

Never Give In

It is now 28 days from Passover. If this year is the same as those past, we can expect a barrage of trials and storms around the Spring and Fall Holy Days. If you have been keeping them for any length of time, this comes as no surprise. Satan works his craft as always but puts in extra hours during the times of God's feasts.

Are all of these trials rooted in the enemy or are we out of our "vertical alignment" with The Almighty? We often tend to put off the blame on aggravating circumstances on the adversary without taking a good look at ourselves. Granted, I know of some folks who are in the middle of storms that are of no doing of their own, even so, is God permitting these things to occur to draw them closer to Himself? Job was close to fit in this category as God allowed Satan to wreak havoc upon him and his life. As painful and heartbreaking as it was for him, this all was done to bring Job into the correct position and relationship with God.

James 1:2-9- "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you are beset by various trials, Knowing that the testing of your faith produces *endurance*. But let endurance have *its* perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete, not lacking in anything. However, if anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, Who

gives to everyone freely and does not reproach *the one who asks*; and it shall be given to him. But let him ask in faith, not doubting at all because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven by the wind and tossed *to and fro*. Do not let that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord. *He is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. But let the brother who is in humble circumstances rejoice in his elevation,”

As we just read in the essay, we can scoff at the atheist in his ignorance and unbelief, but scrutiny of the spiritual condition of God’s church and so-called Christians should be the primary focus.

Psalm 10:4- “Through the pride of his countenance the wicked will not seek God; in all his thoughts there is no place for God.”

Psalm 14:1-3- “The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God!” They are corrupt; they have done abominable works, there is none who does good. The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there are any who understand, who seek *after* God. They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, no, not *even* one.”

Psalm 53:1-2- “The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, and have worked out abominable wickedness; there is no one who does good. God looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any who understand, who are seeking after God.”

I see numerous posts on social media made by atheists. They spend more time degrading and deriding Christians and God than justifying any of their opinion. Never get into an argument with them.

“Never argue with stupid people. They will drag you down to their level and beat you with experience.” - Mark Twain

The protestant churches pursue God in their own way. They profess to be Christians but do not keep God’s Commandments as He instructed them to be kept. The only thing they have in common with Jesus is feet. Much like Republican politicians who claim to be conservatives, they are **Republican in name only**, RINOS. Would that make professing Christians who do not obey God’s word a ChristianINO? It may be fitting as this is an election year. As the social mentality has declined to where people can identify as a cat, a man as a woman or whatever, why not?

The trials we bring upon ourselves come down to belief or conviction. According to a recent Gallop Poll, 81% of people in the United States believe in God. Belief is not enough.

James 2:19- “Do you believe that God is one? You do well *to believe this*. Even the demons believe—and tremble in fear.”

There is a substantial difference between belief and “conviction.” While similar in definition, belief, and conviction both relate to the acceptance of ideas, but with different degrees of certainty and evidence. Beliefs are ideas one accepts as true, often without immediate proof or evidence. Convictions, however, are beliefs one holds with greater confidence (faith), often unaffected by conflicting evidence.

Granted, there are those in the Protestant Churches that have faith but are misguided for *lack* of Biblical knowledge.

Hosea 4:6- “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you from being as a priest to Me. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I will also forget your children.”

This was most of us for the majority of our lives until God called and said to wake up. Reading the Bible for ourselves and doing what God says to do began to open our, eyes, hearts, and minds. Even coming to the knowledge of God's truth, the trials still come.

Ephesians 3:13-21- “So then, I beseech *you* not to faint at my tribulations for you, which are *working for* your glory. For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; *And* that being rooted and grounded in love, you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height, And to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge; so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him Who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us, To Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, *even* into the ages of eternity. Amen.”

I cannot help but believe that most of all the tests that come my way are self-initiated. What is different now is that I can reflect on the Word of God, and I

know the lesson is for me. If we want to grow in our walk with God, we must remember we have a guidebook full of His instructions.

Proverbs 30:5- “Every word of God *is* pure; He *is* a shield to those who put their trust in Him.”

