



## The Lord who Loves – The God who Cares

Text – “I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee” (Jeremiah 31:3)

In this discourse my intention is to outline a number of ways in which the Lord in His love and mercy guides, guards, directs and disciplines His saints: i.e. you and me – as we travel along life’s highway. There may be many ways one could discuss, but I will confine myself to four, and hope we shall see how these evolve as we live to serve Him day by day.

### **1. HE ANSWERS OUR PRAYERS**

I am privileged to be a team member of Divine Healing Ministries, and there I have heard many thrilling and heart warming testimonies of the way in which God has answered the prayers of His people; many in the form of miraculous healings and restorations.

Sometimes prayers are answered **DIRECTLY** and even **DRAMATICALLY**, but as the little chorus reminds us “A thousand ways has Jesus to answer every prayer”. Can we even imagine half a dozen ways never mind a thousand (standing for an infinite number)?

If the answer does not come directly it may be **DELAYED** or **DEFERRED**. God might be saying “Yes, but not just now,” His timing is always perfect.

When the Israelites were on their journey to the Promised Land they were instructed to stay put until the cloud lifted – however long a time that may have been (see Numbers 9:15-23).

The answer may also be **DIFFERENT**. When I look back on my life I can honestly thank God from my heart that He did not answer my prayers as I expected; - but differently, and to my greater benefit. He knows best – that’s for sure.

Lastly the answer may be **DENIED**. The most outstanding example of this is undoubtedly when Jesus prayed in Gethsemane that the awful bitter cup might pass from Him – but the answer was **NO**: He had to go through with His death and burial for without it there would have been no redemption for any of us.

We must of course pray according to the will of God. Prayers for our own selfish interests are unlikely to avail.

So God answers our prayers – but...

## **2. HE ALLOWS US TO FACE TRIALS**

The New Testament scriptures reveal this fact clearly. James writes “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations i.e. trials” (Jam 1:2). Paul also writes, “We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope” (Rom 5:3-4). Jesus Himself warned His disciples “In the world ye shall have tribulation” (John 16:33).

These and many more scriptures would indicate that a certain amount of hardship and adversity is good for us, and helps build up our Christian character and stamina. When we think of it we are travelling in the opposite direction to the world, and that involves extensive effort and courage, and therefore some form of trial is inevitable. The writer of the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes expresses it like this: - “In the day of prosperity be joyful. But in the day of adversity consider, God hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him” (Eccl 7:14)

God therefore gives sufficient blessings to keep us rejoicing, coupled with a number of trials to keep us dependent.

## **3. HE CARRIES US THROUGH TRIALS**

The Lord did not remove Paul’s thorn in the flesh, but gave him the grace to go through with it – and he did (2 Cor 12:9). At the end of his mission writing to young Timothy he could say, “I have finished my course” (2 Tim 4:7), and look at how many trials and even dangers and life threats he encountered on the way.

Furthermore although we must all face trials God will see to it that we are not tested beyond our capacity. Paul again writes “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able” (1 Cor 10:13).

Testings, although arduous and at times burdensome, do not last forever, however long and tiring they may appear. I am sure that in your reading of the Holy Scriptures you have often come across the recurrent phrase: - “and it came to pass”. It is not without good reason that this expression appears in nearly every book of the sacred library. It can be interpreted very positively in the face of any situation, particularly in some form of adversity viz “IT CAME – TO PASS.” Life is a series of comings and goings, and so are all the trials we go through, but remember the Lord’s words to Isaiah, “When thou passest through the waters I will be with you” (Isa 43:2). Notice it is not IF but WHEN – and He will see us through to the end.

## **4. HE TAKES US HOME**

This, of course, is the sure and certain promise and expectant hope of all whose lives are committed to our Lord and Saviour. It was He Himself who declared, “He that believeth on me hath everlasting life” (John 6:47).

The saintly apostle could unashamedly write “Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness” (2 Tim 4:8) and also “The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work and will preserve me unto His everlasting kingdom” (2 Tim 4:18). So for Paul and many others down the intervening centuries, all the trials they endured paled into insignificance compared with the glorious prospect that awaited them at the end of the road.

So there are four main ways in which our Loving Father orders the lives of His saints. It only remains for me to put the challenge to all into whose hands this paper might fall: - Are you one of God's saints? Have you yielded your life to His Dearly Beloved Son – our Lord Jesus Christ? Do you seek His will for your life through prayer and the reading of His Word? Can you manfully face up to the trials of this life, knowing that only by His strength and His Holy Spirit within you, that you can faithfully overcome? And have you assurance of that glorious prospect of everlasting life with Him hereafter?

I trust all readers will consider these matters seriously and come to the Saviour, who is our only hope, especially in these fast closing last days of grace in which we are living at the present time. AMEN