippians chapter 4:

*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* [ESV]

The word that is here translated "reasonableness" (NIV "gentleness") is a word that signifies balance, stability, fairness, moderation—the opposite of swinging to extremes. We have such a characteristic because it's built into the Gospel, the story of what happened to Jesus. The disciples learned it, and they passed it along to us: once you have discovered a man who is God, and then seen Him killed, and then seen Him alive again, nothing else can faze you. Clearly, God has everything under control. Clearly, God has a plan.

What that plan is, may not be so clear. What's going to happen next, is not so clear. Things may get better, or they may get worse; doesn't matter, because we've seen the Ultimate Turnaround. Everything else is small change, compared to the amazing rescue God undertook to bring us back to Him.

A little further on in this chapter, Paul will discuss the financial and material aid the Philippian Christians sent to him, and he says,

*I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.* [ESV]

Paul has "learned the secret" of riding the roller-coaster without (pardon the expression) 'tossing his cookies.' What's the secret to keeping your balance amidst the ups and downs of life? Keep your eyes on Jesus. Remember His Passion and how it ended in His resurrection. Remember that this is the One of whom Paul had said in my first quote above, *The Lord is at hand*.

An even keel. An unflappable faith. Stability and sensibility in the midst of a sea of Chicken Littles. We cope, and not all grim and stoic about it; we find reason to rejoice, even as we redirect our anxiety into prayer and supplication. We're gonna be OK. More than OK—Jesus has made the way!

*Pastor Fremer*