

Introduction

Perhaps you've heard someone say "I'm at the end of my rope." It usually means they're at the end of their patience or they've run out of hope that anything is going to change. Now imagine being stranded on a small raft in the Pacific with few supplies, no paddles, no compass and most importantly no food and the only drinkable water is the rain water you might catch in a pouch. The first day you're probably grateful just to be alive and the same with the second and third days. Then weeks pass with you just sitting on that raft, not being able to take a walk and not being able to do anything, including eating, drinking or showering. You don't even get a change of scenery.

Now one can survive that boredom including even the hunger if you know at the end of say 30 days you'll be rescued. That's what it means to have hope. I've run multiple 26 mile marathons in my life and the pain and exhaustion was always excruciating for me after 16 miles but I always knew that in 10 more miles I'd be done. If I'd been told to keep running until told to stop, whenever that would be, I wouldn't have been able to do it because I would have had no hope of it ever ending.

Then imagine this taking place during a war in a place where you have no idea how close the enemy is. That's the story of Louis Zamperini, former Olympic track runner whose bomber crashed in the sea while on a rescue mission during World War II. Laura Hillenbrand's best seller book *Unbroken* tells the story in detail as well as Angelina Jolie's film version now on DVD.

As humans, we've demonstrated we can endure a great amount of pain...if we know it's just for a while. The Bible indicates that God has endowed every human being with a resiliency to withstand a great deal of difficulty beyond what we think we can endure. It's a coping mechanism designed to keep us from going extinct. But it's the unknown future where this suffering could go on indefinitely that works against that resiliency.

A big factor in resilience is hope, knowing the suffering is going to end or at least lessen. Hope is like fuel for resiliency. More than anything, as

human beings, we've got to have hope. But where can our hope come from on a raft, in a Japanese prison camp or in a chemo chair?

If you saw the film *Unbroken* you know that early on they spotted an American plane flying overhead. But by the time they got their flare gun ready to shoot, it was too far past them and it was too high for the pilot to distinguish them from the white caps. We could call that hope deferred.

Later another plane flew lower overhead and again their hope was renewed. Only they didn't notice it was a Japanese plane and by shooting the last of their flare gun ammunition they caught the pilot's attention who then started shooting at them. Again, hope deferred.

Proverbs 13:12 says "*hope deferred makes the heart sick.*" We can do amazing things as long as we have hope, even if the hope turns out to be false. I've heard that placebos, medicines with no medicinal value heal about 30% of those who use them thinking that they're getting the real thing. That's how big a factor hope might be in healing us.

In the Bible, the Book of Job is about a devout believer in God who had everything; health, loving family, friends, success and money. Then he lost it all to no fault of his own. After he had lost it all he was frustrated and angry with God. You try and do the right things in life and then this happens. It left him with little hope for the future. Fortunately he never forsook his belief or hope in God even when he didn't feel like believing. In the end God restored and increased Job's blessings.

For Louis, he might have been thinking this torture at sea was payback for all the trouble he had caused growing up as a juvenile delinquent. But bad things are no respecter of persons or behavior. Good people suffer as well as people who do evil. It's not fair but life is rarely fair.

What we need to do is look for hope that is outside of ourselves because it may not be very evident at times. If we practice looking for hope before we

get to the end of our rope we'll better be able to recognize it at the end of our rope.

Seeing life as a gift from God

At one point early in the story, Louis and Phil, eventually the only survivors from the plane crash, were sitting in the raft drifting, miles from who knows where. Louis noticed there was absolutely no wind and the ocean was motionless. The sky looked like a pearl. It was so still that when a fish broke the surface of the water hundreds of feet away, they could hear the sound with perfect clarity.

