

“Feeling Fine”

1rst Sunday after Christmas

Colossians 3:15

December 27, 2009

A lawyer was questioning a farmer during a trial concerning an accident. The lawyer asked the farmer, “Is it true, Mr. Jones, that when the highway patrol officer came over to you after the accident, you said, ‘I feel fine’?”

Farmer Jones began to answer by saying “Well, now, me and my cow Bessie were driving down the highway in my pickup truck when ...” At this point the attorney interrupted, saying, “Please just answer my question with a yes or no. Did you say to the officer, ‘I feel fine’?” Farmer Jones then tried to answer the question again. He said, “Well, now, me and my cow Bessie were driving down on the highway in my pickup truck when ...” The attorney stopped him again and this time asked the judge to intervene. He said, “Your Honor, would you please instruct the witness to simply answer my question with a yes or no?” The judge said, “Why don’t we just let him tell his story.”

So Farmer Jones told his story. “Well, now, me and my cow Bessie were driving down on the highway in my pickup truck. Bessie, or course, was in the bed of the truck. I heard a loud bang and knew that I had blown a tire. The truck went flying off the road and landed in a ditch. I went flying out of the truck on one side of the highway and Bessie landed on the other side. When I woke up, the highway patrol officer came over to me and said that Bessie was in awful shape. He then went back over to Bessie, pulled out his gun and shot her dead. Then he came over to me and asked me how I felt and I said, “I feel fine, just fine.”

That kind of experience can lead a person to a lack of confidence. You might say you are feeling fine because you are afraid that if you say other wise, the consequence can be dramatic. It is hard to have self-confidence, to act with boldness and self-assurance, when you are feeling afraid. It’s hard to be confident when you are feeling other things as well – worry, concern, frustration, disappointment, etc. All too often, when we are asked, we respond with “I am fine, just fine.”

Confidence! It means to have firm belief or trust; an assurance; boldness. A synonym would be presumption; conviction; even faith. It is good to have confidence. It is a character trait of self-esteem. We try to teach our children to have confidence. It is also good for a community to have self-confidence (trust) in their leaders. Confidence in our own self or in the leadership, or even in the principles we hold grants us the boldness, the conviction to step out into the future willing to take risks.

Having said this, each of us knows what it feels like to have our confidence shaken. We know how it feels to be filled with doubt and uncertainty. Boldness is replaced with insecurity. Presumption is replaced with second-guessing. We feel powerless to move. When we are in this position it is a very discomforting feeling, not one any of us wishes to feel. The Apostle Paul addresses this with a different tack. Instead of placing our trust in ourselves and drawing confidence from the successes we have known, we are asked to draw confidence from God and what God has done and is doing in our lives. This conviction, drawn from the presence and work of God, is what leads to the peace that Paul writes about when he wrote, “And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body.”

The peace of Christ is not the feeling of absence of conflict. It is more of a confidence that grows from a conviction that God will do what God has promised. When that conviction is present it reorients one's thinking through that conviction. The day-to-day routine is interpreted through God's presumption based on God's promise. Feeling fine is a question that becomes answered by that same promise.

The world may see the answer to this question as a simple yes or no. God sees it answered through the story of His son, our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. His presence in our life greatly alters the answer to the question, "How are you feeling?" To answer that based upon our own self-confidence the answer will depend on the moment and the circumstances of our lives. To answer it based upon our confidence in God then the answer remains the same: "I am fine." I am at peace because I have confidence in my Lord. And it is that peace that rules in my heart regardless of how stirred up my emotions become. Are you feeling fine today? I hope so. I know I am!

AMEN