

4-19-09

The E Factor that keeps your life,  
Acts 4:32-37

Today is the first Sunday after Easter. Easter brings us new hope and energy of life. It reminds us the season of spring in nature and a seed of hopeful life in future. It represents the power of re-bounce, from despair, failure or tragedy to hope, challenge and overcoming.

I once found a jonquil “bounce back” in my back yard after a winter of darkness and cold temperatures. No matter how many inches of snow covered the ground the new buds of jonquil came out from the ground in spring. That is the law of nature that God mad for the good of life.

Everybody expect re-bounce of economy in United State today. The sales, productions, and stocks on market seem not being increased in numbers. The ratio of unemployment is still same. The numbers of lay off from the companies are still adding up. There is no positive sign in our daily life. But, we are the people of God who believe that God will provide and lead us into God’s new way.

A guest speaker at a certain conference gave a graphic demonstration of how people respond to problems and stress. He used an egg, an apple, an orange, and a tennis ball. First, he dropped the egg. Fortunately, it was in a sealable plastic bag. The moment the egg hit the floor, it broke and splattered all over the inside of the bag. The speaker indicated that some people are like that. Whether experiencing failure or disappointment, they are shattered, broken and unable to bounce back.

Then he dropped a large, ruby red apple. When the apple hit the platform, it didn’t splatter; it just rolled on. To look at the apple from a distance, you would see no obvious bruises. Upon closer observation, however, you would realize that although the apple kept rolling, it had sustained numerous bruises. Many people like that. When they have been knocked down, they continue to go through the motions of living. They get out of bed, get dressed, go to work, and perform their responsibility – though perfunctorily. The casual observer, there are no obvious bruises. If you know the person well however, it is apparent that he or she has sustained so many bruises that there is no bounce-back ability.

The third object that speaker dropped was an orange. It fell to the floor with a thus a thud. It stopped instantly – no rolling for the orange. Even when he picked it up, there were no bruises on its thick skin. Yet we knew the impact was so great that there had to be bruises – on the inside. Some people don’t shatter when tragedy occurs. They simply put their lives on hold. The result is depression, withdrawal, and an inability to move forward.

Then, lastly the tennis ball came. The harder the ball hit the floor, the higher it bounced. It had true bounce-back ability! Like the tennis ball, over bounce-back ability is determined by what we have on the inside – our skills, our “absorption ability,” and our

faith. I read this story and found the nature of ball. It is empty inside. When we are empty in our heart to have or to achieve we can bounce again on any occasions.

A homeless beggar walked along a street with his son. He found a house burning and heard screaming from inside of house. That was a tragic scene. Then the father beggar said to his son, pointing to the house burning, "Son, you should know that we are happy, because we don't have house and goods to be burn and worrying about."

You don't have to be like the beggar for your happiness. However, without empty in our heart we can not bounce again. John Wesley once prayed like this. "Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing." There is true spirituality and freedom in emptiness and having nothing. Some times we need to sweeping out our old greed in our heart

A Buddhist monk received a visitor who was a scholar of Buddhism. This visitor wanted to know how deep the monk recognized the Buddhism truth. The visitor asked the monk, "Master, I heard about you. Please accept me as your student." The monk asked him if he would like to drink a cup of tea." Mean while they were drinking a tea, the visitor asked monk some deep question. For a while the monk kept his mouth in silence, and asked him if he want some more tea in his cup. His cup was more than half filled, but he wanted for being filled his cup. The monk held his tea pot and poured hot tea into the guest's cup. The cup was filled with water, but the monk continued pouring water and the hot water over flowed from the cup." The visitor exclaimed, "My cup is overflowing master!" Then the monk said, "Without empty a cup can not be filled." "Go your home. You are filled by yourself already. You don't need to learn from me."

God wants our heart empty when we come to God. God wants us humble, be empty and have nothing but God. At this moment we will be re-bounce in our life. There was re-bounce ability of life among the believers. Like a tennis ball, we have our bounce-back ability inside our heart. I call this bounce-back ability, "the E factor." This E-Factor of life stimulates our life.

The E-factor is not visible, economic, accounting, marketing or computing factor. Rather, it is an invisible factor- the results of which are quite evident. Basically, the "E-Factor" is sustained enthusiasm. This kind of enthusiasm is not back-slapping, phony exuberance or loud laughter. Rather, those who posses it are self-motivated and energetic, work well with others and create of excitement and expectation. Such individuals generally are out going, though some more introspective persons exhibit the "E-Factor" in their quiet strength.

We read today's scripture reading Acts 4: 32-37. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the people the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. (Acts 4:33) After that testimony there was transformation occurred among the believers in life. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the

apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. It was unexpected happening among the community of faith.

Imagine that children who haven't had house before but have a house now ran all through this new little house, a bath and five rooms built by volunteers Habitat for Humanity. That woman and those three little children stood there, that woman's eyes brimming and with tears and the children running into each room and back then pulling at her skirt. "Mama, is this our place? Mama, is this our place?" Off they'd run and back and she'd say "Yes, yes, yes. This is going to be our place. Look at their eyes, really look at their eyes.

Jesus not only conquered death through his resurrection; he also taught us that there is life after death for us, and he told us that he would go there and prepare a place for us so that we might be with him.

When Jesus was resurrected all His saying became truth and real promise for those who met the resurrected Jesus. The apostles witnessed what they saw Him to the multitude.

One man, a Levite, a native Cyprus heard the apostle's testimony and became a Christian and had new name Barnabas given by apostles. Barnabas means son of encouragement. One day he sold a field that belonged to him, then brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet. Because he found new place that the Lord promised. He was excited and enthusiastic because of the place that he will to have.

Most people who have studied enthusiasm agree on two things: It is a skill that can be acquired, and it makes a vast difference in one's life. As Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "Nothing great is ever achieved without enthusiasm." To be sure, we all should remember Henry David Thoreau's warning: "None are so old as those who have outlived enthusiasm."

A famous soccer player was interviewed with a news reporter. "What do you think what made a successful soccer like you?" He answered, "Enthusiasm." When I play soccer I play with enthusiasm. I dream a play of soccer. I think always about soccer. I always hold soccer ball even in my bed. Soccer is all things and everything in my life." Enthusiasm makes man's life change.

Exactly what is enthusiasm, and how do we acquire it? The famous English historian Arnold Toynbee once wrote, "Apathy can only be overcome by enthusiasm and enthusiasm can only be aroused by two things; first, an ideal that takes the imagination by storm; and second, a definite, intelligible plan for putting that ideal into practice."

Most observers agree enthusiasm is a dynamic quality that brings the personality alive, releasing dormant powers. Actually, the word enthusiasm comes from two Greek words: "en" means in "Theos" means God, the meaning is "God within." I am convinced that when we truly believe in God and seek to live in his purposes, we are empowered to do

more than we believe possible. Jesus said, "All things can be done for the one who believes." (Mark 9:23)

Trust in God there is your enthusiasm. Paul's enthusiasm started after he met risen Christ on the road. He confesses, "I can do everything through him who gives me strength." In Christ, we are all new being, new life and new hope. This faith will fill your empty heart with great enthusiasm. Life is wealthy to live in God.