Laura Hillenbrand writes, *"As he watched this beautiful still world, Louis played with a thought that had come to him before. He had thought of it as he watched hunting seabirds, marveling at their ability to adjust their dives to compensate for the refraction of light in water. He had thought of it as he had considered the pleasing geography of sharks, their gradation of color, their glide through the sea. Such beauty, he thought, was too perfect to have come by mere chance. That day in the center of the Pacific was to him a gift crafted deliberately, compassionately for him and Phil." "Joyful and grateful in the midst of slow dying..." "...the two men bathed in that day."*

Louis had not yet given his life to Christ. That would come many years later. But that night on the raft was one of many steps God would use in his life.

In times of suffering we have these kinds of deep spiritual moments. That's when our minds and hearts seem to naturally turn to God. "O God, help! O God, save! O God, deliver!" It's what gives us hope.

You've heard the saying there are no atheists in foxholes. In those times it may seem like God is right there. But then when the fear or the pain goes away, the oddest thing happens, we think about God less. We pray less often and we pray with less urgency. Even our awareness of the presence of God seems to get lost. Why is that?

Hope in self or hope in God

I think whenever everything calms down and the crises are over, we just naturally go back to relying on our own strength. That strength is what becomes our hope. When we go back to relying on our own strength we miss something important. Paul wrote to the church at Rome which had been going through a lot of suffering of its own in Romans 5:3-4 "*...we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope.*"

As much as we hate suffering, and we should, it does have a good side. The ultimate end of suffering is to build in us that one thing most necessary for survival in any situation; hope beyond ourselves. That's the advantage a follower of Jesus Christ has.

When Louis was on that raft he was beyond having hope just in himself even as strong and fit the former Olympian was. He couldn't swim back to shore. He had no paddles to paddle back to shore. He only had that raft, some fishing wire and a pouch to catch rain water.

As you read the book *Unbroken* it's clear that Louis was obviously a good survivalist but any one of at least two dozen things beyond his control could have killed him from bullets to sharks to dehydration. He clearly had some protection beyond himself and he began to see that.

In my previous churches I had World War II veterans who wrote books about their experience, books that I'll always treasure. Harry Berkheimer, was my first new member in Fremont and his story was of landing on the shores of Europe on D-Day in World War II. If you asked him, he'd tell you he survived the bullets racing past him that day, not because of his own abilities but because of God. Experiencing God on that battlefield is what ultimately set him on a course to give his whole life to Christ. Some of you have had a similar experience.

Louis, on that raft in the middle of that ocean, stripped of any ability to rescue himself was starting to see there was someone looking out for him.

It's Not My Fault

But seeing that wasn't the kind of world Louis normally lived in. That's also not the kind of world we live in. We've been taught to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps. If we're in a mess, clean it up. Or more common today, if we're in a mess blame someone else.

In the western world that we live, we're actually influenced by Greco Roman philosophers who would say hope outside of ourselves is a sign of weakness because it causes us to give up control. In fact, some ancients called hope a moral disease saying it causes what should be a strong, self-sufficient person to trust a power beyond yourself, to no longer be the captain of your ship, master of your fate. I think that belief is more common today, even among Christians than we realize.

Not groaners but conquerors

The Greco Romans even went so far as to say if you were so weak in character as to let your suffering disturb your tranquility you were what they called a groaner. Do you know what it means to groan? It's what I do almost every morning when I get up. Groaning, they thought, is what weak people do when they can't bear what happened or they just can't stand the disappointment so they groan. Suck it up would be a modern day expression of what they would tell us.

Instead of being groaners Greco Romans wanted us to be what they called conquerors. A conqueror was someone who had mastered their spirit through reason and self-sufficiency in a world going to hell.

A God who groans

But the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 8:22 *"We know that the whole creation has been **groaning** as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, **groan***

inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption, the redemption of our bodies. In other words Paul says the earth is a groaner because it's decaying. People are groaners because we're dying. Paul isn't ashamed of it. It's what we do.

*But it gets even better. Paul says in Romans 8:26 *In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.**

The Spirit of God intercedes for us with what; ***wordless groans***. Did you catch that? Paul is saying that even God groans. What that means is God groans for us because he feels our pain. What that says to me is God was actually in Louis and Phil's raft. God is on the cross. God is at the end of your rope when you get there. He's moaning with wordless moans.

