

The Bane of Bitterness

“**See**, in place of peace my soul had bitter sorrow. But You have kept back my soul from the underworld; for You have put all my sins out of Your memory. For the underworld is not able to give You praise, death gives You no honor: for those who go down into the underworld there is no hope in Your mercy. The living, the living man, he will give You praise, as I do this day: the father will give the story of Your mercy to his children” (Isaiah 38:17-19 BBE).

Bitterness is much more than an emotion, bad feeling or attitude. What then is it? Bitterness is a destructive lack of understanding; it is a result of not having God’s perspective. Not seeing things His way is so significant and powerful that, if left to do its work, it can defile and destroy a body and even a soul.

Bitterness is disagreement with God. It is a rejection of His will and judgment, even though the one rejecting does not see or know he or she is in disagreement. One thing we must all know, a truth that carries us wherever we go, is that whatever happens in our lives, we either need or deserve. Let me say it again: Whatever happens in our lives, we either need or deserve.

The problem is people do not believe or trust that God is in full control.

Need: Though Job did not deserve his tragic, horrendous losses, he needed what happened to him. He himself acknowledged this when it was over:

“In the past I knew only what others had told me, but now I have seen You with my own eyes. So I am ashamed of all I have said and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:5-6 GNB).

Job was delivered from trusting in his own righteousness and virtue, and given the abiding, restful trust in God. In this state all was doubly restored to him.

Deserve: Paul said to the Galatians:

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, that he also will reap. For he sowing to his flesh will reap corruption from the flesh. But he sowing to the Spirit will reap life everlasting from the Spirit. But we should not lose heart in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not faint. So then as we have

time, let us work good toward all, especially toward those of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:7-10 MKJV).

The opposite is also true - whatever we do not sow, we do not reap. Why should anyone receive pay or reward without earning it? Paul said that if any does not work, he should not eat. This is a fact of life. Therefore, one would not receive evil if he or she did not sow for it. The Law of God holds true both ways, if God is just and in control.

The problem is that people do not believe or trust that God is in full control. Though they profess faith in Christ and call Jesus “Lord,” in their hearts they do not believe that He is Lord, that He is, in other words, **fully, actively, personally sovereign in all affairs in universal existence.**

They have more faith in “coincidences” and “accidents.” Let me say this: There are no such things as random or chance coincidences or accidents. As it is said, “Accidents don’t happen; they are caused.” All things have a cause, and while we can have causes of causes, the chain of cause and effect is not endless - the buck stops at God, the First Cause of all things. That is because all started with Him:

“All things came into being through Him, and without Him not even one thing came into being that has come into being” (John 1:3 MKJV).

“For all things were created in Him, the things in the heavens, and the things on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things were created through Him and for Him” (Colossians 1:16 MKJV).

He is Lord, not in title only, but is Lord indeed. He runs the show.

All things continue, exist, are held together, and operate by Him:

“And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist” (Colossians 1:17 MKJV).

All things also end with Him:

“I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, says the Lord, Who is and Who was and Who is to come, the Almighty” (Revelation 1:8 MKJV).

He is Lord, not in title only, like the Queen of England or the President of the United States, or any other regal entity or governmental authority, who are very limited in

what they can do. Jesus is Lord indeed. He runs the show. He calls all the shots. He determines the destiny of a bird of least value:

“Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them shall fall on the ground apart from the will of your Father” (Matthew 10:29 EMTV).

Going farther, He even determines the destiny of a hair:

“But even the hairs of your head are all numbered” (Matthew 10:30 EMTV).

Notice the hair fallen on your shoulder or on your sweater. Believe this: that hair got there only by the predeterminate counsel and foreknowledge of God. There is not a quirk or a quark that exists or operates without His full supervision and involvement.

