

The Day of Trouble

By Dr. James Earls

"For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountain: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: AND CALL UPON ME IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE; I WILL DELIVER THEE, AND THOU SHALT GLORIFY ME." - Psalm 50:10-15

"In the DAY OF MY TROUBLE, I will call upon thee; for thou wilt answer me." - Psalm 86:7

There is no place in the scripture that teaches us that life is simple or that Christians are without trouble. One can deceive himself into believing that life is without problems if he wishes. He can even pick certain passages of scripture (out of context) to back up his false idea of what the true Christian life is. But doing so is not being realistic.

Can there be a day of trouble for one who is saved and blessed of the Lord? Can there be such a day for one who belongs to the Lord, and who is blessed by Him? Yes, indeed! For the Psalmist often speaks of that kind of day. The Lord Jesus, Himself, spoke of this in the gospel of John chapter sixteen, verse thirty-three. He said, *"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulations: be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."*

Paul also in writing in the epistle to Timothy said this about his persecutions and afflictions that came, *"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."*

There are those who would love to have success and prosperity in the ordinary sense of these words. But if we look at things in the light of eternity, our values will take on an all-together different perspective. We would like to think that everything will come up roses and nothing will happen to us because we're God's children. However, nothing could be further from the truth! The Bible is very realistic. It's very important that we should not be governed by our wishful thinking! Many of us fantasize about what life ought to be, and what we would like for it to be, and we try to get away from what life really is. Some folk believe that days of trouble, trials and difficulties are not for the true believer.

However, the Bible and the experiences of life tell us differently. There are many whose hearts are broken, and who are burdened about something or someone, and for someone to tell them that everything is alright, that there are no problems or troubles for Christians, would be utterly unrealistic and ridiculous. The fact is, there are days of trouble and difficulties for us as the Psalmist said. For many of us, it is hard to understand that troubles and trials are necessary in the will of God. Look with me at Psalm 116: 1-3: *"I love the Lord because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me. Therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow."*

Now, believe it or not, that is a child of God. Is it possible that God would allow such a thing in your

life? Yes, it is. The Apostle Paul experienced something similar to that in II Corinthians 12:7-9. He said: *"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me. Lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."*

Let me tell you something, whatever trouble you might be going through, whatever difficulty or problem you might be having, God's grace is sufficient. Even if He does not deliver you, His grace is sufficient.

In relation to our trials and difficulties in this life, Paul also said in II Corinthians 4:17-18:

"For our light afflictions, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at 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."

We need to look at our troubles not in the realm of time, but in the realm of eternity! That makes a difference. It is true that God does not always shelter His children so that nothing would touch them. Look at Psalm 3:1-2: *"Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! Many are they that rise up against me. Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God."*

Did you see that? You even say things like that yourself sometimes. You get to that point of despondency, and it does happen at times. I guess the most difficult thing for us is when we cannot understand why we are having this trouble. That is the hard part. Many times in the Psalms, the Psalmist complains and cries out and calls upon God, and sometimes it seems that the Psalmist does not get an answer or a reason. And that's how our troubles are. Oftentimes they are without explanation. The trouble can only be appreciated and comprehended when we see it in the light of eternity. We don't always understand these things. I can't answer why trouble comes in our lives. The Psalmist, many times, didn't know why trouble came in his life. But I think if we weigh these trials and tribulations in light of eternity, we remember that our "light affliction" is but for a moment.

When Jesus Christ hung on the cross of Calvary, it was a day of trouble. You and I could not begin to comprehend the trouble that the Son of God experienced while hanging there on that cruel cross, forsaken by His disciples and forsaken by God. O God, help us to comprehend this by your Holy Spirit! And when we have our "light afflictions," maybe we can remember that we have never suffered like He suffered, and we never will. Thank God!

LET GOD BE GOD

Many times, when trouble enters our lives, we ask, why? But what we need to do is let God be God. We like to use high-sounding theological terminology. We like to say that God is sovereign. He is omnipotent. He is omniscient and all of that. But when trouble comes we forget about those terms. We feel like we must help God work things out. When the children of Israel got to the Red Sea, there was nothing that they could do. Pharaoh's army was hot on their heels. The Red Sea was in front of them. Do you know what the man of God said to them? *"Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord."* And do you know what I say to you in your trouble? *"Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord,"* for your trouble will pass if you trust God. We must let God be God. We shouldn't question God. He is God. We can't understand the depths of His knowledge and wisdom. Our thoughts are not His thoughts and our ways are not His ways. So just let God be God!

OUR FAVORITE VERSE

It is abundantly clear that life is not a bed of roses. It's like music with its ups and downs. There are all kinds of things that happen in life, but I have come to the conclusion that many of us fantasize about how we wish life to be. However, the Bible deals with reality. Do you know that the Bible is real, and that it relates to life? Of course, we have problems and troubles and God allows it. Why? Because He is working on and in our lives to conform us into the image of Christ. Now it's one thing to quote our favorite verse Romans 8:28: "*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*" But it's an entirely different thing to live it. It's a different thing when you've had a heart attack, and you're lying in the hospital bed and the doctor is shaking his head and the undertaker is grinning. That's the day of trouble, and sometimes it's hard to live what we like to quote.

CLOSER TO GOD

Often times, when the day of trouble comes in our lives, we draw closer to God. Even if the trouble is as small as going to court for a traffic violation. We fret and we pray like we have never prayed before. Even the unsaved pray in the day of trouble. And all of those pious platitudes disappear. Prayers that begin like: "*Heavenly Father, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, God who created the Heaven and the earth and every living thing, the God who is the giver of every perfect gift,*" etc., brother, when trouble comes, all of this wordy and pious stuff goes out the window, and you get down on your knees before God and you say, "*Oh, God, Dear God, have mercy on me and deliver me...*" We pray more and we draw closer to God when trouble enters into our lives. God said He is a jealous God, and He wants His children to constantly walk with Him and talk with Him. "*If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.*" If I walk with Him in the light of the truth of His Holy Word, I will have fellowship with Him. And that is what He wants. Now you and I don't like trouble to come into our lives, but, frankly, I don't know of anything else that will get you closer to God any quicker than trouble. Praise God for the trouble that comes in our lives! Draw closer to God in the day of your trouble.

THE DAY OF CHRIST

There is a day coming that will end the days of trouble for the Christian. Do you know what the Bible calls it? THE DAY OF CHRIST. Do you know what is going to happen in the Day of Christ? Jesus Christ Himself is going to come back and intervene in all of this mess by taking all Christians back with Him. When that day comes, all trouble will cease. And all problems will be no more.

In that day, "*the wicked will cease from troubling, and the weary will be at rest.*" So the future is bright for those of us who are saved. Praise God!

However, in the meantime until that great day comes, we have to deal with periodic days of trouble. But during those times, God wants us to call upon Him and glorify His name. In closing, look with me at Psalm 50:15:

"And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me."