Most of us going through a hardship will ask "why me, God, what did I do to deserve this?" "This is not fair." As I said last week, when Louis crashed into the Pacific he was on a rescue mission to find good, faithful soldiers whose plane had gone down earlier. His crew was given a plane that was essentially no longer air worthy but they made him go anyway. It actually had been a parts plane they would go to in fixing other planes. An officer in authority over Louis gave the authority to use that plane on a rescue mission with little thought to its condition. Unfortunately America lost a lot of good soldiers to careless accidents in World War II. But fortunately we learned from the experience and put a lot of safety precautions in place since then.

Mistakes happen. We're not robots, we're humans. In military action humans make mistakes and it costs innocent people their lives. God didn't cause Louis to crash into the ocean but he was there groaning on the raft with him.

Jesus, as an act of complete grace, for people as sin-soaked and sin-damaged and sin-stained as me, chose to give his life and suffer and groan and die on a cross for somebody like me. That's the good news. That's why hope outside ourselves and on God doesn't disappoint.

Conclusion

Therefore, whatever your hardship list is (and it may not be anywhere as difficult as Louis' but it's hard nonetheless), whenever you think you've reached the end of your rope it means you're finally arriving at the place where you can truly experience God.

Paul is saying we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

That's why hope doesn't disappoint, and that's why you are more than a conqueror. In the meantime, we glory in suffering because suffering produces perseverance, perseverance produces character, and character produces hope. May that hope grow in you this week, a hope that won't disappoint.

Here's your challenge this week: look for the little signs of hope in your week. Maybe it's not the big rescue you're praying and hoping for but maybe it's a little thing like Louis noticing the Creator in the formation of the sharks. Look for them because your story is not finished yet.

Next Week

After Louis and Phil were on the raft 47 days they were picked up by a Japanese military ship and sent to a notorious prison camp where prisoners rarely depart alive. If you read the book or saw the movie you know that a notoriously evil prison guard named Mutsuhiro Watanabe also nicknamed the Bird repeatedly tortured Louis. In fact Louis was singled out by this guard to be tortured.

With each beating Louis deepened his hatred of the Bird. After the war these beatings caused Louis to suffer Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD as we know it now. It nearly ruined his life. Do you think it was difficult for

Louis to forgive the Bird? You bet it was. It took everything he had not to return to Japan and kill him.

In two weeks we're going to watch a video of the real Louis Zamperini reading a letter he wrote to the Bird seeking reconciliation after the war. You're also going to hear a fascinating interview on video from the real Bird in the later years of his life. I'm going to warn you that reconciliation is not always pretty and not always successful. Our peace is not dependent on the response of the person who hurt us. You may know someone who is struggling with hatred toward someone who hurt them. Invite them to come in two weeks and see what Christ did in Louis' life to deal with his hatred.

Questions for Reflection

Romans 5:1-5

1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Romans 8:22-25

22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? 25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

Ice Breaker Question for Small Groups

1. What is something that you really hoped for and it came true? How happy were you when it came true and how long did that feeling last?

Context: The Apostle Paul writing to his church at Rome. Persecution was not an uncommon experience for the early church as it is for many Christians around the world today. Paul was trying to de-mystify suffering in contrast to the culture his Gentile believers came out of where there was unfounded optimism that would often disappoint.

1. According to Romans 5:1 how do we get peace with God?
2. What are some ways we can feed hope?
3. What got Louis to start thinking that God might exist?
4. What do you think of the saying that hope outside ourselves is a sign of weakness? How is that a sign of weakness?
5. What might “wordless groans be and what does that tell us about what God is like?
6. Describe what little signs of hope might be in your day. **Application – how would you apply this to your church and life today?**

IF YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW HOW TO GET STARTED IN FAITH

1. Recognize that everyone has sinned and fallen short of God's ideal
Romans 3:23

2. Know that the wages or payment for sinning is death
Romans 6:23

3. But God loved us so much that He sent His only Son to die for us
Romans 8:5

**4. It is our responsibility to accept Jesus Christ as our Savior and allow
Him to become the master of our life**
Romans 10:13

Invite Jesus into your heart by praying something like the prayer below...

