

PEACEABLE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

BROTHER BAKHT SINGH

"Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the lord delivereth him out of them all " (Psa.34: 19). When we see many believers God's servants passing through various afflictions, it is comforting that the Lord has promised to deliver the righteous out of all these afflictions, however painful and hard they may be.

It is good for us to note the purpose for which God does permit such painful afflictions to come upon us. The Lord has many spiritual lessons to teach us through trials which He allows to come upon us.

FIRSTLY, these afflictions help us to understand the meaning of 'Righteousness', which God wants us to have. We as human beings try to work up our own righteousness; and we fail miserably in the task. The Lord wants us to possess His righteousness, which alone will last through eternity. This can only be attained when we accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, and He becomes our righteousness."...Christ Jesus... is made unto us... righteousness" (1 Cor 1:30). To all appearances, Job was a perfect and upright man, one who feared God and eschewed evil (Job.1: 1). Yet, after he had gone through the mill of affliction, we hear this same Job say, "I have heard thee by the hearing of the ear: now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes"(Job 42:5,6). It was after Job had gone through several painful afflictions that he began to see that his true nature was sinful and corrupt, and realized that he could become righteous only by a personal experience with the holy, living and just God.

SECONDLY, through afflictions we can develop a strong active faith. In 1 Pet.1: 7, we read: "that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perisheth though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Gold cannot be purified with soap and water. It has, to go through many refining fires to become pure and bright. So also our faith becomes strong when we go through suffering.

THIRDLY, these trials keep us on the right path. We are only human, and are likely to go astray from the path, which our loving Savior has marked out for us. In order to keep us on the right path, the Lord sometimes allows afflictions to come upon us. We read about this in Psa. 119:67. "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word".

FOURTHLY, God allows afflictions so that we may learn God's statutes and precepts. We can never understand God's statutes through any book of human origin. God has to teach us in His own way. David speaks of this side of sufferings in Psa. 119:71." It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes".

FIFTHLY, these hardships finally lead us to a spiritually wealthy place, enlarge our vision and give us a large heart. In Psa.66: 12, we read: "Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place".

SIXTHLY, by these testings, we are being prepared for our heavenly inheritance with the saints in light. We shall soon meet our Lord face to face, and

receive this inheritance. Then the meaning of Rom.8: 17 will be made clear to us: "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint- heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together".

SEVENTHLY, when we have passed through sorrows and trials, we are better qualified to comfort those who are passing through similar sorrows and trials as we read in 2 Cor.1: 4: "Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God".

EIGHTHLY, it is when we pass through mockings and revilings for the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that we are able to appreciate better our oneness with Him. We see in Matt.10: 24,25, "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master".

NINTHLY, sufferings help to keep us humble. When the Lord blesses us, we are likely to get puffed up; but in order to keep us balanced; the Lord allows sufferings to come upon us. Paul speaks about this benefit of sufferings in 2 Cor .12:7- 9, where he mentions about the abundance of the revelations given to him, and also the thorn in the flesh, lest he should be exalted above measure. This thorn in the flesh must have been very painful; but the Lord allowed it in his life to keep him humble.

TENTHLY, through hardships we are prepared to enjoy God's power in fullness. See 2 Cor.12: 9,10. "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong".

May the Lord make this true in our lives.