

The Overwhelming Interference of Your Cross

A.W. Tozer referred to the cross that Jesus gives us to bear as an “overwhelming interference.” There is stress, there is sickness, there are hurts; then there are the occasional overwhelming interferences. These are the events, the hurts, the pains that are catastrophic. These are the times life does not merely come to a slow down; life stops for awhile. Years ago the last song Patsy Cline sang before her untimely death was, *Stop the World, I Want to Get Off*. For many a dear saint, the world stops, but you can’t get off and the happy times just won’t get on. You have a most difficult time getting anything else on your mind. The cross that you carry becomes bigger than life. It looms before you. You cannot cross over it, run from it or circumvent it. You must deal with it. This overwhelming interference is...

1. Personal.

The greatest burden bearing example of the Bible would be Gethsemane where the providence of God spelled more than doom. Revelation came to our Lord of the ultimate price for man’s failure. Christ must not only die for us - He must become sin for us. The effect of this understanding is recorded in these words, full of Divine pathos: “*Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me*” (Matthew 26:38). A sad truth is that his disciples did not watch with Him; they slept while our Lord agonized. It was the loneliness that was the harbinger of the cross.

The Bible makes two paradoxical statements in close proximity to one another. Galatians 6:2 says, “*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*” Galatians 6:5 reads, “*For every man shall bear his own burden.*” We are to help our brothers and sisters in Christ in any way we can, but there are times when only the Lord can be our stay. The Psalmist said, “*From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I*” (Psalm 61:2). In breaking this verse down, we see the Psalmist has run until he can go no further. He comes to earth’s end. Metaphorically, he has also had it with earth and all his hope is now in the Lord alone. Our inspired writer went on to say, “*...when my heart is overwhelmed...*” Allow me to give you the dictionary definition of *overwhelmed* with examples: bury or drown beneath a huge mass: *the water flowed through to overwhelm the whole dam and the village beneath.* • defeat completely : *his teams overwhelmed their opponents.* • (often be overwhelmed) give too much of a thing to (someone); inundate • (usu. be overwhelmed) have a strong emotional effect on. Sometimes we are so overwhelmed that we cannot even function, so the Psalmist says, “*...lead me to the rock...*” In other words, we need some help and guidance to the One who is stable, Christ, our Rock. And this Rock is higher than we are. Upon this Rock we receive the view from a higher place, a place that transcends our troubles, our miseries - you might even say a resurrection from the effect of the cross. The overwhelming interference is meant to be...

2. Persevered.

We often hear the word “bridge” to speak of our passage in times of trouble. Humanity is looking for bridges over the troubled water of life. You want to hear something interesting? The word bridge or bridges is never used in the Bible. Never. When God’s people come to impassible water, God makes a way through the water or in the case of Peter, takes him by the hand and leads him over the waves. There was no bridge here - Peter was stepping on the stormy waves. At the Red Sea and Jordan River, God parted the waters. A wonderful verse that show you God’s way of dealing with rough waters is Isaiah 43:2, “*When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee...*” (Isaiah 43:2).

God wants us to persevere and allow the waters to be learning experiences. Our first response is to run. Let us hear the voice of God say, *“Be still, and know that I am God...”* (Psalm 46:10). The Red Sea experience amplifies this truth! With Pharaoh’s army behind them and the mighty Red Sea before them, these words are spoken just before the miracle: *“And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever”* (Exodus 14:13).

Let us hold on until God’s timing brings to fruition those things He is wanting to perfect in us. *“These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season”* (Psalm 104:27). *“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers (many) temptations (trials); Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing”* (James 1:2-5). Finally, the overwhelming interference is meant to be...

3. Passed.

The full quote from A.W. Tozer is: "The man with a cross no longer controls his destiny; he lost control when he picked up his cross. That cross immediately became to him an all-absorbing interest, an overwhelming interference. No matter what he may desire to do, there is but one thing he can do; that is, move on toward the place of crucifixion." Move on to the place of crucifixion is the only path.

Our Lord had reached resolution in the garden, we now hear these words: *“Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?”* (John 18:11). Jesus is not going to fight the will of the Father; the only way now is to take the will of the Father personally, to persevere through the trial and finally get past it to the other side.

The goal of getting past our problems will give us the courage to keep on keeping on. The Bible says time after time, *“And it came to pass....”* It is good to know that when it comes to troubles, they did not come to stay. Sometimes resisting God-ordained trials prolongs the agony. Here is a good word of encouragement: *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord”* (I Corinthians 15:58). *“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless **afterward** it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby”* (Hebrews 12:11). Hold on! “Afterward” is coming to those who faithfully wait for the Lord to perform His good will. *“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure”* (Philippians 2:13).

- Pastor Pope -

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