

It's time to make lemonade

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Those that think life is always fair often wind up sorely disappointed. Life is not fair. If we can accept that premise, then we can count the times when things go well as the blessings they are, and not feel short-changed when things don't go well. Trouble is the norm and not the exception.

Someone once said that life is 20 percent of what happens and 80 percent how we react to what happens. In other words, when (not if) life gives us lemons, let us make lemonade.

There's a story about a chef who had an assistant who complained constantly about things not going well. He was tired of the fighting and struggling and endless problems. He didn't know how he was going to make it and wanted to give up.

The chef, not saying a word, filled three pots with water and placed them on the stove. In the first he placed carrots, in the second, eggs, and in the last he placed ground coffee beans. Turning the heat on high, the chef stood quietly and watched them boil. In about twenty minutes he turned off the burners. The assistant just watched, wondering what was happening. The carrots were fished out and placed in a bowl. The eggs were then pulled out and placed in a bowl. Lastly, the coffee was ladled out and placed in a bowl. Turning to his assistant, the chef asked, "What do you see?"

"Carrots, eggs, and coffee," the assistant replied. The chef brought him closer and asked him to feel the carrots. The assistant noted that they were soft. The chef then asked the assistant to take

an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, he observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, the chef asked the assistant to sip the coffee. As the assistant tasted its rich aroma, he asked, "What does it mean?"

The chef explained that each item had faced the same adversity: boiling water. Each one, however, had reacted differently to it. The carrot went in strong, hard, and unrelenting. But after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior. But after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened. The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water,

they had changed the water instead of the water changing them. The flavor of the bean had permeated the water and produced coffee.

In our life, we are going to face adversity. How we choose to respond to it can be the difference that will make or break us. There are some who, like the carrot, seem hard, but with pain and adversity they wilt and become soft and lose their strength. There are some like the egg. They start off with a malleable heart and a fluid spirit, but something happens. A death, a breakup, a divorce, a layoff, or something in their life leaves them hardened and stiff. Their outer shell looks the same, but on the inside their hearts are hardened. And then there are some like the coffee bean. The bean changes the hot water. As the water gets hotter, the flavor gets better and the pleasant coffee aroma arises. When things are at their hottest, coffee bean people change the environment around them for the better.

We can't avoid the hot waters of adversity in life, but with God's strength we can be a changing agent within them.