**HOPE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

**COURSE:** Relational Evangelism

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**MY PITY PARTY**

I threw a party for myself years ago. I didn’t invite anyone.

Well, it was a PITY PARTY. It was a rather private thing. No one would have wanted to come. If they had, they would have left early, very early.

I was driving around town in my car and I was having my pity party all by myself. I can’t say it was the first pity party I had and I sadly have to say it wasn’t the last. But God used this one in a unique way. It was a teaching moment.

In my mind, I had black balloons, black streamers, and black confetti. I was feeling sorry for myself. I was bemoaning the situation I was working. I was surrounded with a lot of really old people. I was in my 20’s. They didn’t want to change. They lived in the good memories of the past and that hindered doing anything new in the present time. My boss was close to retirement and seemed to have lost his motivation for working or moving ahead to anything other than his retirement. I had also discovered that some of the people there were racial bigots. I was unhappy with the situation and thought everything would be better if God just changed all the other people.Oh yes, the list was very long.

It seemed bleak, with no way of escape, and I was frustrated. I was having a “wonderful time” thinking about the terrible situation I was in and feeling sorry for myself. Yes, I have to say it was an excellent party. It was a shame that others weren’t there with me sharing in the moment. Well actually, Someone was there. And I’m sure He wasn’t enjoying the party.

Right in the middle of the party it hit me, or I should say the Someone intervened in my party. It was rather shocking! I didn’t hear an audible voice, but I had a disrupting thought and I was sure it came from Him, the uninvited guest, the Someone.

He rained on my party.

The balloons popped.

The streamers fell down, all soggy.

No more confetti was thrown.

It was over.

Bummer.

I was actually staring to enjoy the party in a sick kind of way.

Hey, I was the guest of honor. The party was for ME. And I had been having such a good time complaining about everything wrong with everyone else!

When the thought popped into my mind, I immediately tried to erase it and forget it. I wanted to delete it but I couldn't find the delete button.

It was too late. It had been burned into my brain. It was permanently tattooed there. It is still there. I can see it. And God has brought it back to my attention a number of times in my life since that day.

The thought? The tattooed message?

“John, I’m (God) not nearly as interested and concerned about changing your circumstances as I am in using your circumstances to change you.”

Now that was a bummer of a thought.

That truth was the party crasher in my car.

Poof! It was over.

That was not the message I wanted to hear. Hey, how about a little sympathy for my situation?

I was nailed and I knew it.

I had a common human condition. I had been wailing and crying out to God to change my surroundings and circumstances, believing that would make me happier. Now I must say there are legitimate circumstances in which to cry out to God and ask for deliverance. But for me, this was not one of those times.

At that time and place, God had a better plan. He knew that if He changed all those things I’d eventually find new things to complain about and then I’d just start the next pity party not having learned anything.

I wanted God to make everything around me perfect and then I would be happy.

The problem was me.

I wanted something better around me, but God wanted something better within me.

I didn’t think I had much fixing to do compared to the others. Yowzer! I sure got that one wrong! And God knew it. He still had to teach me a lot. And he still does.

So I guess the idea is that the next time you find yourself throwing your own pity party, watch for the rain. It’s coming. He loves us too much to leave us there too long.