"Dear Lord Jesus, in many ways I have sinned against you. I am sorry and want to turn from my sinful ways. I invite you to come into my heart and begin to make me like yourself. I commit my life wholeheartedly to you now. Thank you for saving me."

Series: Unbroken

January 11, 2015

"Resiliency"

Larry Thorson

Romans 5:3-5

3 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And

hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

New International Version

Introduction

A number of years ago a member of a former church I led asked me if I had ever heard of Louis Zamperini or had read Laura Hilldebrand's best selling book ***Unbroken*** which wonderfully describes Zamperini's fascinating life. He loaned me the book and savoring it for 15 minutes a day of reading, I found it quite a ride. Ever since reading that book whenever I've had to face a situation where I didn't think I could take it anymore, Zamperini's story reminded me of the deep resources God plants within each of us.

Who was Louis Zamperini?

Louis Zamperini grew up in Torrance, California where he took up smoking by picking up cigarette butts on the sidewalk... on his way to kindergarten and his childhood adventures went downhill from there. Louis was basically a juvenile delinquent who ran track at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, who became a World War II bombardier, whose plane got shot up to the tune of 594 bullet holes in one encounter. Then he was in another plane that crashed into the Pacific Ocean. The only survivors were Louis, the pilot Phil, and a tail gunner named Mac. Phil had a wound to his head and it wasn't clear to Louis that he was going to survive. Mac kind of snapped. The only food provisions they had for the three of them, Mac ate all by himself on the first night. They're surrounded every day by sharks that keep bumping into their little raft. They were even attacked at one point, by a great white shark.

Then after they'd been on the ocean for some time, a plane spotted them, and they become euphoric because they thought they'd been spotted, but then it turns out to be an enemy plane and it uses them for target practice. The guys would jump under the raft, into the ocean, to try to evade the bullets. The raft ended up getting 48 bullet holes in it. While he was under the water evading bullets, they would have to push sharks away that were coming after

them. Their lips and skin were burned. Their feet were cratered with sores the size of quarters. Their thirst was maddening. Their food deprivation was so severe that Louis lost over 100 pounds. This former Olympic athlete ended up weighing 66 pounds on the raft. That's just the beginning of the book. The Japanese prison camp was another nail biting episode in Louis' life.

I thought when I read the book it would make a great movie. Then I learned that Universal Studios had actually bought the movie rights to Louis' story way back in the early 1950's and Tony Curtis was selected to play Louis as soon as he finished making Spartacus. For some reason unknown to most of the public, Universal postponed their plans until now. What a story. I highly recommend the book Unbroken and Louis' own autobiography *Devil at My Heels* as well as the movie.

Louis was selected to be the 2015 Grand Marshall of the Rose Parade in Pasadena but died July 2 of last year at the age of 97. But when he was in his 70's he took up skateboarding and did it well into his 80's.

As I was reading the book in 2012 I learned he was scheduled to speak at the weekend services of Menlo Church in the Bay Area. I listened to the video of the service there the week before he was scheduled to speak and heard Pastor John Ortberg say that unfortunately Louis Zamperini had had an accident in the last week and broke his leg. His doctor told him that flying from his home in southern California so soon would be too risky. So what do you think he did? Louis and his son drove up to Menlo Park from Hollywood. That's called resiliency.

In a number of weeks we're going to hear that testimony on video about how after the War, when Louis got home to California, he found his life even more hopelessly lost than when he was at sea. Come and find out what the book and movie leaves out. His life got turned around by an encounter with Jesus Christ. I have the actual 1958 testimony Louis gave at a Billy Graham crusade at the Cow Palace in San Francisco nine years after he came to Christ.