The lack of trust that some may have can also be a hinderance to spiritual growth and will yield the tests and storms. A poor personal relationship with God can cause a shortage of trust in Him. Even so, God will never forsake us, but we must learn to trust in Him in all things.

Psalm 9:9-10- “The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And those who know Your name will put their trust in You, for You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.”

It is not easy to keep these things in mind when we are up to our chins in conflicts or contentions. If we remain steadfast in our faith and fully trust in God, the blessings will come.

Psalm 94:12-15- “Blessed is the man whom You chasten, O LORD to teach him out of Your law That You may give him rest from the days of trouble until the pit is dug for the wicked, For the LORD will not cast off His people, nor will He forsake His inheritance. But judgment shall return unto righteousness; and all the upright in heart shall follow it.”

Psalm 26:1- “Judge me, O LORD, for I have walked in my integrity. I have trusted also in the LORD without wavering.”

Romans 4:20-21- “And he did not doubt the promise of God through unbelief; rather, he was strengthened in the faith, giving glory to God; For he was fully persuaded that what He has promised, He is also able to do.”

We have all got the same set of instructions, the same Savior, and the same race to finish. We may be on different laps, but our finish line is the same as well.

1 Corinthians 9:24-25- “Don’t you know that those who run a race all run, but *only* one receives the prize? That is the way you *are to* run in order that you may obtain *the prize*. For everyone who is striving *for mastery* controls himself in all

things. Of course, they *do this* so that they may receive a corruptible crown; but we *are striving for an incorruptible crown.*”

This race we are in must be run by us as individuals. While we can run it as a part of a team and get assistance from our Church family, it is like our relationship with God. *We* must set the pace and run it with determination. Expecting someone else to compete for us will not get you across the finish line. If you have a flat tire, you change it. If a baby has a wet diaper, you change it. When the circumstances of your life are less than desirable, change them. God can and will help us along the way if we are doing our part according to His word. It is up to us to get off the bench.

We must have will power to finish the course regardless of what storms we may face along the way. We can stumble, trip, and fall along the way, but we get up. God will dust us off and tell us to keep going. We cannot allow the enemy to cause us to give in regardless of how many obstacles and hurdles he sets in our way.

Hebrews 12:1-4- “Therefore, *since* we are surrounded by such a great throng of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that so easily entraps *us*; and let us run the race set before us with endurance, Having *our minds* fixed on Jesus, the Beginner and Finisher of *our* faith; Who for the joy that lay ahead of Him

endured *the* cross, *although* He despised *the* shame, and has sat down at *the* right hand of the throne of God. Now meditate deeply on Him Who endured such great hostility of sinners against Himself so that you do not become weary and faint in your minds. You have not yet resisted to the point of *losing* blood in your struggle against sin.”

The pitfalls of life can and will impede us from time to time. However, none of us have had to face crucifixion. Our reward will come at the end of the race. Our endurance will produce a crown of life given at the finish line.

Matthew 24:12-13- “And because lawlessness shall be multiplied, the love of many shall grow cold. But the one who endures to *the* end, that one shall be saved.”

James 1:12- “Blessed *is the* man who endures trials because, after he has been proved, he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”

Intense perseverance, devotion, and determination are best exemplified by two stories from the Gospel. I love this woman’s determination.

Matthew 9:20-22- “And behold, a woman who had been *afflicted* with a flow of blood *for* twelve years, after coming behind *Him*, touched the hem of His garment. For she said within herself, “If only I shall touch His garment, I shall be healed.” But Jesus turned; and seeing the woman, He said to her, “Be of good courage, daughter; your faith has made you whole.” And from that hour the woman was healed.”

Luke 8:43-48- “And a woman who had been afflicted with a flow of blood for twelve years, and had spent her whole living on physicians, but could not be cured by anyone, Came behind Him and touched the border of His garment; and immediately the flow of her blood stopped. And Jesus said, “Who touched Me?” And as everyone began to deny it, Peter and those with Him said, “Master, the multitudes are thronging and pressing You, and You ask, ‘Who touched Me?’ ” But Jesus said, “Someone touched Me, because I know that power went out from Me.” Then the woman, seeing that her act was not concealed, came trembling; and after falling down in front of Him before all the people, she declared for what cause she had touched Him, and how she had immediately been healed. And He said to her, “Be of good courage, daughter; your faith has healed you. Go in peace.”

