

THE FLORAL HEIGHTS INFORMER

www.floralheightschurchofchrist.org

24 February 2008
VOLUME 8; ISSUE 08

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The Joy of Adversity

No, I'm not an ascetic (i.e., one who has renounced the comforts of society). Actually, I can't stand pain and anguish. I find; however, the command at James 1:2, to "*Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold trials.*" To bring myself to the state of mind that considers assorted pains in life such as sorrows, calamity, adversity, sickness, and disease as joyful seems a bit odd yet divine revelation commands it. The Christian that finds joy in the calamities of life are viewed by God as "*perfect*" (James 1:4). There must thereby be a transformation in my thinking (Rom. 12:1ff). There must be a deeper meaning in joyous calamity than meets the eye.

Consider the fact that James and the Apostle Peter speak of calamity in life as a "proving" or testing of one's faith (see James 1:3; I Pet. 1:7). The reading indicates that one is being examined during a trial. Who does the examining and for what purpose? Interestingly, Moses explains to the Israelites that the forty years of wilderness wandering was a time that God was "proving" (putting them to the test) (Deut. 8:1-3). Moses specifically states the purpose of the trial by saying that God did this to "*know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or not*" (Deut. 8:2). This was the idea behind God proving Abraham (see Gen. 22:1). The Lord told Abraham, "*Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering*" (Gen. 22:2). When Abraham did what God told him to do the Lord stayed the hand of the patriarch saying, "*Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me*" (Gen. 22:12). Both Abraham and the children of Israel were being put to the test; i.e., they were being proved by God. God wanted to know what was in their heart. God wanted to know if they would put Him above all else in this life.

Trials have a way of making manifest a man's true character. God will certainly know what is in our hearts when we experience

Local News:

Welcome to all our visitors:

We pray that you will be edified by our service and that you will ask questions if things are not as you are accustomed to seeing. Please do come back at your every opportunity!

Deirdra Wilson's mother was scheduled to have surgery this week; however, it was canceled. She instead had a colonoscopy on Thursday. Please keep her in your prayers.

Mac McBroom's back is slowly getting better. He will be out of town this week as he attends the funeral of his sister-in-law's sister.

Manuel Ruiz (the prisoner I have been studying with) will be up for parole in a couple of months. He asks for our prayers on his behalf.

Last Sunday of the Month Singing!

Remember to sign up to lead a song for tonight's service. If you have requests get with one of the men so that your song may be sung.

Sunday AM Bible Study:

We begin a new study this morning over the book of James.

Continue to pray for our shut-ins:

Stella Davidson
696-1030 (Home)

Calvin York
692-0489 (Home).

Bessie Murphy
4600 Taft Blvd, Apt. 538

pain and suffering in this life. James said that trials "*perfect*" a man so that he is entire and lacking in nothing (James 1:4). The idea of being perfected by trials is to be accomplished, complete, perfect in its kind (see Liddell and Scott 797). In what way does the Christian become accomplished, complete, and or perfect? The Apostle Paul helps us better understand this subject. Paul told the Philippians, "*Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye are otherwise minded, this also shall God reveal unto you: only, whereunto we have attained, by that same rule let us walk*" (Phil. 3:13-16). The "perfect" mind is the mind that is bent putting God's will first and going to heaven. There is nothing that will stand in the way of such a glorious goal to the man that is perfect. To get to this frame of mind; i.e., to put heaven as one's primary goal in life, one must be brought there by trials. The more trials I experience the greater my desire for heaven. I know that God is not punishing me with these trials but that "*All things come alike to all*" (Eccl. 9:2) and God is watching my reaction to these trials that he may know what is in my heart (Deut. 8:2).

Are you getting closer to understanding the joy in trials? Those who seek gain in this world are devastated by catastrophe in life because this life is their hope. The Christian's mind; however, has been transformed from worldly thinking. The ultimate profit of our existence is not in the things of this world but rather in eternity with God. Solomon found this to be true by personal observation and inspiration (see the entire book of Ecclesiastes). When heaven comes to be one's ultimate object in this life there is no calamity that will move us from Christ. We will rather be strengthened in these times because our hope is in God. Who can forget Job's response to the great calamity in his life? Job said, "*Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken away; blessed be the name of Jehovah*" (Job 1:21). Job, like the perfect Christian today, has transformed their thinking to heavenly things. Life, as we know it, comes and goes but eternity is forever. Though no man actually finds it entertaining to be persecuted, very sick, or loose a loved one we can; however, approach all calamities head on with a spirit of joy knowing that our eternal existence is with God in heaven. When our hearts fully belong to God we will indeed be perfected through trials.

John C. Robertson

The End of Three “Negative” Sermons

A study of Deuteronomy 31

Introduction:

I will miss the book of Deuteronomy after we complete this study but I know its principles will remain with me throughout my life. I have learned what it means to love the Lord God Almighty with all my heart, mind and soul (Deut. 6:4 compared to Matt. 22:37), to respect the authorized words of God alone (Deut. 4:12ff / Col. 3:17), to fear God (Deut. 5:29; 6:2 / II Cor. 7:1), to be proved by God (Deut. 8:2 / I Pet. 1:6-7), to put evil out among brethren (Deut. 21:21; I Cor. 5 all), and I have learned that all God’s will is not overly difficult to perform (Deut. 30:11-12 / Rom. 10:6-8).

Chapter 31 concludes Moses’ three divinely inspired sermons in the plains of Moab. Moses has pointedly delivered what may seem to some as the most negative sermon ever delivered. He has exposed Israel’s weaknesses and commended them in no areas (see Deut. 9:24). He has demanded that they make a choice from this point forward (Deut. 30:15, 19-20). All Israel listens to his words (Deut. 29:10-12). The prophet of God concludes his three sermons with some of the most “negative” words in the Bible. He states, on a multitude of occasions in chapter 31, “***For I know** that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days; because ye will do that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands*” (Deut. 31:29). What lessons can we possibly learn from such language?

I. Moses is Confident that Israel will Fail God:

- A. Moses had lived a long life (i.e., 120 years / 31:2). During these years he had seen Israel’s spirit of rebellion (Deut. 31:27).
- B. God foretold of Israel’s failures (Deut. 31:16, 21).
- C. The Lord commands Moses to compose a song and deliver it to all Israel (Deut. 31:19). The objective of the song is that Israel will be without excuse as they experience a living hell for their future rebellion (Deut. 31:19).

II. Forsaking the People of God:

- A. God promises the people that He will not forsake them (Deut. 31:6-8).
- B. God forsakes His people (Deut. 31:16-18).

III. Reading the Law of God ought to produce faith and obedience:

- A. Moses commands the law to be read during the feast of tabernacles (Deut. 31:9-11).
- B. The reading of the law was to be performed that Israel may hear, learn, and fear the Lord (Deut. 31:12-13).

Conclusion:

How would you respond to a sermon that points up all your failures and expresses no confidence in your spirituality? Will you be angry? Will you be stirred within to do all within your ability to not allow these things to happen? How will you respond? God knew that once in Canaan Israel would get fat and wax lazy in contentment (Deut. 31:20). The moment anything went wrong they would fall apart (Deut. 31:20). Those; however, who truly love the Lord God Almighty with all their heart, mind, and soul will take such a sermon and be more determined to live Godly in this world.

