

Chapel Flock



~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

"come just as you are"

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

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Worship Music

[Hallelujah-](#)
[Alexandra Burke](#)

[Healer-Kari Jobe](#)

[Find You On My Knees-](#)
[Kari Jobe](#)

Prayer

Lord, today I am surrendering myself as a living sacrifice to be used in whatever way You choose. I know You are beckoning me to come higher and closer than ever before, so right now I approach You with great reverence and surrender myself more fully to You. With all my heart I vow to give You my soul, my emotions, my spirit, my body, and everything else that I am and that I possess. I want to live for You and to serve You for the rest of my life. Starting today, I yield to You completely. When You speak, I will do exactly what You tell me to do. In Jesus' name. Amen.....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

Video's / New Information/ Prayer Requests

Matthew 24:36 (AMP)

36 But of that [exact] day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

["The Cross"](#)

Billy Graham

[" The Cure "](#)

Pastor Chuck Smith

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Chapel Flock.....text a prayer..... request telephone number.....

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Or----

If you have a prayer request...please e-mail it to us so we can pray for you...or a person.....

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Psalm 32:1-11 (AMP)

1 BLESSED (HAPPY, fortunate, to be envied) is he who has forgiveness of his transgression continually exercised upon him, whose sin is covered.

2 Blessed (happy, fortunate, to be envied) is the man to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

3 When I kept silence [before I confessed], my bones wasted away through my groaning all the day long.

4 For day and night Your hand [of displeasure] was heavy upon me; my moisture was turned into the drought of summer. Selah [pause, and calmly think of that]!

5 I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord [continually unfolding the past till all is told]—then You [instantly] forgave me the guilt and iniquity of my sin. Selah [pause, and calmly think of that]!

6 For this [forgiveness] let everyone who is godly pray—pray to You in a time when You may be found; surely when the great waters [of trial] overflow, they shall not reach [the spirit in] him.

7 You are a hiding place for me; You, Lord, preserve me from trouble, You surround me with songs and shouts of deliverance. Selah [pause, and calmly think of that]!

8 I [the Lord] will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you.

9 Be not like the horse or the mule, which lack understanding, which must have their mouths held firm with bit and bridle, or else they will not come with you.

10 Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but he who trusts in, relies on, and confidently leans on the Lord shall be compassed about with mercy and with loving-kindness.

11 Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you [uncompromisingly] righteous [you who are upright and in right standing with Him]; shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

Psalm 32

Now this next psalm is thought to have been written at the time of David's sin with Bathsheba. After the prophet of God, Nathan, had come to him and spoken to him of that sin. We will get another psalm that relates to this same situation in Psalm 51. Another of the Penitent psalms.

David had many wives, and yet, one day while standing on the roof of his house and looking over the city of Jerusalem, he saw on the roof of a house nearby a beautiful lady bathing. And he was attracted to her, and he sent his servants over to her house to bid her to come to him. And David had an adulterous affair with her; her husband at the time was out fighting with the armies of David, under the leadership of Joab. David received in a few weeks a message from her, "I am pregnant." And David ordered that her husband be brought home from war and he sort of just said, "Well, how are things going? How is the battle going? How are the men? How is the morale?" and all. And then he expected the guy to go home and spend the night with his wife. What he was hoping is that the guy would go to bed with his wife and later on when she says, "I am pregnant," the guy would never know the difference. But it didn't quite work out that way because this fellow, rather than going home, spent the night on the porch of David's palace with David's servants. And in the morning it was told David, "He didn't go home last night. He spent the night here." And David called him in and said, you know, "Why didn't you go home? You had this wonderful opportunity to be with your wife." And the fellow said, "Well," he said, "all of my buddies are out there in the trenches and it wouldn't be right for me to enjoy a night with my wife when all of my buddies are still out there in the field fighting."

So David that day got him pretty drunk, thinking that if he gets drunk enough he will stagger home and still never know the difference. But he only staggered to David's porch and again spent the night there, and so David was faced with a dilemma and he took a tragic way out. A horrible way out. For David ordered Joab, his general, to put this fellow into the thick of the battle and then to withdraw the other troops from him that he might be killed. And the ploy worked; Uriah was killed. And David then took Bathsheba as his wife. The child that was born became very sick. David prayed; the child died.

And then the prophet Nathan came to David, and the prophet said, "David, there was a man in your kingdom who is an extremely wealthy man. He had many servants, many flocks. Now next door to him there lived a very poor man who had just one lamb. And the lamb was like a child. It went to bed with him. It ate at his table, and it was just a pet, a family pet. Now this very wealthy man had friends come for dinner and he ordered his servants to go and by force take the one lamb from his poor neighbor and kill it in order that he might feed his guests." And David became very angry and he said to the prophet, "That man shall surely be put to death." And Nathan said, "David, thou art the man!"

