

Christ is Victor

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2010

“A New Beginning”

“Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.” Isaiah 43:19

God wants us to soar to greater heights in our spiritual life. We should never be satisfied after some initial excitement like little children. You know children like something new. If they don't care for one toy, then a father tries to buy a new one. Sometimes though we have grown in many years, we still have that childish tendency and trait.

Now that very often happens. The old problems, tears, conflicts and the old defeats are still looming large. And you may say, hey, what is new? Of course, you are closer to the grave by yet another year! That is all.

We see that both great men and ordinary people don't see anything drastically new when a new year comes around. But when you truly taste the Lord Jesus, oh you feel that you have only touched the hem of his garment! As for me, I feel like a little child. Oh, as I look at my Almighty Saviour, and when I hear Him say, “All power is given to me in heaven and in earth,” I say, what a miserable representation or representative of yourself am I in this world! I am not showing forth your glory! There comes an excitement, oh I must reach out to greater things and I must see millions of people, even billions

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“Why Me?”

Why? Why me? Why my family? What is the meaning of this suffering?

These are familiar questions which are asked by Christians and non-Christians alike. No one is immune to suffering and adversity. *“Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward” (Job 5:7, KJV)*. There are the pressures of want, need, sorrow, persecution, unpopularity, and loneliness. Some suffer for what they have done; others suffer because of what people do to them. Many suffer because they are victims of circumstances which they cannot control.

Pain is distressing. There can be nights of agony when God seems so unfair and it seems that there is no possible help or answer. Temporary relief may seem adequate, but the real solution to suffering is not to isolate it in an attempt to do away with it, nor even to grit our teeth and endure it. The solution, rather, is to condition our attitudes so that we learn to triumph in and through suffering. When the Apostle Paul sought relief from his “thorn in the flesh,” God did not take it away, but reassured him with: *“My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9, KJV)*. In another encouragement to the Corinthians, he wrote, *“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” (2 Corinthians 9:8, KJV)*.

Except for physical pain, handling suffering seems to be a question of attitude: “What am I going to do in the face of suffering in order to learn from it and use it for my advantage as far as God's eternal purposes are concerned?”

Billy Graham comments: “Nowhere does the Bible teach that Christians are exempt from the tribulations and natural

disasters that come upon the world. Scripture does teach that the Christian can face tribulation, crisis, calamity, and personal suffering with a supernatural power that is not available to the person outside of Christ.”

Some of the most pathetic people in the world are those who, in the midst of adversity, indulge themselves by wallowing in self-pity and bitterness, all the while taking a sort of delight in blaming God for their problems. Job's attitude is an inspiration: *“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15)*.

The sufferer will be blessed if, in the midst of great agony and despair, he can look into the face of his Heavenly Father and, because of His eternal love and presence, be grateful. Our response to suffering should lead us to look beyond it in the attempt to see God's higher purposes and what He wants to teach us.

What are some of the Reasons for Human Suffering?

(1) We may bring suffering upon ourselves. Dissipation and lack of discipline bring unhappy consequences. Long-term abuse of our bodies may bring on sickness. Wrong choices come back to haunt us.

You may ask the caller: “Do you think this is happening to you because of your own bad judgment or intemperate actions? What can you do to alleviate your suffering?”

(2) Sometimes God is taking corrective action because of sin and disobedience. God will correct and discipline His own. Through chastening He proves that He loves us and that we are truly His own (Hebrews 12:5-11).

(3) God may permit suffering so we learn to respond to problems in a biblical way. Scripture tells us that

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“Keep On Knocking”

How often people become discouraged, and say they do not know whether or not God does answer prayer! In the parable of the importunate widow, Christ teaches us how we are not only to pray and seek, but also to find. If the unjust judge heard the petition of the poor woman who pushed her claims, how much more will our Heavenly Father hear our cry!

A good many years ago an Irishman in the State of New Jersey was condemned to be hung. Every possible influence was brought to bear upon the Governor to have the man reprieved; but he stood firm; and refused to alter the sentence. One morning the wife of the condemned man, with her ten children, went to see the Governor. When he came to his office, they all fell on their faces before him, and besought him to have mercy on the husband—the father. The Governor’s heart was moved; and he at once wrote out a reprieve. The importunity of the wife and children saved the life of the man, just as the woman in the parable, who pressing her claims, induced the unjust judge to grant her request. It was this that brought the answer to the prayer of blind Bartimeus. The people, and even the disciples, tried to hush him into silence; but he only cried out the louder, “Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Prayer is hardly ever mentioned in the Bible alone; it is prayer and earnestness; prayer and watchfulness; prayer and thanksgiving. It is an instructive fact that throughout Scripture prayer is always linked with something else. Bartimeus was in earnest, and the Lord heard his cry.

Then the highest type of Christian is the one who has got clear beyond asking and seeking, and keeps knocking till the answer comes. If we knock, God has promised to open the door and grant our request. It may be years before the answer comes; He may keep us knocking; but He has promised that the answer will come.

