

GOD'S GOODNESS IN THE GUTTER

Saturday, October 28

Reading: Lamentations 1-5

Lamentations 3:21 Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: **22** Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. **23** They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. **24** I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for Him." **25** The LORD is good to those whose hope is in Him, to the one who seeks Him; **26** it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

"Great is Thy faithfulness! / Great is Thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning new mercies I see
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!"

The words of this hymn were written by Thomas Chiselm who struggled with poor health his entire life. It was always a struggle to make ends meet. But this man found great comfort in the Scriptures. His favorite verses were Lamentations 3:22-23. It was these verses that inspired the hymn "Great is Thy Faithfulness."

The amazing part of these inspiring verses about God's faithfulness is that they appear in the middle of a book of tragedy and grief. Lamentations was written by Jeremiah after the fall of Jerusalem. You can almost picture the prophet wandering through the burned-out streets and stepping over the bodies of the fallen as he tearfully records his sorrow and hurt in the opening chapters. Chapter 3 begins with a description of Jeremiah's own suffering during his ministry for the Lord. His experiences are now also those of the people who have been dragged off into captivity in Babylon.

But in the midst of this grief, Jeremiah remembers a reason to hope: the character of God! He is full of love and compassion. *Hesed* is that Hebrew word so rich in meaning it cannot be expressed in one English word. It is because of God's steadfast, merciful, strong, loving and devoted grace and faithfulness that He disciplines His people but does not destroy them!

A key word in these verses is "good." The goodness of God is poured out on those who hope and seek Him in their trials. When we "bear the yoke" (3:27) of difficult times and wait for God to work in our lives through them, we will see the goodness of God change us and grow us! That is what it means to "wait quietly" for the Lord.

POINTS TO PONDER:

1. Do you "consider it pure joy...whenever you face trials of many kinds?" (James 1:2). We must learn to wait on the Lord and understand that God wants to test our faith and develop us into the mature, complete Christians He wants us to be.
2. Can you see God in the dark times? While mourning and grief may fill our hearts (5:15-17), we must learn to say with the weeping prophet: "I have hope" (3:21-26), "Examine your ways, Return to the Lord, and Lift up your hearts and hands to God" (3:40-41). "Remember" us, Lord (5:1) and "Restore us" (5:21). Great is God's faithfulness!