Now David's response to that was that of repentance. David's actions were terrible. The scripture in no wise seeks to excuse the actions of David, but they also do point out the repentance of David. This is thought to be a psalm that relates to that period of David's

life when he was going through this guilt of sin. When he was trying to carry it. He was trying to hide it. He was trying to bury it, and going through the guilt of this illicit affair. And this particular psalm relates to this period.

And David begins the psalm by saying, "...Blessed [which is, Oh how happy] is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered (Psa 32:1).

Oh, what a happy moment it is when I have that assurance that my transgression has been forgiven, that my sin has been covered. Now there is a difference between a transgression and a sin. A sin is not always a willful act. The word sin comes from a root word which means, "to miss the mark." God says, "Here is the mark. I want you to hit it." All right. And I take aim, and I miss. Now I may not deliberately miss. I may be trying to hit it. I might just be a poor shot. That is still a sin. I have missed the mark. Whether it is deliberate or just a lack of weakness or failure, it is still missing the mark that God has set. That is why the Bible says, "All have sinned." The Bible calls you a sinner. You may get uptight about that, but God said that you have all missed the mark. Now when I tell you the mark is perfection, that is what God wants you to be, then, is there anyone here who is willing to stand up and say, "I have hit the mark. I am perfect. Look at me. I am Mister Perfect"? No, I think we will all confess, "I have missed the mark." Not always willingly. I have sought to be a better person than I really am. I am not as good as I would like to be. I have missed the mark. A transgression is a little different, because a transgression is a willful, a deliberate missing of the mark. It is a deliberate action of disobedience on my part. God says, "Here is the line. Now, Chuck, I don't want you to go over that line." And I get busy with my activities, I am not paying any attention, and all of a sudden I am over here on the other side of the line. And God says, "Hey, hey wait a minute. There is the line I told you not to go over." "Oh Lord, I'm sorry. I forgot all about it. I, hmm, didn't mean to." I still went over it. It was a sin; it was a missing of the mark. It wasn't really a deliberate, willful kind of a transgression. Whereas if God says, "Here is the line, Chuck. Now don't you cross over it." And I step over it and say, "Okay, God, what are You going to do about it?" That is a deliberate, willful transgression. Many times sins compound into transgressions. I start off innocently enough. But then rather than repenting and turning, I seek to try to cover it and hide it and all, and it compounds until it becomes a transgression. But either way, oh how happy I am when it is all forgiven. When it is all over. When it is all covered.

O how happy is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, in whose spirit there is no deceit (Psa 32:2).

Now David had done his best to deceive. I mean, he was trying to set up Uriah. You know, "Go home and spend the night with your wife." And he was trying this whole deceitful little scheme. But he is talking now about an interesting experience here, "Oh how happy is the man to whom God does not impute iniquity." Now I think that many people, because of Santa Claus, have gotten a wrong concept of God, and many people think of God as a glorified Santa Claus. That, just anything I want, all I have to do is come to God and just tell Him what I want Him to lay under my tree this Christmas, and God will give me anything that I insist on. Anything that I believe for. Anything that I will confess God will give to me, because after all, He's just a Santa Claus waiting to hear my request. And in carrying this concept of God as Santa Claus, we know that Santa Claus is making out a list and checking it twice, and going to find out who is naughty and nice. And if you have been naughty you are going to get a bundle of sticks. You know, he doesn't bring toys to bad little boys. Making this list, keeping the records.