So if these things are true, why are we bitter? We are bitter because things did not go or are not going the way we would prefer them to go. We disagree with God. But if God is in full control, working “all things according to the counsel of His own will” (Ephesians 1:11), then surely there must be good reason why anything happens, “good” or “bad,” unless He is a fool or someone playing games at our expense. If it is true that all things are with purpose, determined by a wise and perfect God, then we must come to realize that all things are necessary:

“We, and all those that love God and are called according to His purpose, know that He works all things together for good” (Romans 8:28).

Giving thanks in everything, we confess Jesus Christ
is sovereign over all things.

Furthermore, if we can truly believe the Scriptures, which declare that God is love, that is, His will is only one of good for all His creation, then how can we, in good conscience, not accept all things from Him as ultimately good? That is why we are to fulfill one of our prime responsibilities and activities as believers, that being:

“In **everything** give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thessalonians 5:18 MKJV).

Giving thanks in everything, both perceived good and evil, we confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, that He is in full control, that He is sovereign over all things, and that His Kingdom reigns supreme. Thanksgiving to God in all things is the quintessential confession that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Did He not say to Pilate?:

“You could have no authority against Me unless it were given to you from above...” (John 19:11 MKJV).

All things are determined from above - never from beneath.

When good comes, know that God has blessed. When evil comes, know that it also comes from God. When suffering great and sudden loss, Job declared:

“I was born with nothing, and I will die with nothing. The LORD gave, and now He has taken away. May His Name be praised!” (Job 1:21 GNB)

And when the evil came and Job’s wife said to him, “Why don’t you curse God and die?” Job replied:

“You are talking nonsense! When God sends us something good, we welcome it. How can we complain when He sends us trouble? Even in all this suffering Job said nothing against God” (Job 2:10 GNB).

His sovereignty is ever displayed in all of His creation.

Job recognized that it was not primarily “the devil that did it.” He understood that God was Ruler of Heaven and earth, of the unseen and the seen, the spiritual and the physical. The first two chapters of Job make it very clear that he was right in this, and that God is in the driver’s seat.

God’s sovereignty is described and displayed throughout the Scriptures by precepts, statutes, testimonies, commandments, judgments, laws, prophecies, and confirmed, historical records. His sovereignty is ever displayed in all of His creation.

Can bitterness then be justified? Obviously not. What then is the solution to bitterness? There is only one. We must ask God to give us wisdom and understanding. We must put our trust in Him to grant us to see things His way. We must yield to His will, denying our preferences, desires, and ourselves. If we must hold bitterness, let it be against holding bitterness.

God rewards and punishes according to our relationship to Him.

You may deny that you have done anything that even remotely relates to your sufferings. There is another dimension to our suffering, as expressed in the Second Commandment:

“Worship no god but Me. Do not make for yourselves images of anything in Heaven or on earth or in the water under the earth. Do not bow down to any idol or worship it, because I am the LORD your God and I tolerate no rivals. I bring punishment on those who hate Me and on their descendants down to the third and fourth generation. But I show My love to thousands of generations of those who love Me and obey My laws” (Exodus 20:3-6 GNB).

God rewards and punishes in all things according to our relationship to Him. He also carries those blessings and curses down the generations until the process is complete. Know this: Not only do we descend from our ancestors, we **are** our ancestors. You are your father and mother, and if they or their parents have worshipped other gods contrary to the First and Second Commandments, then you have worshipped other gods before you were born into this world and time. That is why prophets and people confessed the “sins of their fathers”:

“If they shall confess their iniquity, and **the iniquity of their fathers**, with their trespass which they trespassed against Me, and that also they have walked contrary unto Me; And that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: Then will I remember My covenant with Jacob, and also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land” (Leviticus 26:40-42 KJV).

Bitterness may be the cause of evil circumstances.

Is there a link between the evils in your life and your ancestry? God knows, and only He can show it to you. Break that link, by His grace, and you will find an eventual removal of the curse that was brought on you by the sins of your ancestors; eventual, I say, because all things must run their course, but He is just and merciful, and will break that chain for your sake when you are fully repentant, even as He promised. I know; He has done it for me, and I know He has done it for others, for those recorded in Scriptures and others since. The testimonies in this matter are sure.