I will tell you what I think it means to knock. A number of years ago, when we were having meetings in a certain city, it came to a point where there seemed to be very little power. We called together all the mothers, and asked them to meet and pray for their children. About fifteen hundred mothers came together, and poured out their hearts to God in prayer. One mother said: “I wish you would pray for my two boys. They have gone off on a drunken spree; and it seems as if my heart would break.” She was a widowed mother. A few mothers gathered together and said: “Let us have a prayer-meeting for these boys.” They cried to God for these two wandering boys; and now see how God answered their prayer.

That day these two brothers had planned to meet at the corner of the street where our meetings were being held. They were going to spend the night in debauchery and sin. About seven o’clock the first one came to the appointed place; he saw the people going into the meeting. As it was a stormy night, he thought he would go in for a little while. The Word of God reached him, and he went into the inquiry room, where he gave his heart to the Saviour.

The other brother waited at the corner until the meeting broke up, expecting him to come; he did not know that he had been in the meeting. There was a young men’s meeting in the church nearby, and this brother thought he would like to see

what was going on; so he followed the crowd into the meeting. He also was impressed with what he heard, and was the first one to go into the inquiry-room, where he found peace. While this was happening, the first one had gone home to cheer his mother’s heart with the good news. He found her on her knees. She had been knocking at the mercy-seat. While she was doing so, her boy came in and told her that her prayers had been answered; his soul was saved. It was not long before the other brother came in and told his story – how he, too, had been blessed.

On the following Monday night, the first to get up at the young converts’ meeting was one of these brothers, who told the story of their conversion. No sooner had he taken his seat, than the other jumped up and said: “All that my brother has told you is true, for I am his brother. The Lord has indeed met us and blessed us.”

I heard of a wife in England who had an unconverted husband. She resolved that she would pray every day for twelve months for his conversion. Every day at twelve o’clock she went to her room alone and cried to God. Her husband would not allow her to speak to him on the subject; but she could speak to God on his behalf.

It may be that you have a friend who does not wish to be spoken with about his salvation; you can do as this woman did—go and pray to God about it. The twelve months passed away, and there was no sign of his yielding. She resolved to pray for six months longer; so every day she went alone and prayed for the conversion of her husband. The six months passed, and still there was no sign, no answer.

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The question arose in her mind, could she give him up? “No,” she said, “I will pray for him as long as God gives me breath.” That very day, when he came home to dinner, instead of going into the dining-room he went upstairs. She waited, and waited, and waited; but he did not come down to dinner.

Finally she went to his room, and found him on his knees crying to God to have mercy upon him. God convicted him of sin; he not only became a Christian, but the Word of God had free course, and was glorified in him. God used him mightily. That was God answering the prayers of this Christian wife; she knocked, and knocked till the answer came.

- D. L. Moody

... “NEW” FROM PAGE 1 touched by God in this New Year. If there is anybody in the subcontinent or Asia or in the whole world, who has never heard that Jesus makes them a new creation, oh it is your fault and my fault! Instead of showing the joy that is in Jesus, we are miserable ambassadors and we are not the light of the world.

God says, “Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.” Yes, God can make a way in the wilderness of your life! Some people are addicted to evil habits and they feel like prisoners. But God says, I will do a new thing. Yes, He is the one who gives you a new heart and a new spirit. He is the one who makes you a new creation. And he is the one who says, I will make all things new.

Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth and the life”. Who can ever say such a thing except Jesus? If you look at your own life, you will see a lot of selfishness. And you know today, young people have lot of money in their pockets. I don’t know whether they torment their parents. I would not even ask my father for a rupee because I could see that my father was giving everything he had for the work of God. I had my food; I had my clothing. Why do I need a lot of money in my pocket? My parents gave us a very happy home. We didn’t have a lot of furniture and polished stuff. We were an ordinary family. But my father had

an extraordinary Saviour and he brought this great Saviour into our home. What a marvelous home he gave!

When we talk about a new thing, we want a new family, i.e., a family with a new heart. And then you know when the family moves ahead it is like a setting up a great power plant. When you pray together, when you labour together, the blessing spreads. That is what took place in my parent’s life. Revival broke out. Murderers turned into prophets. Drunkards turned overnight into mighty men who healed so many thousands. New things!

Don’t you need a new faith, a new love, and a new humility in this New Year. Oh I need it! Don’t you? I want a new walk with God and a new brokenness. I want Jesus. I don’t know what the future holds. You know my breath is in my nostrils, like yours. But I am never afraid. Where is your faith in the midst of hardship and calamity? We need a new vision for His Kingdom in this New Year.

- Joshua Daniel

“Weekly Resolutions”

Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God’s help, I do humbly entreat Him, by His grace, to enable me to keep these resolutions, so far as they are agreeable to His will, for Christ’s sake. I will remember to read over these resolutions once a week:

1. Resolved, that I will do whatsoever I think to be most to the glory of God, and my own good, profit, and pleasure, in the whole of my duration; without any consideration of the time, whether now, or never so many myriads of ages hence.

