

Be Prepared For Motion Sickness by Jeff Strite

1 Peter 2:11-2:25

OPEN: Tom had never gone deep-sea fishing before, and once he was out at sea he began to think it was the stupidest thing he'd ever done in his life. Who would ever have believed that seasickness could be this awful? With every pitch and roll, Tom wondered how he was going to survive the remaining two hours of the trip.

About that time one of the deckhands came up to him and said, "Don't worry, young fella. Nobody ever died of seasickness."

Tom looked up and cried, "Oh please don't say that. It's the hope of dying that's keeping me alive."

How many of you have ever experienced car sickness or motion sickness?

Me too. It's really unpleasant isn't it?

It goes by many names:

- Travel sickness
- Air sickness
- Car sickness
- Sea sickness
- Even SPACE sickness (astronauts get "motion sickness" too)

It happens when our eyes get focused on something that isn't moving while the vehicle we're riding in IS moving. It happens a lot to me if I'm trying to read a book while I'm a passenger in a car. My eyes are focused on the book. The book isn't moving ...but the car is. My inner ear senses the motion of the vehicle. But there's this conflict with what my eyes are sensing.

So, when we suffer from motion sickness it's because there's a conflict between REALITY - which our inner ear is experiences and a FALSE IMPRESSION – which is what our eyes PERCEIVE.

As a result we get disoriented and dizzy and nauseated.

It's the difference between perception (of that which is not true) and reality (which is true) that gives us motion sickness.

I Peter tells us that we are travelers in this world. Peter says

- We need to "live (our) lives as strangers here" I Peter 1:17

- And that we are indeed “aliens and strangers in the world” 1 Peter 2:11

Now as we “travel” through this world we can get disoriented, because we may perceive things to be true that aren’t. And if there arises a conflict between our PERCEPTION of what is true and the REALITY of what is true then that conflict will make us uncomfortable and disoriented and we’ll end up with a form of spiritual motion sickness.

For example Peter implies that we can have this perception that life should be fair. But in reality life is not fair.

Peter tells us we WILL encounter “unjust suffering” 1 Peter 2:19

And that – in this a world we WILL “suffer for doing good” 1 Peter 2:20

Now, that doesn’t seem right! That frustrates us because – we’re Christians. We serve the most High God, the powerful creator of the universe. Our perception is, that as Christians, we shouldn’t be suffering, but the reality is – we will suffer.

Jesus said: “In this world you will have trouble.” John 16:33

James tells us “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds...” James 1:2-3

Paul tells us “everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” 2 Timothy 3:12

And Peter agrees: “Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.” 1 Peter 4:12

So, that’s the reality.

We ARE going to suffer and face difficulties, and persecution and hardship, and life will not be easy for us even though we are Christians.

We don’t belong here. We are not citizens of this world... we’re just passing through. If we don’t understand that, we will suffer MORE ...and we’ll be disoriented and we’ll be uncomfortable and sick to our stomachs.

That’s the truth.

But if that single truth is all you perceive... if ALL you believe is that you’ll suffer in this world/nothing’s ever going to go right... then you end up becoming a cynic, a fatalist who will never succeed in your faith.

ILLUS: I read the story once about a Civil War reenactment where the South lost to the

North. The men taking part were dressed in traditional civil war garb, wool uniforms, and it was a hot miserable day. On top of that, a lot of things weren't going right and many of them were getting frustrated. Finally one miserable "Rebel" threw down his hat and walked away. He was grumbling and complaining as he walked off: "I quit. We're not going to win anyway."

He was defeated.

He was finished.

He had accepted the idea that his role involved suffering and he wanted no part of it. So he simply walks away.

He'd lost sight of the joy he's once known in playing his part in this historical event.

And that can happen to a lot Christians if all they see is the suffering they have to endure. If they sense that all life is one long time of hardship and frustration they can get defeated and discouraged and walk away.

Sometimes they may continue to go to church but it's an empty exercise. They've lost all their joy. Their faith becomes shallow and their relationship with God is... grudging.

How do you fix that?

How do folks put the joy back into their Faith?

Well, let me go back to our opening illustration.

How do you deal with motion sickness?

One source I read says the remedy is to simply look out of the window and gaze towards the horizon in the direction you're traveling. In other words—in order to overcome the false perception of "standing still" you need to fix your eyes on that which is REAL.

Hebrews 12:2 says "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith..."

The teaching out of Scripture is that Jesus is the only thing that's going to help us to deal with the difficulties of life. And that's what Peter is telling us here.

"Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

'He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.'

When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls." I Peter 2:21-25

Fix your eyes on Jesus.

He's been where you are.

And fixing your eyes on Him can help carry you through the worst miseries of this life.

ILLUS: Corrie Ten Boom wrote of incident that took place at the prison camp she and her sister were held during WWII. Every Friday the Nazis made the prisoners completely undress for medical inspection. The women were made to march by grinning guards. Then one day as they were enduring this she said, "yet another page in the Bible leapt into life for me. 'He hung naked on the Cross.'

"I had not known – had not thought... the paintings, the carved crucifixes showed at least a scrap of cloth. But this, I suddenly knew, was the respect and reverence of the artist. But oh – at the time itself, on that other Friday morning – there had been no reverence. No more than I saw in the faces around us now.

"I leaned toward Betsie, ahead of me in line. Her shoulder blades stood out sharp and thin beneath her blue mottled skin."

"Betsie, they took His clothes too."

"Ahead of me I heard a gasp. 'Oh Corrie. And I never thanked Him...'"

The only thing that helped Corrie and her sister to endure their miseries was to fix their eyes on Jesus. And it's the same for us. It is in the midst of life's difficulties that we most need to "fix our eyes on Jesus."