What a story. Invite your friends to come hear this great story of resiliency. It will lift you up regardless of what challenges you face.

Today we're going to talk about resiliency. How do we have resiliency when everything around us says give up? When you're lost and stranded on the raft, where's God? What is God up to in your life when it looks like your life is over?

The Apostle Paul in the Bible wrote in Romans 5, *"Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings..." "...because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."*

This idea that suffering can actually produce growth in character was widely embraced in the ancient world, and thinkers in Greece and Rome would actually write what were called "hardship lists." These were really difficult experiences that serve to make the wise person stronger and better. Even the Apostle Paul wrote some of these hardship lists in the New Testament.

One night on the raft, an albatross landed on Louis' head. He said they were so skeletal that when they were sleeping the albatross didn't realize they were human beings. This bird lands on his head and wakes him up. It took him about two minutes moving very slowly to catch the bird. They ended up using it mostly for bait because it tasted so bad.

It happened again, and then a third time. By the third time, they were so starved that Louis said, "We ate the entire bird with gusto. This time it tasted like a hot fudge sundae. I ate the eyeballs and all the rest."

Phil, the pilot of his downed plane reminded Louis that killing an albatross is supposed to bring bad luck. Think about their situation for a moment. Their plane crashes in the Pacific Ocean. They're on a raft. They have no food, no water, no medicine, and no shelter. The Allies couldn't find them. The enemy found them and tried to shoot them. The sharks are trying to eat

them. They're dehydrated, blistered skeletons waiting to die, and Phil says, "Hey, that might be bad luck." Louis says, "What more bad luck could we have?" He would find out. Stay tuned.

Hardship lists. We all have them to one degree or another. They tend to have a way of revealing and making evident, our character. Think about it. There were three different men on that raft. They all faced the same situation. They were all in the same raft, on the same ocean, with the same odds, but in their minds and their spirits, they respond in different ways. Mac just kind of gives up while Phil and Louis somehow embrace it as a challenge, and they engage how they think, in their imaginations, and that meant the difference between life and death.

The writer of Proverbs says in 24:10 *"If you falter in a time of trouble, how small is your strength!"* See, part of what trouble does is test our character. The hardship list doesn't have to be nearly as dramatic as drifting on the ocean. Everybody has a hardship list going every day, and we need to trust that God is at work in this, not causing it but building our character.

Proverbs 17:3: *"The crucible for silver..."* In other words, that's where the purity of silver is tested. *"...and the furnace for gold..."* The fire is where gold is tested. *"...but the LORD tests the heart."* God is interested in my heart.

There's a way in which all of life, every day, is kind of a test. How will I respond to an interruption, or not getting what I want, or to a health problem, or to somebody getting in my way, or being disappointed, or getting criticized, or having to wait? Does anybody here ever get impatient? See, trouble can reveal my character.

Trouble can also be an opportunity for the growth of character. John Ortberg writes of talking with a friend about an important decision he faced. The friend said one path will be really hard but one path will be very easy and he was trying to figure what to do. Ortberg asked him a question: "Would either path make you a better person?" His immediate response was, "The harder path would make me a better person." Ortberg asked him why. He said,

"Haven't you noticed great comfort rarely brings great growth?" Trouble, by itself, doesn't produce growth. Trouble can produce bitterness. Trouble can produce all kinds of bad stuff. If I can trust God in it, if I can live with confidence and joy and not get all focused on myself, then God can use trouble to bring growth.

Desperate trouble reveals the truth about the human condition. It's like a stress test and God never stresses us more than we can handle. Louis Zamperini may be the most resourceful guy you have ever read about but even his resourcefulness wouldn't be enough without a little intervention. In *Devil at My Heels*, which Louis wrote in his late eighties, he says "Today, I am licensed, accomplished, or an expert in 84 fields, from skiing to lifeguarding to skydiving to glacier climbing."

