

WHY ME? HELP AND HOPE FOR THE HURTING: THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST (continued)

Finally, our Lord proved to be a great example of *dependence and trust* throughout His many adversities. This trust in and dependence upon His Father was essential just prior to the Cross. The suffering and sorrow that Jesus underwent during that time was totally undeserved. He could have refused to accept it, responding in a defensive manner, but He did not. Peter bears witness to this fact, where he tells us in 1 Peter 2:23, “. . . **and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously. . .**” The word “entrust” here means that Jesus simply “handed over” the matter of His unfair treatment into the just judgment of His heavenly Father.

The implication of the context is that if He were unwilling to do so, it would have become a distraction to accomplishing the task at hand. If He became preoccupied with His own unjust experiences of suffering, this would have proved a hindrance to the fulfillment of God’s redemptive purpose. Christ’s focus during His earthly life was upon what would take place on the Cross at the end of His life. Any negatives that could have blurred His vision in regard to that purpose, were handed over to the Father, freeing Jesus to fulfill the will of God for His life. It is no coincidence that the example of Christ, described in 1 Peter 2:21-24, becomes the apostle’s exhortation to the Christian in 1 Peter 4:19, where we read the following –

“Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.”

We must remember that we are not saved by following the example of Jesus. We receive forgiveness of sin and eternal life through faith in Christ and His death and resurrection on our behalf. However, it was His exemplary response to personal adversity which in turn enabled Him to stay on task for the goal of accomplishing our redemption. Think about it. If His work on earth required Him to experience suffering, how could He have fulfilled it, if He were unwilling to submit to it? But that redemptive work was never in jeopardy, due to Christ’s deep and profound dependence upon His heavenly Father, in submitting to God’s will for His life.

Now that we have personally experienced God’s plan of salvation through faith in Christ, our Lord has an “assignment” for each of us to accomplish as His disciples. The very best way to stay on task is by following Christ’s example. Just as Jesus suffered in order to carry out the will of His Father, so will we. Just as He entrusted His times of trial into the keeping and care of His heavenly Father, so must we. For the Christian who is hurting, be encouraged and have hope. Our God is a great and awesome God! He will not allow your experience with adversity to be wasted, but will use it in your life in an eternally significant manner. I will close by sharing a passage of Scripture which has been an encouragement to me during times when I needed it the most:

“Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)