But too often we Christians don't do that.

We get caught up in the daily grind of life. And when...

- People mistreat us
- Bills come due
- We suffer from an illness
- Or there are difficulties at work at home we become dismayed and discouraged

WHY?

Because for a while we're disoriented and we try to think in terms of how WE can fix the problem. We forget about Jesus.

ILLUS: What happens is that we are faced with a situation we can't change and we can't fix. And you know what most folks do when that happens? At night, when they go to bed, they go back over that situation... and back over it... and back over it. They toss and they turn all night long rehashing the unfairness and injustice of what they're facing... and they can't fix. If they sleep at all, it isn't much.

Now for those of you know me, there's precious little that I'll let interrupt my sleep. It's

a precious commodity that I guard jealously. And I long ago learned the principle of how to face nights like that: I give it to God.

If I can't fix it and I can't change it and I have no way of handling the problem I face, I just tell God: "I can't fix it and I can't change and I can't handle... so I give it to you." Then I roll over and go to sleep. I figure – He's going to be up all night anyway, let Him worry about it.

In Psalm 127:2 we're told that God "gives to his beloved sleep." That's His promise. But it's only a promise we can claim if we're willing to give our problems to Him. If we trust Him

We must remember Jesus and fix our eyes upon Him.
We must remember that He knows what we're going through.
He's been where we are.
In fact, He's been through worse things than we can imagine.

Jesus was very clear and very honest about this reality of life.
Jesus said: "In this world you will have trouble." John 16:33
Jesus is telling us that life ISN'T going to be easy for you as a Christian.

But notice Jesus doesn't stop there.
That's NOT the whole verse.
That wasn't ALL He said

Jesus said: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33

You and I WILL face difficulties and suffering and hardship and persecution for our faith in this world... but take heart! I have overcome this world. That's Jesus' promise to us.
Whatever I have to face... I don't have to face it alone.
He'll never leave us and He'll never forsake us.

Essentially the Bible says: if you can't handle it – give it to God.
"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." 1 Peter 5:7
David wrote: "Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. Psalm 37:5-6
And again - "When I am afraid, I will trust in you." Psalm 56:3

(PAUSE) Do you do that?
When you're afraid, do you THINK ABOUT God?
Do you and LEAN on Him?
Do you TRUST Him?
Do you PRAY to Him?

It's hard. But if you learn to do it - to lean on God - this world will never slow you down.

So, how do you know if you've come to this point of faith?
You know it when you've learned to walk and live as one who's born of God.
"Shake like you're changed" says the song (we played the song by MercyMe "Shake").

You know there are times when I prepare for a sermon like this and I get to a spot where it's like I've come to the edge of a chasm. There doesn't seem to be anyplace to go. I've plowed all the ground up to this point and it's like the ground has disappeared beneath my feet. And that's how it felt at this point in my sermon prep for this sermon. When that happens I go back to the Scripture and let it tell me where to go. That's when I noticed this next passage:

"Show proper respect to everyone: ... Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh." 1 Peter 2:17-18

Then it struck me.

I can tell when I've learned to lean on Him, and He has gained control of my life when I can actually show respect to people who are harsh to me.

You know, there are people out there who aren't pleasant to be around. People who really get to me and make me squirm when they're around me. They're mean-spirited and frustrating and hard to be near. And it's particularly hard when these people have authority over me somehow. And most folks deal with those kinds of individuals by groaning and griping all the time about how terrible those people are. They go on and on and on about how terrible this or that man or woman is.

You know that's not a good idea.

There's an old proverb that says: "You become like the people you spend the most time with."

So, if I spend most of my time thinking about these miserable people... who am I going to become like? Just like them! Because they dominate my thoughts throughout the

day the control me and influence how I think and act.

But I'm a Christian. These folks shouldn't control me.

Who should control me? (Jesus)

So, if I can learn to show respect to people who are harsh to me, then I prove that I'm able to trust God when I'm able to trust Him with the person that irritates me the most. And I show that I fully trust - by showing that irritable person respect.

Jesus said it this way: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you." Luke 6:27-28

So now, let me go back to my original statement:

Spiritual Motion Sickness occurs when that which I perceive to be true is in conflict with what is actually real.

I may PERCEIVE that the things of this world are unjust and unfair.

And if I allow that perception to overwhelm me and bring me to my knees then I show that I haven't yet let God take control of my life.

ILLUS: The only way to control spiritual motion sickness in my life is to let God take the controls of my life. I once read the true story a preacher once told of doing the funeral for a man who'd been a pilot. He said "The man had married a lady in our congregation and began attending. When I learned that he had never made a commitment to Christ. I asked him if he would be interested in studying God's word with me. He agreed and ultimately I had the privilege of baptizing him.

On one of my visits to his home, he took me to his tool shed to show me his project. He was building his own plane. It was a small plane. The wing was under the fuselage. There were 2 seats – front and back and I was impressed with the precision and detail in the constructions.

He refused to cut any corners because he understood that cutting corners could cost him his life.

He built his little plane by the book.

As I visited with his wife and daughters in preparing for the funeral, his wife told me that Dave always went through his check list before flying. He made sure everything was working properly. He didn't take any chances.

He did everything by the book.

His daughters told me also that when Dave would take them flying he would allow them to take the wheel and fly the plane. When his daughters became comfortable with the handling of the plane he even taught them to do loops.

That wasn't by the book. And so I asked them "did you father really take his hands off the wheel?"

And they said no. A daughter was in the front seat flying the plane, but dad was in the back with his hand on the wheel.

His daughters felt as if they were flying the plane, but ultimately their father was in control.