

“ You have said harsh things against me”, say’s the Lord. ‘ Yet you ask, “What have we said against you?” ‘ You have said, “it is futile to serve God. What did we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the Lord Almighty? But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly the evildoers prosper, and even those who challenge God escape.” Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honored his name. “They will be mine,” says the Lord, “in the day when I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him. And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.” Malachi 3:13-18

LET US NOT BE WEARY

by Craig Marlatt

“Sometimes I wonder if God is really there; if He’s really listening when I pray. How come it seems like the people who aren’t serving God have all the blessings and those who are trying to live for God seem to have so much struggle in life? Maybe I should just give up trying to live like the Bible says and just have a more balanced life. It doesn’t seem like God really cares that much anyway.”

Have you ever had these thoughts or maybe something similar in your mind? I’m sure at one time or another every Christian battles with this kind of thing. It’s hard to watch as those who reject God prosper in the world and live seemingly ‘blessed’ lives, while those who are living to please God are constantly being bombarded by one thing or another. How can these things be? Isn’t God in control?

The scriptures show that others who have served God have had similar thoughts and struggles in their minds. Asaph, the writer of Psalm 73 wrote, “Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. But as for me, I had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They have no struggles, their bodies are healthy and strong. They are free from the burdens of common man; they are not plagued by human ills” (Psalm 73:1-5).

Today we are living in a time when the heroes of life and those who get highly rewarded by society are often people not worthy of honor. We have superstars in the sports and entertainment field who make untold millions each year by flaunting their ungodliness before the world. People like Madonna, who openly mock God have become the envy of our younger generation, teaching that pleasure and gain are the only real things worth seeking. Even prominent world leaders lay out the red carpet for her when she comes to town. The money mongers of life who see nothing wrong with devouring the little people in their pursuit for riches and power seemingly glide through life without a care or trouble that can’t be overcome.

How sad it has been in recent years to see so many once honorable Christian leaders fall sway to these things and have their ministries, families and personal lives crumble in shame and dishonor. And many believe that what we have seen so far is just the tip of the iceberg.

All of this must surely have an effect upon the average believer who is trying to serve God, be faithful in the church, and take care of his or her family. Many of us have gotten tired and weary. Some have tried all of the new 'wonder teachings' to get rich and prosper and still have a hard time keeping up with the bills or finding enough free time to strengthen their spiritual lives with Bible reading and prayer, let alone time to go out and win the lost for Christ. Sometimes you just feel like giving up!

If you can relate to what I'm saying there are a few things that I want to share with you:

1. Just because God does not judge the injustices of the world immediately does not mean that He has changed his mind or forgotten his Word.

God will surely bring justice to the earth and those who have rebelled against him will suffer the punishment that comes from such a life. Though they may seem as though they can live in open hostility and rebellion to God they will not escape the sure damnation that lies ahead for all who live this way. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promises, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night" (2 Peter 3:9,10).

Remember also Noah who, ". . .being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Hebrews 11:7).

Although we are living in an 'instant' society (we want everything and we want it now) God does not adjust his time to our schedule. "O' the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgements and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counselor" (Romans 11:33,34).

2. If we envy the arrogant and ungodly we will be snared by a desire to have what they have.

"But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Timothy 6:9,10). This is not a popular word for the day we are living in when everyone wants to have the best of everything (and many are using scriptures to get it), still it is the Word of God and I believe that it is true.

3. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth (Colossians 3:2).

Your affections will not by their own nature go in an upward direction. You must set them there. You will not be able to endure the bombardment of temptation and enticements that are coming upon you from the world unless you do. If we are to be able to continue serving the Lord and being servants to those around us we cannot have our hope fixed in the earth. Paul understood this clearly when he wrote, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. 15:19). We must know in our hearts that God's Word is true and that He will reward us for our faithfulness to the life which He has called us. Jesus said, Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God,

believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you" (John 14:1,2a) .

I believe we may be living in a time when the world as we know it could go through a major shift in a very short period of time. Right now, as I write this, the armies of the world are gathered in the Mid- East poised for war and destruction. We now have at our disposal enough military weaponry to bring about the end of civilization as we know it, and to make the earth a scorched and barren place for those who might live through it. Though it may not be this time or this battle, it will no doubt come, and we must be ready.

Now is the time for us who know the Lord to strengthen ourselves in Him and go forth to preach the everlasting gospel of the Kingdom of God. Surely we will never know peace from the means of man. The only peace that can ever last is that which comes from Jesus Christ, This is the Christian message and this is the Christian hope! If we are entangled with the business and affairs of the world we cannot be free to give ourselves to the urgency of the times we are living in. We have the message that can save men's souls from eternal damnation and we must free ourselves from the shackles of the world and prepare to go forth with the Word of God.

You Are God's Precious Possession

If you are weary today and find yourself wanting to give up and go back, just look to the Lord and He will give you strength. Take the time to seek the Lord and He will meet you and refresh you. If need be, give yourself unto fasting and prayer for a season in order to have the priorities of God re-established in your life. Find someone to talk and pray with and the Lord will hear you. God has a scroll of remembrance with your name on it if you fear and honor the Lord and He says, "They will be mine in the day I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him."

Maybe now you don't see much difference between those who serve God and those who don't but you will soon. God is making a distinction between the righteous and the unrighteous and He says the righteous shall . . . "shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:43). For now He is letting the wheat and the tares grow together but it won't be long, I believe, before the gathering angels come to separate the two.

Let us who know him seek God with all of our hearts and cry out to him for power and grace to reach the lost in the late hour. "And let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). He has promised us that He is making us a permanent home, " a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13). When God brings to a close this sinful age that we are living in He will "raise up the foundations unto many generations . . . and [restore] the paths to dwell in" (Isaiah 58:12). Until then let us trust in the Lord, knowing that He will bring it to pass. For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.