

Affliction

Affliction is “depression, that is, misery.” Have you ever been depressed or miserable because of some injustice you’ve suffered? You ask the question, “If I’m doing what’s right, why am I being afflicted for it?” We’re told little cutesy phrases like, “If life gives you a lemon, make lemonade,” but such does not remove the reality of the affliction. When affliction comes, it’s difficult to be optimistic. The mind begins to search for answers, only to become more confused: if what is being done is righteous if the actions pursued are truly what needs to be done, then why does affliction come? There just doesn’t seem to be any justice, any equity. What should we do when such overwhelms us and depression and misery flood our lives?

The greatest king to sit upon the throne of Israel in Jerusalem was David. King David was a man of whom God said, “I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who shall do all my will” (Acts 13:22). Though David was such a man, there were times when the afflictions of life would weigh upon him. When such times came, his refuge, his hope, his only means of security was Jehovah, the God of Israel. The writings of the book of Psalms set forth many petitions for God to rectify unjust circumstances. The Psalmist was free with his thoughts of wonder and questions about the equity of life. One such Psalm is found in the thirteenth division of the book. David said, “How long, O Jehovah? wilt thou forget me for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?”

Have you ever felt like God had abandoned you? Have you ever wondered why God has not rendered vengeance upon those who oppose his will? Do such thoughts make you question your faith?

We live in a “right now society”. If there’s something we want, or want done, there is little to stop us. Thus, we lack patience when adversity comes. Though it is not new to our society, it is alive and well in it. Patience is something we all want but fail to appreciate the development of. Almost two thousand years ago, the Hebrew Christians were told, “For ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise” (Hebrews 10:36), a patience that is only realized when one’s faith is being proved (James 1:3).

When our faith is being proved, it will cause us to call upon the only source that can help us: God. That’s what David did. His cry was not one that displayed a lack of faith, but one that called upon God to act, because David’s faith resided in God. David was just a man and responded like one on many occasions. He would “take counsel in” his own soul (Psalms 13:2). He would attempt to resolve his difficulties in his own way, only to find that only God could, and would, ultimately resolve them. His motivation was based upon the sorrow in his heart, a sorrow of having his enemies prevailing over him. The shame of his enemies being able to say, “I have prevailed against him” (Psalms 13:4), or that his adversaries would rejoice if he was moved, was more than his heart could bear. So, his petition was delivered unto God for a resolution to his misery. In many cases, it takes time for us to ultimately do what should have been done in the first place: turn to God in prayer. Adversities of life overwhelm us, and we attempt to fix them by our own means. Though David’s adversaries were in the flesh, the god of this world motivated them. Satan seeks to destroy.

Remember the words of the apostle Peter, who said, “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you. Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour, whom withstand steadfast in your faith, knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren

who are in the world. And the God of all grace, who called you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall himself perfect, establish, strengthen you” (1 Peter 5:8-10). ret