The woman knew if she could just press through the crowd and touch the hem of His garment, she would be healed. The garment really had no magical power as we all know, it was her faith! Is our faith strong enough to recognize the enemy's attacks when they occur? Do we pray before we begin a chore, a task, or another project?

Another of my favorite stories is the men who lowered their friend through the roof that Jesus may heal him.

Mark 2:2-12- “And immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer any room, not even at the door; and He preached the Word to them. Then they came to Him, bringing a paraplegic borne by four *men*. And since they were not able to come near to Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was; and after breaking *it* open, they let down the stretcher on which the paraplegic was lying. Now when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paraplegic, “Child, your sins have been forgiven you.” But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, “Why does this *man* speak such blasphemies? Who has the power to forgive sins, except one, *and that is God?*” And Jesus immediately knew in His spirit what they were reasoning within themselves, *and*

said to them, “Why are you reasoning these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘*Your sins have been forgiven you*’? or to say, ‘Arise, and take up your stretcher and walk’? But in order that you may understand that the Son of man has authority on the earth to forgive sins,” He said to the paralytic, “I say to you, arise and pick up your stretcher, and go to your house.” And immediately he arose and, after picking up his stretcher, went out in the presence of them all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We have never seen the like!”

The paralytic’s friends would not give in. They were determined to get their friend in to be healed. It is a brazen move to chop a hole in someone’s roof to gain an audience with a person. It would get you three to five years in jail if you did it today.

Luke 5:18-20- “And behold, men came, carrying on a stretcher a man who was paralyzed; and they sought to bring him in and place him before Him. But when they could not find a way to bring him in because of the multitude, they went up on the rooftop and lowered him with the stretcher through the tiles into the midst, directly in front of Jesus. And seeing their faith, He said to him, “Man, your sins have been forgiven you.”

Their faith made the difference. We all need to have more faith and trust in God.

Would the trials decline if we put all of our trust and faith in God? But even if they did not, would we be any worse off? Would we recognize we still may be missing something?

Romans 12:12-18- “Be rejoicing in hope. Be patient in tribulation. Be steadfastly continuing in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and strive to be hospitable. Bless those who persecute you; bless, and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep; Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high ambitions; rather, be accommodating with those of low estate. Do not be wise in your own eyes. Do not render to anyone evil for evil but be prepared to do what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, as much as is your part, be at peace with all men.”

Drawing closer to God, knowing His will and being obedient to His

Commandments opens the door to change and spiritual growth. As Passover approaches, we strive and continue to self-reflect in our walk with God.

Philippians 2:12-16- “So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God Who works in you both to will and to do according to *His* good pleasure. Do all things without complaints and disputes; So that you may be blameless and without offense, innocent children of God in *the* midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine as lights in *the* world, Holding forth the Word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, nor labored in vain.”

Our lack of knowledge, disobedience, lack of trust in God, and weak faith could be additional causes of our own trials. Are we still looking at alternative sources for the “quick fix” for our problems or are we willing to sacrifice and do it God’s way? We have the ability through Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit to overcome the flesh and fulfill the will of God for our lives.

James 5:10-11- “My brethren, take the prophets who spoke in the name of *the* Lord as an example of endurance *in* afflictions and of steadfastness. Remember, we call those blessed who endure. You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the end result of *serving the* Lord: that the Lord is very compassionate and full of tender mercies.”

Winston Churchill gave a speech to a group of boys at the Harrow School on October 29, 1941.

“Never give in. Never give in. Never, never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in, except to convictions of honour and good sense. Never yield to force. Never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy.

It may seem the enemy is overwhelming at times, but we have more than belief, we have conviction. We have faith. We have the word of God and His promises. Our love for God and Jesus Christ is the core for our devotion and obedience to His way of life. Because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and His resurrection, we too never, never, never, never, have to give in and yield to the enemy or his influences.

1 John 4:4- “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them because greater *is* He Who *is* in you than the one who *is* in the world.” Amen.

BL-03/09/24