

The Goodness of Afflictions

“Do good to your servant according to your word, O Lord. Teach me knowledge and good judgment for I believe in your commands. Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word. You are good, and what you do is good; teach me your decrees. Though the arrogant smeared me with lies I keep your precepts with all my heart. Their hearts are callous and unfeeling, but I delight in your law. It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees. The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of gold and silver.” -- Psalm 119:65-72

“It was good for me to be afflicted!” Hardly had you heard someone say such thing. Usually when a person has a problem he would complain and start to speak about his bad luck until he goes to the details, being helpless as no one is helping him. But the man of God who wrote Psalms 119 says, ***“It was good for me to be afflicted.”*** Why did he say so?

1. ***Before I was afflicted I went astray:*** In many occasions people fall into problems because they are not in the right way. They grow up facing their lives with their own strength. They grow up with certain tradition and cultural habits of doing things. Nobody wants to go astray and we all want to go to the right way. But that seems to be right is not right, and if we walk in it we are lead astray. People in this world who believe that there is God they want to please God and they want to reach His heart. Many believe in doing good things to reach God. They says, ***“Do good and get a point; you receive forgiveness for your sins and you please God.”*** But, ***this is not the truth. It is not by good works that we can reach God. If in fact works justifies us we have something to boast about, but not before God.*** People join religions who said they can reach God and have eternal life by good works, but they go astray because they are contrary to the word of God that says: ***“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.”*** (Ephesians 2: 8-9)

Problems and afflictions bring us back from astray path. We find religions but these do not give us real solutions or lasting relief. We start then to seek and search the true God who is abounding in mercy and love. God has sent His son Jesus Christ who gave His own life for us; He died on the cross for our sins to give us eternal life. And that true love is what we need in this life, especially when we are in trouble we need God’s love and affection. We receive God’s love as we give up religions and build true friendship and relationship to God through believing in Christ Jesus.

2. ***You are good O Lord and what you do is good, teach me your decrees:*** After knowing the right way to God through believing in Jesus Christ – who is the way and the truth and the life, and no one comes to the Father except through Him – we may still insist our own ways or standard to do things. We may still continue to live depending on friends, relatives and seeking favor from men. As we enter the kingdom of God, we are under the leadership of our King, the Lord Jesus Christ, whom we should know His ways And follow His commands. We find His words and instructions to us in the Bible, so we need to read it daily to know the right ways to follow. The word of God in the Bible teaches us how to speak, how to deal with the people and how to live a life pleasant to God. It teaches us to love God and to love others, to show mercy, to be patient and to wait upon God; to refrain from anger, strife, gossip, slander, back fight, and to live in peace with everyman. The word of God teaches us to ***“live as free man but do not use your freedom as a cover up of evil, but live as servants of God. Show proper respect to everyone. Love the brotherhood of the believers, fear God and honor the King.”*** (1 Peter 2:16-17)

3. ***It is good for me to be afflicted so that I may learn your decrees:*** It happens that some people after they come to know God and become enlightened and have tasted the goodness of the word of God they go back to sin and live a life indulging with the lust of the body. There are people who have followed God and served Him and who have been rewarded by Him yet they forsake God and they embrace the worldly life; involve more in their professional careers, knowledge and study, try to gain more toward luxury, prestige, etc. At such stage in their lives God will not allow them to continually go away from Him. They may become like fortified castle that no one can approach them. But God will allow trouble to enter their lives. Affliction is the way to their heart because affliction humbles them and makes them teachable ready to accept God’s ways.

My dear and beloved: We search precious things in life. We look for a better future and we aim for perfection. Can this message from God make a difference to us? Can we today say to God, ***“the law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousand of pieces of silver and gold?”***

My prayer: ***“Heavenly Father, I come before You in the name of Jesus, who died for me on the cross and gave me eternal life. O Lord your hands made me and formed me. Give me understanding to learn your commands, teach me knowledge and good judgment for I believe in your commands; you are my portion, O Lord. I have promised to obey your words. I have sought your face with all my heart. Be gracious to me according to your grace and mercy. I pray in Jesus’ name, Amen.***