

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Endurance Of Adversity

By Mike Willis

Sometimes Christians expect that life will always be pleasant. We should not become pessimistic and one with a bad attitude toward life. However, we are realistic. Adversities come into the lives of all mankind.

We should not be like those who become unrealistic in their “Positive mental attitude” approach. When five inches of rain has already fallen, the weatherman is predicting that the present rain will continue for two or three more days, the basement is flooding, and the rain presently is coming down in sheets, there is no need for me pasting a smile on my face, grinning from ear to ear, and saying, “What a lovely day we are having!”

We wish that we could always live on the mountain tops. However, there would be no mountain tops were there no valleys, and every individual must walk through the valleys. We are sometimes persuaded that Christianity is to be equated with living on the mountain tops – smiles, cheery disposition everything going the way we dream it should, etc. Unfortunately that unrealistic.

Adversities come in life. Every family faces such things as illnesses, deaths, loss of friends, loss of jobs, bills, and other unpleasant experiences associated with living. To face and overcome these problems of life, a Christian needs to have “*patience*.”

Patience Is Endurance

When we read that the Christian should add “*Patience*” to his faith (2 Pet. 1:6), some think of patience as the ability to control one’s tongue when he hits his fingernail with a hammer. The character trait involves much more than this. “*Patience*” (*hupomone*) means “*the characteristic of a man who is unswerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings*” (*Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon* p. 644).

In Romans 5:34, Paul wrote, “*we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience hope . . .*” James added, “*Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing*” (Jas. 1:34). Tribulations and the trying of one’s faith produce the trait of “*patience*” or endurance and steadfastness.

It is true that prosperity has its own peril, and makes its own demands on the human spirit. But when the sky is clear above us, when loving friends stand round us with protecting care, when privileges abound on every side, it is comparatively easy to maintain an equable and obedient mind. We can row with the stream and sail with the favouring wind. But the hour must come to us that comes to all in time, when we have to face difficulty, or to bear obloquy, or to sustain heavy loss, or to go on our way with a lonely heart, or to suffer some keen and all but crushing disappointment (*Pulpit Commentary*, Vol. 9, p. 475).

When such an adversity comes, one’s patience is tested. Will the Christian maintain his faith in God? Will he continue to worship God? Will he maintain his moral purity? Will he continue in prayer?

Adversity Displays One’s Strength

The proverb says, “*If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength small*” (Prov. 24: 10). The day of adver-

sity displays whether a person is strong or weak in faith. You will be tested, the same as the rest of us. Will your faith sustain you in the crises of life?

In the hour of adversity, one must draw on the past reservoirs for faith. In the hour of trial, one does not have time to build up his faith. He draws from what he already has. That is why one must constantly be growing in faith – to be prepared when the trial comes. Every Christian needs to be studying the word of God, drawing close to God in prayer, bringing every relationship of his life in harmony with God’s will, and eradicating every sinful thought and deed from his life. By doing so, he is building his faith. When the adversity comes for such a person, he will find the strength to overcome the temptation and tribulation.

There are those Christians who are not redeeming the time in growing as they should as Christians. They do not read their Bibles, pray, visit the sick, try to teach the lost, or otherwise grow in the grace of Christ. Trials come for these kinds of Christians as well. Frequently, these Christians forsake the Lord in the hour of trial. We sometimes lament that such Christians might have been faithful to this day except some tremendous adversity fell upon them. We should remember that this adversity, which is common to the lot of all men, simply manifested that their faith was already weak.

Conclusion

We must all face the adversities of life. Consequently, we must be developing the perseverance and endurance in our character which will enable us to remain faithful in the hour of trial. ***“For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise”*** (Heb. 10:36). ***“...Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us”*** (Heb. 12:1).

If the hour of trial should come upon you today, how well would your faith sustain you? Would your conduct in the hour of trial simply manifest to the world that you have not been growing and developing as a Christian should? Or, would your conduct demonstrate that you had been applying yourself diligently in becoming the mature Christian which God expects us to become? – ***Guardian of Truth***, September 20, 1984 ■

Enduring Faith

By Joe R. Price

“30 Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this we believe that You came forth from God.’ 31 Jesus answered them, ‘Do you now believe? 32 Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me” (Jn. 16:30–32, NKJV).

This confession by the apostles, that Jesus came from God, was the last confession of faith they made before His death. However, within hours, they would act counter to the faith they confessed. Fearful unbelief would grip them and cause them to scatter, leaving Jesus alone and arrested in Gethsemane. We do well to take a lesson from this, as we confess our faith in Jesus. Like them, our faith can falter. When it does, we must return to the Lord like they did. Otherwise, our soul will be lost in unbelief. When Peter’s faith faltered, and he denied knowing Jesus three times, he returned to Christ (which he did, see Luke 22:32; John 21:15-19). A failing faith is not a saving faith. Yes, the sheep scattered when the Shepherd was struck, but they returned to Him after His resurrection (Matt. 26:31-32; Mk. 16:9-14). Their faith grew. “Once believe, always believe” is just as dangerous and false as “once saved, always saved.” Faith unto the saving of the soul does not abandon the Lord; It endures with Him to the end (Heb. 10:36-39). – ***Sword Tips***, December 14, 2017 ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Tommy Glendol McClure, Editor and Evangelist - 925-759-4357

Web Site: www.lodiCAchurchofchrist.com - Email: lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com - Phone: 209-365-9250