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In Times Like These

We should keep in mind that we are children of God and that God loves us. Here on earth, this is our proving ground, to see if we are truly worthy and want to obtain the promise of God. That is why our faith is sometimes tried. We must maintain joy and our faith for with that faith, we will obtain the salvation our our souls.

Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

(1Pe 1:5-9)

For each of us knows that trials do come. They can be difficult for us. But God wants us to trust him, even in our trials. This is the test of faith. It is not just trusting God when all is well, it is trusting him when the bottom falls out of your boat, when things go awry and hard times come. I know whereof I speak, I have been in some pretty dark situations and today, knowing that one day before long my life will come to an end, I know that there is no greater prize than that which God gives to those who love, trust and honor him. So brothers, stand firm in your faith in your trials, God knows all. Know that there are times when Satan can get in the way of blessings and delay them.

Consider that when Daniel was praying for an answer to his prayer for the interpretation of the vision he saw, a powerful demonic angel kept the answer from him for three weeks. Sometimes the blessings of God may seem a bit late, but they are in reality, right

on time. If Daniel's interpretation had not been delayed, we in our times would never understand how this aspect of Spiritual Warfare works. So even when the Devil was plotting evil, there was good that God brought about in this episode. Which brings us to our next point.

*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.
(Rom 8:28)*

God has a marvelous plan that includes all things. Nothing is hidden from God. He knows what we are going to do long before we do it. He knows the day we are to graduate from high school, the day of our wedding and the day of our passing, long before we are even born. Our job as children of God is to walk in the ways God has laid out for us, walking in the light, that being in faith, love and the hope that is in Christ Jesus. The devil will target these things. He will especially target our faith when we are going through a tough time. This is the time we have to maintain our faith, do what we know we are supposed to do and wait upon God. That is what Daniel did. He waited patiently on God. Daniel also did it with Fasting and Prayer. He finally got his answer. This is a model for effectual prayer. Faith, determination and waiting on God.

Trials are going to come to all of us. Look at how the Christians in so many parts of the world have held their faith in the face of horrible loss and persecution. The key for them as it is for us when we face trials is to keep our faith, rock solid, bring our requests before God, humbly and then wait upon God in faith. Some of our brothers faith has been tried to the very edges.

*I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.
(Psa 27:13-14)*

I know how hard it can be brothers, I have been through some pretty rough trials. One really cut me to the quick. Brothers, that is one trial I will never forget, not through all eternity. But I had to steel my soul. While I was going through it I clung to a verse from Job that I have always taken to be one of my most cherished passages.

Job was going the hell on earth and lost everything, friends, family health, wealth all at once and everyone around him was pointing fingers at him calling him a sinner and a hypocrite and dishonoring him.

Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.

*He also shall be my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before him.
(Job 13:15-16)*

What did I learn from that Trial? It is that faith is tenacious and you must be willing to go right into the fires if God so ordains it. Remember how those three young men behaved in Daniel? They had a tenacious and yes, even a defiant faith. They were never going to give in - not to the ways of those who revile the Lord. We must not give in to the ways of this world, or the evils that are part of it. The temptations and trials can be great and one day will be for many of us in the face of the Mark Of the Beast.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: therefore he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And he commanded the most mighty men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire.

(Dan 3:16-26)

They told the king in a polite yet firm manner just where he could stick that image they were not going to worship it. They were not going to fall down before it and even if the King killed them, they would not nor would they ever comply.

This is the kind of Holy defiance in the face of evil that real Christians will be demonstrating in the days ahead. The world is going to hate us. They are going to turn on us like never before. In India they are facing Hindu Extremists, in Pakistan they are

facing Islamic Extremists, the same thing throughout many places in the Islamic world, there are even Buddhist extremists who persecute Christians.

Generally what they want is for Christians to forsake God and bow down before their idols, their false God's and false prophets. They often, like Nebuchadnezzar, resort to murder to try and get one to renounce their faith in Christ. This is why I have stated many times here that if our faith were not of such great importance, the devil would not be using **all** of *his* religions to force us to change. If their gods were so great, like with Islam, they would not have to force people to worship in their temples at the point of a gun or the threat of the loss of a job, or social standing. This is always the mark of a false religion. They force you to worship out of fear of what the political-religious establishment can do to you. This is how satan operates in this world – bow down or die! When his 42 month system comes fully online, that is going to be the modus operandi. Go back and look at how it was done in Ancient Babylon and that is how it will be done in Modern Babylon and all over the world. You will find 666 encoded throughout that episode of scripture in Daniel – it is a type of the Mark of the Beast.

So brothers, take our trials with some perceptive. None of us is here on earth for very long. Our trials are brief compared to what God has prepared for us. We have been given a hidden wisdom, a hidden glory something that is wonderful and cannot be put into words, that being what God has prepared for those who love him.

Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.
(1Co 2:6-9)

The day to day troubles that we face, the financial troubles, family troubles, the health issues, the employment problems. Brothers, these are just things that go with living. We must learn to face them with faith and an open ear as to what God wants us to do in each situation and then do it. Sometimes the things God asks us to do may not make sense to the natural mind. People may get mad at us for taking such different approach to our problems and issues. Lost souls do not understand. Their minds are carnal not spiritual, their eyes are on the things of this earth and the security that satan's system offers those who serve it. We see beyond and behind this system and serve another. This is one reason why there can be no lasting fellowship with those whose souls are lost. We operate on a different plane as we are open to the things of the Spirit and are guided by the Holy Spirit. Eagles don't fellowship with Chickens, and Lions don't hang out with

rats. Why not? They have little in common. A child of God has no business hanging out with murders and pastors should not be best buddies with Nazi's. This does not mean we cannot have casual acquaintances who are not saved but that we must learn to keep to the household of faith. Be most careful of close relationships with lost souls, they can only slow you up on the road to Christ at best and become a serious hindrance leading to betrayal at worst.

Brothers, sometimes trials have nothing to do with how we have behaved, think of Job. Other times they are there to reprove us for things we are doing and should not, or things we should be doing and are not.

I write this brief one so that all of you may know that I hear you when you write me of your trials. I do pray for you and it is my hope that none of you fail when trials come as they surely will.

God's Grace be upon all of you who love our Lord.

Brother Mark,

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