

Trial of Your Faith

1 Peter 1:7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

The Covid pandemic has tested the spiritual character of professing Christians and local churches. For the child of God, difficulties are trials of our faith says Peter. Satan operates in afflictions to destroy faith, but God operates in afflictions to purify faith. If the faith is real, it is purified. If the “faith” is nominal or hypocritical, it will not stand.

Job 23:10 (a) when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. Job was never told by God, why he was going through the trial. Satan’s strategy was this ‘is God serving these for not?’ Notice, God set both the permission and the parameters of the struggle, and He has done the same with this pandemic. Everything in Job’s life was *dead, despairing, or diseased* to the natural heart.

However Job emerged from those severe trials a better man, not a bitter man, with more than he had before the trial.

It may be a hard truth to embrace, a bitter pill to swallow. But ultimately, God’s ways are beyond our comprehension. “There are secret things that belong to the Lord our God” (Deut. 29:29). At some point we have to humbly accept what God has told us and trust that he is doing what is right. Even though “clouds and darkness surround him,” we can trust that “righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne” (Ps. 97:2). And there is no getting away from the fact that good can come out of evil.

I fear that the Covid at times has been used as cloak to cover coldness of heart, that existed long before the pandemic! The pandemic trial has brought it to light.

“And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended” (Mark 4:15-16).

When Judas was tested, he was shown to be a hypocrite who did not have saving faith. It took the storm to reveal the one builder never had a foundation in Luke 6:48 We call them children, but they were real men. When faced with a literal trial by fire, the young men would not bow down and worship the golden idol. Instead, they accepted the punishment of being cast into the fiery furnace—confident in God’s sovereignty and care (ch.3). *They made a defining decision to stand up for what was right, rather than bow down to what was wrong.* These Hebrews did *not know what their God would do...* but what *He could do* ... they knew what they could do but ... **WOULD NOT DO** ... they would not bow the knee!! *I may not always know what God is going to do* ... do I need to? But I need know what I am going to do ... *obey His commandments. Among many commandments, He commands us to gather, and commands us to break bread.*

Be like that early church that continued stedfastly Acts 2:42 Acts 2:41-4 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. v42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. We seldom mention the first words of the next verse v43 'and *great fear* came upon every soul. Their consistency didn't exempt them from fear!

Peter was tested, he was purified and continued on from faith to faith (Lu. 22:31-32). My dear fellow believer, it isn't going for the gold, it is being gold! I am so very thankful for so many believers today, and I can speak of them as 'gold'

Murray McCandless

mmccand@nbnet.nb.ca