

Sunday Service Sermons

26 September 2021

Affliction

“Look upon my affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.” *Psalms 25:18*

Full Text: *25:16-22*

Since human departure from God, being sent out from the garden of Eden, suffering and affliction have been people’s common lot in every age.

People have had to labor for their bread and women have had to bear children in great pain.

Jesus said, “In the world you will have tribulation” *John 16:33*.

Centuries later, the poet Longfellow said, “Into each life some rain must fall. Some days must be dark and dreary.”

Affliction will be ours if we walk long enough along life’s highways.

Have you learned the opportunities of affliction?

Maybe some thoughts on it can help you to do this.

Affliction comes because it is the common lot of humanity.

Many people are ignorant and superstitious concerning affliction.

Often after loss of possessions, illness, or death, someone will ask, “Why did God do this to me?”

Or they might say, “What have I done, or failed to do, that God should punish me in this way?”

Some people never realize that loss of possessions, heartache, pain, death, and grief are common to all people.

The good and the bad, the just and the unjust, the believer and the unbeliever are afflicted

We should not blame God or accuse him of these things.

Decay, disintegration, and death belong to all living matter, and there is no escape.

Why do God’s children suffer?

Let’s make some observations.

Many suffer as the result of storms, floods, fires, disease, poverty, and war.

Many afflictions arise out of the near or distant past, for heredity can be merciful or merciless.

Affliction comes because of wrong choices.

Much suffering is self-imposed through wrong choices, knowingly or ignorantly made.

Many people are afflicted because of their disobedience and rebellion.

This is especially true of God’s people.

Jesus said, “That servant who knew his master’s will, but did not make ready or act according to his will, shall receive a severe beating.” *Luke 12:47*.

And James wrote, “To him that knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin.” *James 4:17*.

Affliction comes as a matter of discipline because of sins.

The Bible teaches that God does impose disciplinary measures on his people because of their sins.

It is for our good, and we should seek to know the purpose and design of such correction.

You will recall that God, by the hand of Moses, liberated Israel from bondage.

God instructed Moses to lead the people into the promised land.

For about forty years they milled around in the wilderness, rebelling against God and against Moses, until God’s patience was spent.

He decreed that not one of them, except Joshua and Caleb, should ever set foot on the soil of Canaan.

God had led the Israelites with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

He fed them with manna and gave them water to drink.

He sought to teach them to depend on him, but they were lacking in gratitude, and God let them die in the wilderness.

The people of Israel did not learn their lesson.

God's efforts to correct and teach his people to depend on him were futile.

There was nothing left for him to do but punish them.

Affliction comes so that God's work can be displayed in our lives.

You will recall that Jesus healed a man who was blind from his birth.

The disciples asked, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"

Jesus answered, "Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." *John 9:2-3*

Jewish theology of that time interpreted all suffering and affliction as a direct penalty for a specific sin.

But here was a baffling case.

Neither the blind man nor his parents had done anything to cause his handicap.

Affliction should never be a matter of doubt, debate, or controversy.

It should be a means of glorifying God.

The blind man's affliction became a means of displaying God's work in his life.

The benefits of affliction are many.

Listen to God's Word!

Job said, "He knows the way that I take: when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold." *Job 23:10*

The writer of Hebrews said, "Now no chastening for the present seems joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." *Heb. 12:11*

Job said, "Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects, therefore despise not the chastening of the Almighty; for he makes sore and binds up; he wounds and his hands make whole". *Job 5:17-18*

David wrote, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now have I kept thy word." *Ps. 119:67*

Solomon said, "My son despises not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction; for whom the Lord loves he corrects; even as a father the son in whom he delights." *Pro. 3:11-12*

Our attitude toward the discipline of our heavenly Father should not be rebellious, sour, bitter, or complaining.

If we cannot understand our affliction, then let us believe "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*

William Cowper wrote:

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea
And rides upon the storm.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds you so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
With blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace.
Behind a frowning providence,
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour.
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.
Trust in God, Always!