When he was on the raft, at one point, a shark got frustrated and actually leapt out of the water into the raft to attack Louis. Imagine being in a raft and a shark jumping at you out of the water. What would you do? This is what Louis did. He said, "I thrust both my palms against its nose, which stuck out about a foot past the mouth, and was able to shove the ravenous creature back into the sea." Do you think he had some help there?

On the raft, maybe the most resourceful guy in the world found that his existence was a gift over which he was not in charge. When the plane crashed, he writes, "Just to be on the safe side, I thanked God for saving our lives. My buddies prayed with me. Of course, on life rafts, that's what you mostly do. You pray." "On the raft, I was like anybody else. From the native who lived thousands of years ago on a remote island to the atheist in a foxhole. When I got to the end of my rope, I looked up."

The late Dallas Willard, former USC professor and spiritual director used to say, "God's address is at the end of your rope." We all have a rope and it has an end. If you haven't gotten there yet, you will get there one day. That's where God is but it's not the only place where God is.

Once, they went six days with no rain. They had no water on the raft, so they were literally dying of thirst. They had nowhere else to turn, so Louis bargains with God. He says, "God, answer my prayers now. I promise if I get home through all this and whatever is to come, I'll serve you the rest of my life." Then Louis writes, "What else could I say? Given our miserable situation, devotion was all we had to offer." But think about it, what else does anyone ever have to offer God? "Give me what I want, and I'll give you devotion and \$20." Maybe devotion is all God wants.

Louis says, "When you're on the raft, no food, no water, no medicine, no radio, no engine, no bargaining chips, no diplomas, no offices, no desks, no promotions, no cash, you become aware of your intense dependence on God. How slender is the thread from which your life hangs."

But what if the view from the life raft is actual reality? We think of the life raft as being kind of strange or abnormal. What if that's actually real? What if self-sufficiency is the great illusion? What if we have so many props that we live with an illusion we're in control? Because when trouble comes...illness, loss, bankruptcy, divorce, fear...when you're on the raft, when you're at the end of your rope (and you do have a rope) that illusion of self-sufficient control gets shattered.

One day, the Word of God came to a church in Laodicea. God said to people in Revelation 3:17, "You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.'" God said, "But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked." Spiritually, that's all of us in our sin, in our stubborn pride.

The lesson of the raft needs to be I desperately need God, but everything in what we call normal life is designed to make us forget this. Hardships in our life aren't fun but without them we would never realize that we need God. Without feeling and knowing a need for God we would never give our lives over to his Son Jesus Christ. We would never have that life changing encounter with him that gives us hope in life. Without hope we're lost. So instead of cursing your hardship this week, try saying thank you that God gave you

resiliency to overcome it and is building even more resiliency within you.
Amen.

Questions for Reflection

Romans 5:3-5

3 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Ice Breaker Question for Small Groups

1. Who is the optimist in your family or group? In what ways are they optimistic? What usually happens to them?

Context: The Apostle Paul writing to his church at Rome. Persecution was not an uncommon experience for the early church as it is for many Christians around the world today. Paul was trying to de-mystify suffering in contrast to the culture his Gentile believers came out of where there was unfounded optimism that would often disappoint.

1. To “glory in our sufferings” means to rejoice or be glad to have them. What is the ultimate purpose of a Christian suffering? What does suffering produce?
2. What’s the difference between hope and optimism?
3. Describe perseverance, character and hope.
4. Why does hope not “put us to shame?”
5. Describe a time when you were suffering something uncomfortable. How did you get through it? What did you learn from it?
6. Romans 8:28 *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”* In what ways might this verse be helpful when you’re suffering? In what ways might it be unhelpful?
7. Revelation 3:17 *“You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.”* How could there be such a discrepancy between how the church described it’s situation (“I am rich...need nothing) and God’s view (you’re pitiful, poor, blind and naked)?

Application – how would you apply to your church and life today?

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