

Affliction of the Soul

2 Corinthians 1: 3 & 4

With all that is going on these days; it is no surprise to see many that are suffering and that are afflicted. So let us study it from the Bible. And in order to avoid confusion in the Older English of the AV; we will be using the NKJV. Then, the word suffer had some other meanings that people don't use to-day. While some afflictions are due to external forces; some are also self-inflicted. And there's the Job factor; where people, for no apparent reason; suffer much. Some, even have a ministry of suffering. And they, like Paul, will have to trust Our Lord Jesus. 2 Corinthians 12: 5 to 10 - Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities. For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me. And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Now not everyone goes through the same hard times as he did. And for those who desire a closer walk with our Lord; FB Meyer wrote an excellent book, The Gift of Suffering. But when we are afflicted; remember that Our Heavenly Father has a plan. 2 Corinthians 1: 3 to 6 - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.

David too was well acquainted with affliction. Psalms 102: 1 - 11 - A Prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed and pours out his complaint before the LORD. Hear my prayer, O LORD, And let my cry come to You. Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my trouble; Incline Your ear to me; In the day that I call, answer me speedily. For my days are consumed like smoke, And my bones are burned like a hearth. My heart is stricken and withered like grass, So that I forget to eat my bread. Because of the sound of my groaning My bones cling to my skin. I am like a pelican of the wilderness; I am like an owl of the desert. I lie awake, And am like a sparrow alone on the housetop. My enemies reproach me all day long, Those who deride me swear an oath against me. For I have eaten ashes like bread, And mingled my drink with weeping, Because of Your indignation and Your wrath; For You have lifted me up and cast me away. My days are like a shadow that lengthens, And I wither away like grass.

And who can forget what Our Lord Jesus Christ went through? Remember, that He knew before what was going to happen; even the prophets foretold it. Isaiah 53 - Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, & we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, & afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked--But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering

for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.

Luke sums it up in Acts 3: 18 - But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.

Now, enduring hardship is nothing new for the Church and God's People. & when God was re-ordering the Hebrew nation after Egypt; there is an interesting item. Leviticus 16:29 - *This* shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth *day* of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, *whether* a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you. V31 It *is* a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. *It is* a statute forever.

Leviticus 23:27 Also the tenth *day* of this seventh month *shall be* the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. V32 It *shall be* to you a sabbath of *solemn* rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth *day* of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath.

Numbers 29:7 On the tenth *day* of this seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall afflict your souls; you shall not do any work.

Afflicting the soul! What's that all about? John Gill, when commentating on Leviticus 16: 29, says ye shall afflict your souls; not only by humiliation of the heart for sin, and by repentance of it, and by turning from their evil ways, but by corporeal fasting, which is chiefly meant by the affliction of their souls; so the Targum of Jonathan explains it, by abstaining from eating and from drinking, and from the use of baths, and from anointing, and from the use of shoes, and of the marriage bed; and so it is said in the Misnah, on the day of atonement, eating and drinking, and washing, and anointing, and putting on of the shoes, and the use of the bed, are

forbidden; whoever eats the quantity of a gross date with its kernels, or drinks a mouthful (as much as he can hold in his jaws), is guilty: they do not afflict children on the day of atonement, but they train them up a year or two before, that they may be inured to the command; hence this day, in #Ac 27:9 is called the fast: and do no work at all; no bodily work, for it was in that respect a sabbath, as it is afterwards called; the Jewish canon is, he that ate and did any work was guilty of two sins, or was obliged to two sin offerings.

Now aren't you glad that we are no longer under the Old Covenant? But now under the New Covenant; the bar has not been lowered, but raised. We, now as born-again believers, have God's Holy Spirit, living within us. Luke 12: 48b - For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

And for those who want more; there is the in-filling of the Holy Spirit. You see, His job is to make us more like Our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 8:13 - For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Paul describes the two sides in greater detail. Galatians 5: 16 to 26 - I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Self-control! What's that? It's the missing ingredient in to-days society.

When was the last time that you heard a sermon on self-control. Hopefully, with our new life in Christ, we are not indulging in the works of the flesh. They have to be confessed as sin, and not done again. And then the demons that came in can be cast out in the Name of Jesus Christ. 2Chronicles 7: 14 - If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves & pray, & seek my face & turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, & will forgive their sin, & will heal their land.

Back then, this afflicting the soul was done a few times a year, with the Feasts. What do we do now? Romans 12: 1 to 3 - I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

Now, it's a daily commitment, not yearly. That daily sacrifice is very hard; and you will be greatly afflicting your souls, to follow on. But when you slip, you do not lose your salvation. We just sincerely use 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.

It is important to maintain an attitude of repentance; as the Holy Spirit leads. Because when we don't; the self rises up, and causes trouble. Galatians 2: 20 - I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Prayer is important too. It is important to stay prayed up all the time. When disaster strikes, it will be almost impossible to pray anything more than Jesus help. And as you are praying; expect the devil to throw up blocks and hinderances. Matthew 26: 37 to 45 - And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me. He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me;

nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will. Then He came to the disciples and found them asleep, and said to Peter, What? Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done. And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then He came to His disciples and said to them, Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Another aspect to afflicting the soul is fasting. Even the world does this; with such things as dieting etc. And fasting is part of most religions. The muslims have their ramadan; where for a month they don't eat or drink during daylight. The native indians traditions have those entering adulthood going on a fasting journey, until they contact their power animal or familiar spirit. Fasting opens people up to the spirit realm, both good and bad. So we have to check everything with the Word of God. When was the last time that the Christian Church called a fast for anything. Sometimes, families need to fast. 1 Corinthians 7: 5 - Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

When fasting, remember that there are different kinds. Calculate what you can do, and follow through. And your attitude is very important.

Matthew 6: 16 to 18 - Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; & your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. To guide us, there is an important passage. Isaiah 58: 1 to 12 - Cry aloud, spare not; Lift up your voice like a trumpet; Tell My people their transgression, And the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek Me daily, And delight to know My ways, As a nation that did righteousness, And did

not forsake the ordinance of their God. They ask of Me the ordinances of justice; They take delight in approaching God. `Why have we fasted,' they say , 'and You have not seen? Why have we afflicted our souls, and You take no notice?' In fact, in the day of your fast you find pleasure, And exploit all your laborers. Indeed you fast for strife and debate, And to strike with the fist of wickedness. You will not fast as you do this day, To make your voice heard on high. Is it a fast that I have chosen, A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, And to spread out sackcloth and ashes? Would you call this a fast, And an acceptable day to the LORD? Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, & that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh? Then your light shall break forth like the morning, Your healing shall spring forth speedily, And your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.' If you take away the yoke from your midst, The pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, If you extend your soul to the hungry And satisfy the afflicted soul, Then your light shall dawn in the darkness, And your darkness shall be as the noonday. The LORD will guide you continually, And satisfy your soul in drought, And strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. Those from among you Shall build the old waste places; You shall raise up the foundations of many generations; And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.

The affliction of our soul is not easy; but it is necessary; if we want to grow up in Our Lord Jesus. Isaiah 48: 10 - Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.

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