

When Trials Come

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November 15, 2018

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Adversity becomes a companion to all of us somewhere along the way. Bad things happen to good people. However, most of us can look back and honestly confess what we thought were terribly dark moments were really blessings in disguise. Paul's "Thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. 12:7-10) made him a better man, able to empathize with others. Job's trust in God was tested through many bitter trials, but was better in the end (Job 42:12). "*Out of the depths*" (Psa. 130:1) we have all cried for help, and when the dawn broke, things looked much brighter. A great old gospel song contains rich words of challenge and comfort: After the shadows there will be sunshine, After the frown, the soul-cheering smile. Cling to the Savior, love Him forever, All will be well in a little while.

No one suffered more than Jesus, but He knew that the Father was with Him in every conflict He faced on this earth (John. 16:32). And He knew that God's tomorrow will be brighter than today! Persecution and tribulation cause pure gold to glisten even more as the chaff fades away and is consumed. 1 Pet. 1:7-8 informs us of the value found in the furnace of affliction: "*That the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ: whom not having seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*" (1 Pet. 1:7-8). As the wise man wrote long ago, "*The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold; But Jehovah trieth the hearts.*" (Prov. 17:3).

The Psalmist admitted that he had learned valuable lessons because of trials that he had not ascertained in moments of normalcy. A careful reading of Psa. 119:67-71 will truly enlighten us. A major point therein clearly tells the story: "*It hath been good for me to be afflicted that I might learn thy statutes.*" We need to utilize times of sadness and illness to build our trust in the Lord and the comfort of the Scriptures (Rom. 15:4).

In what is called, "The Song of David" in 2 Sam. 22, we have powerful and beautiful wording from a man who ran the gamut of emotion and pathos. He refers to God, the Creator, as his rock, his shield, his refuge, his high tower and his Savior. He confesses his utter dependence upon God: "*In my distress I called upon Jehovah; Yea, I called unto my God: And he heard my voice out of his temple, And my cry came into his ears.*" (2 Sam. 22:7). When trials come — and they will — we should be prepared to look to the Lord for comfort and peace and strength (Heb. 4:16).

Paul brought to a close his brilliant life as a Christian by admitting that men had forsaken him, "*But the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me; that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and that all the*

Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.” (2 Tim. 4:17-18). As the old gospel song declares, “The toils of the road will seem nothing when we get to the end of the way.”

Our Redeemer made it exceptionally clear in Luke 14:33 that to follow Him means a path of sacrifice and surrender: “*So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*” When we mature as the children of God, we do not shed tears for our own problems, but we mourn over sin, and comfort from above enters our lives (Matt. 5:4). What a difference it makes when we have a heavenly perspective! When trials come into our lives, we should realize that we will be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might (Eph. 6:10), if we use them to draw near to the Savior. He who suffered so much for us, that we might be with Him throughout eternity, will never forsake us (Heb. 13:5). Trials can connect us to Jesus, if we walk with Him through adversity.

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