

Daily Devotional, January 22, 2021 Who is Always Faithful

"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." Gen 50:20 (NIV)

Do bad things happen to faithful Christians? There are some who would say no. The thought is that if you have been faithful nothing truly bad should come in contact with your life. If there is some sort of tragedy that plagues your life it must be because there is some type of sin in your life. ***"Do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and He chastens everyone He accepts as his son." Heb 12:6-7 (NIV)***.

Look at the life of Joseph. Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers because they were jealous. Some would say they had cause to be unhappy, due to their father making it no secret that Joseph was the favorite of all his sons. While a slave in Egypt the Lord blessed Joseph, though, as he became one of Potiphar's personal servants and was then framed by Potiphar's wife. Joseph was sent to prison where the Lord again blessed the work of Joseph and he was placed in charge of all the prisoners. He became known for interpreting dreams and was called to interpret one of Pharaoh's dreams. God answered Pharaoh's questions about this particular dream, and as a result, Joseph was appointed ruler over all of Egypt besides Pharaoh himself, lifting Joseph into the ruling class of Egypt.

Joseph's work was blessed as he surrendered to God. Yet He was sold into slavery by his own brothers. He was wrongly accused of a sexual assault and jailed for more than two years. Most of us would call these bad things.

And then there is the life of Job. First Job is introduced to us as blameless and upright. Satan had to ask for permission and have it granted by God for Job's life to be affected, and in a very short period of time almost everything that Job owned or loved was taken from him. One of the worst times in the life of a parent is to lose a child, indescribable in words. The loss of Job's livestock and fields and wealth would have meant little next to his children, but they were all swept away. At the end of chapter one we see Job tear his robes, shave his head, and **worship** God. What a statement! We are told that Job did not sin and never blamed God.

At one point, Job's desperation came to the point of sitting in ashes covered with boils and scraping those boils with a shard of pottery. Job's wife tried to convince him to curse God and die! His friends decided that there must be some sin in his life, and that God is punishing Job. One of his friends asks, "Does God pervert Justice?" In the middle of this intense debate Job despairs deeply. Most of us would consider these things unbearable.

In the end Joseph has such favor with Pharaoh that he is in a position to save his entire family and the Hebrew people from starvation. They are given the choicest land in Egypt, called Goshen. Joseph is reunited with his family including his father before he dies. Job is restored twice as much as everything he had prior to his life being put through such trials. It goes without saying that everyone who is righteous and falls into troubled times is restored.

Those bad things that happened to these two men of faith were turned around as blessings. They continue to bless us today as we are taught of the faithful who went before us.. Clearly these two men trusted God through all their troubles. Through imprisonment and the loss of health, all the while the Lord was moving the pieces on the chessboard. He was in complete control of the events the entire time. Joseph and Job both surely reached the end of their understanding of what was happening in their lives. But they trusted when they could not see what lied ahead.

Do bad things happen to faithful believers? In our feeble human understanding, it seems we would have to say yes. Yet, if we remain faithful, we have no idea what may come next, even if it is only the satisfaction of knowing that we have lived our lives for God. The examples that have been shown through the lives of these two men have touched the lives of millions as an encouragement. You have no way of

knowing whose life will be impacted by yours for good or for ill. It is up to us to remain faithful and trust in the Lord's guidance.

Prayer: Father, I come to you worn and weary from the hard times I have walked through. I come seeking Your shelter where I know I can find security and rest. Thank You that You are my safe place where I am always welcome and for being a fortress I can trust. Father, I know you can save me from these trials. I will wait patiently for You to help me work things out for my good. You have always been faithful to me. I will rest in Your faithfulness. Amen.