

SIMPLE TRUTH: Optimistic, or Misty Optic?

By Shawn Parker

Executive Director-Treasurer, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board



Parker

Someone has well-said that an optimist sees an opportunity in every calamity, and a pessimist sees a calamity in every opportunity. Most of us love a good optimist, and dread being around a bonafide pessimist. In our world these days, it's hard to be optimistic because there are so many pessimistic realities around us. Truth be told, the world provides sufficient reason for pessimism, for sure.

The interesting thing about pessimism is that it's contagious! All you need to do to catch a good case of it is to turn on the news or talk with somebody who did. I'm inclined to say that pessimism may be the most infectious pandemic we're facing in the world today. I can almost guarantee that if you're around a pessimist for very long, you'll become infected unless your spiritual immune system is really strong.

Pessimism is driven by hopelessness. People are so dependent on hope in *something*, whether it's the next ballgame, hunting season, ladies luncheon, or weekend gathering. As long as we have something to look forward to, we tend to have an optimistic spirit. As this pandemic lingers on, more and more of our normal cycles of life have been cancelled and our

objects of anticipation have been dashed. This reality has resulted in a sense of hopelessness for many people, even those of us who follow Christ faithfully.

As Christians, our hope should be more far-reaching and our spirit should be more optimistic because of this hope. The truth is we should be more focused on the eternal hope we have through faith in Christ, and less focused on the temporal hope we are offered from the world. As we shift our focus, we'll discover a rising tide of optimism washing over our souls.

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Some years ago a fellow pastor shared that he was driving home from school with his little girl. He usually took advantage of the drive time to teach her some practical lesson. On this given day, he wanted to teach her the difference between optimism and pessimism so he asked her this question: "If a glass is filled halfway with water, would you say it is half-empty or half-full?" His little girl looked at him with a gleam in her eye and quickly answered, "Well, Daddy, it depends on whether you're filling it up or emptying it out!"

This little girl actually hit the nail on the head! If you're filling your cup, it's half-full, but if you're emptying it, it's half-empty. Are you filling your spiritual cup or allowing life to drain it through the challenges you're facing? We fill our cup through prayer, Bible study, and worship of the true God. The key to optimism is clear vision, and clear vision is possible only through the lens of faith. The late evangelist Vance Havner said, "it's hard to be optimistic if you have a misty optic." So, clear your eyes by looking to the Lord because He is good, and loving, and powerful, and in control of all circumstances.