



AFFLICTION

Many believe that once they receive the knowledge of the Lord all their problems will be solved -- no more confusion, pain, suffering or hurt. Contrary to that way of thinking, when you truly live, learn and apply the principles of the scriptures and follow after Christ, we quickly learn that affliction is part of our walk. When you are afflicted, words like distress, tribulation, misery, being restraint and pain come to mind. Christ warned us that sacrifice is a necessity when we choose to follow him. He advised that parents, children, spouses or even our own desires can never come before Him! (Luke 14:26-27). Being looked down upon or despised for our belief in Christ all comes along with the territory. Christ said: “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” St. John 15:18-19. Clearly we see that Christ was not well liked or received by the general population of the world. He is letting us know that our walk with Him will be a rough road to travel with many obstacles and bumps which we must overcome in order to be received of the Father.

We are living in the land that the bible deemed “Spiritual Egypt” (Revelation 11:8) which is our place of spiritual and physical bondage (Exodus 13:3). You have to understand that we are in captivity and suffering the afflictions promised in Deuteronomy Chapter 28:15-68. Those curses cover our physical bondage and set the stage for us to understand the afflictions Christ forewarned us about. Matthew 10:32-36: “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. [35] For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. [36] And a man's foes shall be they of

his own household.” Again, Christ warned us that our own families can and will be affected when one is put in a position of sacrificing for Christ. You may be excommunicated from family, friends, relationships, etc. when put in the position of choosing to follow Christ instead of the ways of the world.

The Most High wants us to prove our worth to Him. “Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.” Isaiah 48:10. Our refining and polishing will be shown through our ability to rise out of our afflictions. The reward is great but it comes at a cost. Acts 14:22: “Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”

We can only be confirmed as worthy of the kingdom of God through afflictions. As hard as it may seem, we must embrace and learn from our daily afflictions such as job loss, financial hardships, relationship problems, etc. The Most High said that He chastens those that He loves and deals with us as a Father would with his child. If a child is out of line and is in need of correction, punishment should quickly follow. Being that we are not perfect in our walk to righteousness, correction is always needed and many times those corrections come in what we consider punishments. (Hebrews 12:5-11; Job 5:17). We have to be strong and resilient in our afflictions. The Most High does not take pleasure in one who is not willing to persevere and push themselves to unthinkable measures (utilize our faith) in order to be accepted of him (Proverbs 24:10). Christ achieved his perfection through sufferings: “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” Hebrews 2:10. Keeping our desire towards him and reflection on the great men and women of the scriptures who suffered affliction for the sake of righteousness, we can only come out better, stronger and more refined men and women of the Lord. Greats like David, Daniel, Job, Joseph, John the Baptist, the Apostle Stephen and many more were all greatly afflicted for the sake of righteousness. There is a reason why these great men’s legacies were documented and kept for learning. Do not fall for the good old time religion and feel good pick-me-ups they teach on Sundays as our walk is not easy, brothers and sisters, and Christ never said it would be. Simply believing and accepting Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour is not enough!

If we are going to be true “Christians” or “Christ-like” we must take upon all aspects of His walk including His affliction. The Most High told us not to think anything strange or odd is happening when it seems like the walls are caving in and you feel like you do not have anywhere to turn! Accept it with a smile and know Christ is right there with us 1 Peter 4:12-14: “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing

happened unto you:[13] But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. [14] If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.”

In closing, brothers and sisters, be advised that although we have a walk ahead of us that is strenuous, painful, and at times difficult just know that it is but for a moment and a eternal reward awaits for those of us that make it through! II Corinthians 4:17-18: “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; [18] While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”