2. Resolved, to do whatever I think to be my duty, and most for the good and advantage of mankind in general.

3. Resolved, never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can.

4. Resolved, to live with all my might, while I do live.

5. Resolved, never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life.

6. Resolved, never to do anything out of revenge.

7. Resolved, never to speak evil of any one, so that it shall tend to his dishonour, more or less, upon no account except for some real good.

8. Resolved, to study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly, and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive, myself to grow in the knowledge of the same.

9. Resolved, never to count that a prayer, nor to let that pass as a prayer, nor that as a petition of a prayer, which is so made, that I cannot hope that God will answer it; nor that as a confession which I cannot hope God will accept.

10. Resolved, to ask myself, at the end of every day, week, month, and year, wherein I could possibly, in any respect, have done better.

11. Resolved, never to give over, nor in the least to slacken, my fight with my corruptions, however unsuccessful I may be.

12. Resolved, after afflictions, to inquire, what I am the better for them; what good I have got by them, and what I might have got by them.

13. Resolved, always to do that which I shall wish I had done when I see others do it.

14. Let there be something of benevolence in all that I speak.

- Jonathan Edwards

**REALITY
CHECK!**

**“THE NAME OF THE
LORD IS A STRONG
TOWER: THE RIGHTEOUS
RUNNETH INTO IT, AND IS
SAFE.”**

- PROVERBS 18:10

... "WHY" FROM PAGE 1

Jesus "learned obedience from what he suffered" (Hebrews 5:8, NW). Our goal should be not merely relief from suffering but rather learning to please God by being responsive and obedient to Him and to His Word (see Romans 12:1,2).

(4) Sometimes God permits us to suffer to teach us that pain is a part of life. Nowhere does the Bible say that the Christian will not suffer adversity! Paul points out in Philippians 1:29, KJV, that it is "given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Adversity can be a gift from God.

Christ did not evade the Cross to escape suffering. Hebrews 12:2 says he "endured the cross, despising the shame." Why? "For the joy that was set before him." He knew that the final word was not crucifixion (suffering); it was resurrection (victory).

We may suffer briefly, or all our lives. But let us not give up hope or engage in self-pity or bitterness. The end-result is what we all look forward to. Being with the Lord in heaven will put all things into perspective!

(5) God may permit suffering for our well-being. "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28, NIV). We must accept this by faith and pray that God's highest good will come as a result of our suffering. Only through adversity are some of the deeper lessons of life learned. Trust God to work out His own will and purpose in us so that we might be more Christlike (see Romans 8:29).

There is no redemptive merit in our suffering as there was in that of Jesus, but if we are faithful under adversity we may be able to share in "the fellowship of his sufferings" (Philippians : 10, KJV).

(6) Sometimes God permits suffering to speak through our life and testimony to comfort others. Jesus said that the sufferings of the blind man in John 9 were so "that the work of God might be displayed in his life" (NIV).

God might work in your life through suffering to inspire others by your example in adversity. Those who endure adversity can sympathize and identify more effectively with others in their sufferings. We comfort others in the way

we are comforted, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God" (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4, (NIV).

- The Billy Graham Christian Worker's Handbook, (Minneapolis: World Wide Pub., 1984), pp. 223-225

"He Chose Your Lot"

Do you think God has made a mistake in your life? If instead of being a poor man you had been rich, if instead of being a lone woman you had had one to call you wife and little children to clutch your dress and call you mother, if instead of being tied to the office stool you had been a minister or missionary, you think that you would have been a better, sweeter character. But I want you to understand that God chose for you your lot in life out of myriads that were open to Him, because just where you are you might realize your noblest possibilities. Otherwise God would have made you different from what you are. But your soul, born into His kingdom, was a matter of care and thought to Him, how best He might nurture you; and He chose your lot with its irritations, its trials, its difficulties, all the agony that eats at your nature.

Though men and women do not guess it, He chose your soul just as it is, because in it, if you will let Him, He can realize the fairest life within your reach. Look at the potter's wheel with the clay lump spinning round. I begin to manipulate the clay. It rises beneath my hand till I come to one certain point where, either through some flaw in the clay, a bubble or a fault, it resists me. Leaving that point, I put my hand around again, and in some other direction endeavour to secure my purpose, and then come back to that one point, but again I meet that obstruction that thwarts me. The genius of my brain as an artist is complete; the power of my hand to manipulate is unrivaled; it is the clay that thwarts me, until presently, because I have been frustrated again and again, the work is a marred, spoiled thing.

Now is not that true of you?

The one trouble of my life, years ago, was just this about which I am speaking now. God was dealing with me. I suppose He wanted to make me a vessel fit for His use. But there was one point in my life where I fought God as the clay fights the hand of the potter. I fought God; I will not say for how long. God help me! The only benefit that I can get now out of those years the cankerworm has eaten is to discover the secret in other lives while they, too, are standing still, and then to take them to the Christ to whom I went myself. There I shall encourage them to hope that He who years ago took up a spoiled and marred life and made a little of it, will take other men and women and will find out where they have thwarted Him. If they let Him, He will touch them there, and as they yield to Him they will be made again.

- F. B. Meyer

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