

ONE in the word

“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me (Jesus).” (John 5:39)

January 29 - Preparation

DEAR WOMAN OF GOD'S AMAZING GRACE:

How wonderful it is to know the Lord! Troubles come from time to time, for any number of reasons, but how we deal with them demonstrates to observers, as well to ourselves, how close our relationship with the Lord is at the time. Often times it is our demonstration of consistent faithfulness that God will use to draw another to Himself.

In our continued pursuit of Christ, we have seen how Pharaoh handled troubles that came his way. We saw how he who knew not the LORD (Exodus 5:2) continually hardened his heart. As we enter the fifth week of our pursuit, we will see Moses continually going to the Lord to gain God's mind in how to deal with troubles. Then we will see Israel continually going to Moses with their complaints. In the end, Pharaoh died, Israel will suffer, and Moses will see the glory of God.

In preparing for this week's pursuit, which do you think you are most like at this point of your biblical Christian life? Do you feel so distant from God that you really don't know who He is? Or are you more like the children of Israel and feel the need to continually go to someone else to pray with and for you about troublesome situations because you just don't think your own prayers alone are enough? Perhaps your heart's desire is to be more like Moses, whose confidence in the wonder-working power of the Lord is drawing you closer and closer to God so that you are able to catch a glimpse of His glory every so often. Oh that this would be your heart's cry and desire!

One of the evidences of the intimacy of our relationship with the Lord is seen in our heart's attitude toward faithfulness to be in His house (the local church). While there may be legitimate times we, as a member of God's family (the church), we cannot gather with our church family (the local body of believers), there could be other times that we simply allow things and circumstances to come between us and our faithfulness to worship in our church. We must continually examine our heart's attitude before God to make sure we are not putting something else before Him; making something else of higher importance. It happens over and over to born-again women as thing after thing “comes up” to keep her from going to a service: her unsaved husband, though he does not forbid her to attend worship services, asks her to spend time with him instead. She does, thinking little of it and without realizing how easily it is to stop attending services altogether; a child involved in an athletic activity has the “big game” on Sunday which

starts a trend of recreation instead of being in her place of worship; overnight guests arrive on Saturday evening that haven't been seen for while and don't know when the opportunity to see them again will happen, so she stays home, not concerned that perhaps her example of faithfulness to service just might be what they need to see their own need for Christ to be Lord in their life; and the list of "justifiable" thing after thing could go on. But perhaps the biggest deterrent, keeping women from being in the Lord's house, are when troubles come and she doesn't know what to do so she stays home to "work it out" or to avoid seeing people or some other justified-in-her-mind reason to avoid going to church, without consideration of the condition of her heart.

If you are serious in this pursuit of a more intimate relationship with Christ, consider the words of Hebrews 10:19-25. *"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: **and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.**"*

When troubles come we need to be prepared in how to handle them before they arrive. Our God is omniscient (all-knowing) and has the solution already in the works before we ever know it. However, by our demonstration of unfaithfulness to worship him in His house, He may choose not to prepare us as He would like, because we haven't spent time in His presence in His house. So, regardless of what is going on, by the power of His Holy Spirit within, let Him become your faithfulness to be in church every opportunity available, letting nothing come between you and your Lord!