

Wading in Mud

Mud has made news recently – like the quagmire at the ‘Burning Man’ festival in the Arizona desert. Do you sometimes feel as if you are struggling to navigate your way through unexpected deep mud?

Situations may overcome us – often not of our making – which make us feel

helplessly ‘bogged down’. Outrageous fortune has a habit of drenching our personal festival ground with torrential rain, turning our fine plans into a claggy mud bath, and leaving us feeling disabled and confused. How do we cope?

We can easily feel sorry for ourselves. Why me? What have I done to deserve this? It’s not fair! We may rail in anger and look for someone to blame: anyone, even God, is a target for the anger generated by the hurt we feel. It’s a natural reaction but there is a danger that we may get stuck in the mud of resentment for a long time. If the situation is really bad, we may need someone to rescue us, so calling for help is not a sign of failure but a courageous step.

An alternative strategy may be to ‘befriend’ the mud - to accept an opportunity to sit quietly (not angrily), to listen for God’s ‘still small voice of calm’ after the wind and storm and to consider our options. What can we learn from this situation? What can it teach us about ourselves? Are we able to envisage the sun after the rain? Are we able to find the will to adapt, and the resilience to reshape our plans in a new way? Perhaps we could look outward to see if there’s anyone else struggling in mud – someone we could help.

Whatever situation befalls us, one thing is true – our ‘muddy calamity’, however painful, is not the most important thing. How we deal with it is the critical factor. That’s what Jesus came to show us – that new life can be forged through pain, through rejection, through injustice. It’s not an easy choice to ‘befriend’ the people or events which cause us pain – but it’s worth trying – with Jesus to encourage us and to help redeem the muddy ground for new growth.

Give thanks in all circumstances (*1 Thess.5:18*)