We may not recognize that while we may not have committed a conscious, deliberate sin, we may have permitted a wrong attitude towards circumstances not of our choosing. Evil circumstances come not only because we have directly caused them but because of our attitude towards them. In other words, evil circumstances may not be the cause of the bitterness; bitterness may be the cause of the evil circumstances; it is often so.

Did you know that bitterness also destroys the body? Bitterness causes digestive, nervous, mental and other problems. It causes heart disease, obesity, diabetes and cancer. Indirectly, it causes bad relations, which can lead to strife, which can lead to damage and death. Bitterness is a killer of the first order. Submit, therefore, to God's correction, no matter what it may be, for your sake and for the sake of all those around you.

“Now no discipline seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, later it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those having been trained by it. Therefore strengthen the hands which are weakened, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that the lame may not be turned aside, but rather be healed. Pursue peace and holiness with all people, without which no one shall see the Lord: **looking diligently** lest anyone fall from the grace of God; **lest any root of bitterness growing up cause trouble, and through this many be defiled**” (Hebrews 12:11-15 EMTV).

Why not give glory to the Prince of Life?

The land of bitterness is a dark, cold, and desolate one; it is the land of the dead and dying. Why choose to be there? Why be defiled? Why give glory to the prince of darkness and of this world; why die? Why not give glory to the Sovereign Prince of Light and Life?

Receive from Him and live. After all, you owe Him; you owe Satan, the murderer, liar, and thief, nothing. Put away all bitterness - a wrongful, antiChrist attitude. Remember that the cross is the sum total of His attitude toward you, and don't forget it. Comprehending the significance of the cross will deliver the soul and body from Hell into the Kingdom of Light, of healing, peace, prosperity, and joy.

A poem with its introduction:

Bitterness

When you are given to see the incarnation of bitterness concentrated in your direction, I doubt that there can be a more hideous spectacle, especially when residing in one whom you have known intimately for decades and who is supposed to have the opposite - love - toward you. This comes by revelation but also by outer manifestation in the end, for all things must come to light and be dealt with, and are in the last days. Only understanding from God can give one the encouragement to forgive, and the faith to persevere.

But bitterness is the lot of every believer and everyone must come to terms with it once and for all in the end. This is the wicked one being revealed (2 Thessalonians 2:8) and dealt the deathblow. While it is the worst time of all, there is cause for those who believe to lift up their heads, because redemption is near at hand. The manifestation of that mysterious man of bitterness is a token of the Lord present, for it is in His coming that the son of perdition is exposed and destroyed. But destroyed how? By being redeemed, transformed, resurrected, reconciled to God through the Son of God. It is a great and terrible event.

Bitterness cries, "You owe me!"
And she will not rest until
She gets what she wants.
She'll not be persuaded otherwise
Nor will a substitute do.

"I disagree with You!" she cries to God.
"Either You don't know what You're doing
Or, You cannot do what's right.
So I have to do it!
I have to take control of things;
I have to protect myself
And get what I want.
Nobody else can be trusted to do it for me.
But I know I can't,
Yet I have to try
And try and try until
You will finally see it my way.
I am wise in my own eyes."

Bitterness is stubborn;
She shuts her eyes and stops her ears.
She sees what she wants to see;
She tells herself what she wants to hear,
Yet is deceived in believing

That which is not true.

Her heart worships her ambition and desire
Perceived incarnated in this world's promise.
Nothing can persuade her otherwise.

And the Lord comes
And grants her all her desire
And more than she asks.
He opens her eyes to see
And she closes them, seeing.

Brokenness confesses, "I owe you!"
And cannot rest until
The debt is settled once for all.
He opens her eyes to see
And she rests, pacified.
Content is her new name.

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