

What Do We Do When Adversity Strikes?

Matthew 5: 44

Is there anyone out there who has not gone through adversity? There are believers all around Africa that are being persecuted for their faith. In fact, whole towns are being massacred. o what do we as believers do in the face of adversity? In the Old Testament, under the Old Covenant, most of the fighting was done on the physical plane. But the victories for God's people were always preceded by Divine Intervention. 1 Samuel 17: 46 - This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

Those who were empowered by the Holy Spirit, had some amazing results. 2 Kings 6: 8 to 23 - Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp. And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down. And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice. Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel? And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber. And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan. Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. And Elisha said unto them, This is not the way, neither is this the city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria. And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw;

and, behold, they were in the midst of Samaria. And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them? And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.

Doesn't it sound a little like what Paul told us?

Romans 12: 20 - Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

Did Our Lord Jesus Christ have any teachings about this subject?

Matthew 5: 43 to 48 - Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

And what did Paul do when he was being opposed? Acts 13: 4 to 12 - So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister. And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord. By the way, Paul did not go around striking everyone with blindness who disagreed with him. This was the only time it is recorded, and he was led by the Holy Spirit.

God's Power has not diminished these days. Pastor Win Worley went to Indonesia many years ago, and the son of the most powerful witchdoctor got saved. This didn't bother his father. Then the son got the in-filling of the Holy Spirit, and spoke in tongues. This didn't bother his father. But when the son got into deliverance, this got his attention. And shortly after this, his father got saved, when he saw that his demons were being bound up.

Now there is no shortage of legalistic teachings out there, that would have believers attacking all those who don't agree with them. They use, or abuse the Scriptures; regardless of what is God's Will. Pastor Win Worley wrote an article entitled, "Psychic Prayer Equals Witchcraft". It is important to read it, to see if your prayers are in accordance with the Will of God; or whether they are charismatic witchcraft. Because most of today's prayers are not right with God, and they are causing a lot of damage to the Body of Christ.

Many years ago, James McKeever, (End-Times News Digest) had a vision about how devastating these were to the Church of God. God showed him that believers were being savaged by the devil. And when they should have received help from other believers, they were being afflicted even worse.

For those of you who teach that Christians can't have demons, or can't come under demonic attack; take notice. I have been in contact with many modern day Gadarene demoniacs; and thankfully Our Lord Jesus Christ has set them free. Praise the Lord!

So what can you do when you are being afflicted? First of all, you have to determine if it is of God. Hebrews 12: 4 to 8 - Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, & not sons. And where there are sins outstanding; we have not lost our salvation. 1 John 1: 9 - If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

2 Chronicles 7: 13 & 14 - If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, & will forgive their sin, & will heal their land.

And if that is not the case, then you can do like King Solomon, & refer the matter to God's Court of Divine Justice.

2 Chronicles 6: 21 to 23 - Hearken therefore unto the supplications of thy

servant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall make toward this place: hear thou from thy dwelling place, even from heaven; and when thou hearest, forgive. If a man sin against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to make him swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house; Then hear thou from heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, by requiting the wicked, by recompensing his way upon his own head; and by justifying the righteous, by giving him according to his righteousness.

That is why we send curses back to the original sending demons & not the people. And that is why it is so important to correctly interpret the Scriptures, especially the Old Testament. We have to view them as Our Lord Jesus does. John 8: 1 to 11 - Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, & saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. & Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, & sin no more.

One of the biggest problems in the Church today, is the general ignorance of the Word of God. Hebrews 5 :11 to 6: 2 - Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

As we have said before, our main fight is not down here, and Our Lord

Jesus has provided the necessary equipment.

Ephesians 6: 10 to 18 - Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Praying for all the saints includes our families. It is the husbands' & fathers' responsibility to pray for their wives and children. 1 Timothy 5: 8 - But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

When it comes to physically protecting them from harm; self-defence is one thing. But it is all too easy to go overboard, like the Lord's Resistance Army. As we pray the Scriptures, particularly the Old Testament; we need to remember that we are now under God's Grace, and not under the Law. Remember, Satan destroys; Our Lord Jesus Christ restores. John 10: 10 - The thief cometh not, but for to steal, & to kill, & to destroy: I am come that they might have life, & that they might have it more abundantly.

If we use Psalms 35 as an example, what are the main points? First, we are now fighting against the demons that are afflicting us, from within and without. We are calling on Our Heavenly Father, in the Name of Jesus Christ to help us. We ask that all the attacks (curses etc.) from the demons, through the mouths of people; are to be sent back to the original sending demons. 1 Kings 22: 22 - And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? & he said, I will go forth, & I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. We do not act on revenge. Romans 12:19 - Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath for it is written, Vengeance is mine I will repay saith the Lord.

Proverbs 24: 17 & 18 - Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth: Lest the LORD see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him.

Stephan, while under great duress prayed for his adversaries.

Acts 7: 60 - And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not

this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

We see David praying this in Psalms 35: 13 & 14 - But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.

We can ask Our Heavenly Father to stop all their attacks against us, & even to turn them back. Psalms 35: 3 - Draw out also the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.

Being betrayed goes with the territory; it even happened to Our Lord.

Luke 22: 48 - But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

Psalms 35:11,12 - False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not. They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul.

We should be thankful to Our Lord Jesus, for the deliverance and help He gives us. Psalms 35: 18 - I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.

And when our prayers don't seem to get answered the way we want, let us remember Paul. 2 Corinthians 12: 7 to 10 - And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 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.

Believers need to realize that we are not promised a trouble free life.

John 15: 20 - Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

So as we read through Psalms 35, let us act on it as Our Lord Jesus did. Psalms 35: 1 to 28 - A Psalm of David. Plead my cause, O LORD, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me. Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help. Draw out also the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I am thy salvation. Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt. Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the LORD chase them. Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the LORD persecute them. For without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit,

which without cause they have digged for my soul. Let destruction come upon him at unawares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall. And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD: it shall rejoice in his salvation. All my bones shall say, LORD, who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him? False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not. They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul. But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother. But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not; they did tear me, and ceased not: With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth. Lord, how long wilt thou look on? rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions. I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people. Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause. For they speak not peace: but they devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land. Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me, and said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it. This thou hast seen, O LORD: keep not silence: O Lord, be not far from me. Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, even unto my cause, my God and my Lord. Judge me, O LORD my God, according to thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me. Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it: let them not say, We have swallowed him up. Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at mine hurt: let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify themselves against me. Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant. And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long.

And by waging spiritual warfare, as outlined in the Scriptures, and as Pastor Win Worley shows in his "Warfare Prayers", we can stay within God's Will, and defeat our enemy, the devil and his demons.

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