

“It is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure” Phil 2:13

HE IS ON YOUR SIDE

by Craig Marlatt

How many times have you heard someone say, “If you become a Christian all your problems will be over.” ? Whoever said that certainly didn’t have much experience in the Christian life. I think we all go through that phase though, if you really think about it. It’s almost as though we feel an obligation not to have problems anymore once we’ve accepted Jesus as our Saviour. You know what I mean: You’re going through the church doors and you see a friend that you know is having marital, or financial problems, or something and you ask them how they’re doing. What’s the standard reply?, “Great brother. Things couldn’t be better, Praise the Lord!” Their life is falling apart and “things couldn’t be better.” Who are they trying to kid? That’s a good question: Who are they trying to kid?

Christianity has lots of built in guilt trips if you’re looking for some. Which ones you end up with really depends upon the type of Christians you hang out with. The problem is that none of them come from the Father above. He doesn’t work that way. In fact just the opposite is true; “For God sent not his Son to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved” (Jn. 3:17). Or how about this one: “ There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus ” (Rom. 8:1). That doesn’t sound like a God who’s out to get me, if you know what I mean. I think God loves me and is working on my behalf. Wouldn’t you say so?

A preacher friend of mine once asked for my thoughts on Christian Liberty. He was going to be preaching that night on the subject and thought I might have some insight that he had not yet seen about it. I pondered the question for a few moments and said, “Liberty is the power of God to live a holy life”. Wow! I had never thought about it before , but I knew that it came from the Holy Spirit. I don’t think my friend was impressed , but I certainly was. Liberty really is the power of God to live a holy life. Nobody can make me live a holy life, but through Christ I can if I choose to.

It is the nature of men to compare others to our own best efforts. For instance, have you ever known someone who finally managed to quit smoking after a long hard battle with the habit? Within weeks of their own new found victory they often become harsh judges of all who are still bound to that devil weed. How quickly we forget our own long struggles in the light of new found victories. We must remember what Galatians 6:1 says: “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” It is best not to forget how quickly our judgements can become our own sins.

We can rejoice though, because God really is working in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. If Jesus Christ lives in you He won’t let you go until He’s finished the project that He began (Phil. 1:6). He is working in your life to conform you into His image. That’s really comforting to know when you’re hurting. God’s commitment to every Christian is the same and He is no respecter of persons. Be of good cheer my brother or sister! God is on your side. If He wanted to squash you why did He send his Son to die for you? Hold on to Jesus and He will guide you safely through, even though your path may take you through the valley of the shadow of death. He said , “ I will never

leave you nor forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5)

As for me I have learned the value of such a promise. And I’m thankful that He took the time to give it to me just because He loves me.