Now, he is speaking about a man, "Oh how happy is the man to whom God does not impute, or account, iniquity." Who in the world would that be? A man that God isn't even making a black list on his deeds. Not imputing iniquity. Paul tells us in Romans that that happy man is the man who is in Christ Jesus. "For there is therefore now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). Oh how happy is my life in Christ, this glorious life I have in Him. For if we walk in the light as He is in the light we have fellowship one with the other, and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, is continually cleansing me from all sin. God is not even keeping a record of my failure, of my sin. Oh what a happy man I am. Not only has He forgiven my transgressions, not only has He blotted out my sins, but He's not even keeping a record of my current failings. Oh how happy is the man to whom God does not impute iniquity, that man who is in Christ Jesus. Now David goes on to express when he was trying to cover the whole thing and hide the whole thing and the reaction that it had upon him. When I kept silence (Psa 32:3)...That is, when I was trying to hide it, when I would not confess, when I would not bring it out and confess. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long (Psa 32:3). Did you know, you may try to hide your sins, you may try to cover your guilt, but it will find a way out. With guilt there is always the developing subconscious desire for punishment, which, if I cannot find a relief for this guilt, I will begin some abnormal behavioral pattern by which I am seeking to be punished. And I will start just doing weird things because I am feeling guilty and I want someone to punish me. I want someone to say, "Hey, man, you are weird. You're crazy. Something is wrong with you. You ought to go jump off of the pier." "Oh, thank you, brother. I needed that." Now I feel relieved from my guilt; someone has punished me. When I was a kid I had no problem. My father took care of my guilt complexes very efficiently. And the old apricot tree, those switches always stung, but it sure got rid of my guilt complex. It was healthy, psychologically. But now I am older, no one to take me into the bedroom and apply the psychology. And so I have to do things, abnormal things, neurotic things, in order to be punished. Get people to punish me. Don't tell Romaine I said it, but this is why he is such a fantastic counselor. I mean you come in and he will lay it on ya! If you are wrong, I mean, he will tell you. And you go home relieved. You get angry with him because he is so straightforward, but I mean he will just tell you what a rat you are, you know. And he doesn't realize it, I am sure, but from a psychological standpoint it is very healthy. We see them storming out of here sometimes, steam coming out of the top of their head. And we say, "Well, they have been counseling with Romaine." He is so good. But when you are trying to hide and cover your guilt, there is an inward roaring that is going on all the time. This inward turmoil. "When I sought to keep silent, my bones were waxing old because of the roaring all the day long." For day and night thy hand was heavy on me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer (Psa 32:4). "Boy, I will tell you. My life just became all dry. Just like a drought in summertime, no moisture, no life. Felt like I was dying." The Selah brings an end to that strophe of the psalm, and now we move into a new direction. The first is the endeavor to cover the sin, the endeavor to hide the guilt. But now as we move into the new direction.

I acknowledged my sin (Psa 32:5)

Now the Bible says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). So,

I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin (Psa 32:5).

Now, in the Hebrew language there is here the intimation of an immediate process. In other words, "The moment in my heart I said, 'I am going to confess my transgressions,' in my heart. Before I could ever get the words out of my lips, God had already forgiven me." God is only looking for the change of the attitude of your heart. The moment in your heart you say, "Oh God, I am sorry. I am going to confess. I am going to get it right with God." In that very moment, God's grace comes flowing over your life and the sins are all obliterated. Why should we carry guilt, why should we carry the sins, when God is so ready to forgive, so ready to cleanse, so ready to pardon? "The moment I said, 'I'm gonna confess,' Thou forgavest my transgressions."

Now we enter into the third strophe.

For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when you may be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come near unto him (Psa 32:6).

Surely all of us ought to be seeking God, because of His love, of His grace, and of His preserving power. In the times of these great waters, in the times of tragedy, it shall not touch you.

For thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance (Psa 32:7).

So another Selah. We enter into a new strophe of the psalm. "God is my hiding place. He is my preserver from trouble. He encircles me with songs of deliverance."

Now in verse 8 we have a whole change of voice, and God is now responding to the psalmist. Up till now David has been speaking of God and his relationship to God, but now God responds to David, and David writes God's response to him. Now this is God speaking to David. God said,

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way in which thou shalt go: I will guide you with my eye (Psa 32:8).

The steps of a righteous man are order of the Lord. God said, "I will teach you and instruct you in the way that you shall go. I will guide you with My eye."

Be not as a horse, or a mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in a bit and a bridle, lest he comes near to you (Psa 32:9).

So God is saying, "Don't be like stubborn mule where you got to put a bit in its mouth in order to guide it." Now a bit is painful when you jerk on it. But the bit is put in the mouth of a mule or a horse in order that he might be led. That you might have control. So that he doesn't walk or step all over you. You put the bit in their mouth, and if they don't hearken or respond to your reign upon them, then you pull on the bit and it jerks the mouth. And it is painful, but you get the message. You are led.

Now God is saying, "Hey, I don't want to lead you that way. Don't be stubborn like a mule. Where I have to use harsh methods to lead and guide you. I want to guide you with My eye. Okay, that way, son." We are the ones that make it tough on ourselves when we rebel against God. When we won't listen to God. When we are insensitive to God, then He has to get rough. God doesn't delight in the painful processes. God didn't want to send a whale after Jonah; it was just that was the only way that He could get his attention. God doesn't want to lead you in a painful process. He doesn't want to bring painful experiences into your life in order to get your attention, in order to change your directions. So He is saying, "Look, be sensitive. You'll beat him. I will guide you in the right way. I will guide you with My eye. Don't be like a horse or a mule; you've got to put a bit into its mouth in order that you might lead so that it won't step on you and all."

Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusts in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about. Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart (Psa 32:10-11).

As I said, when you are in your own reading of the psalms, it might be an interesting experience for you to, as you read, just sort of follow the exhortations. When it says, "Be glad in the Lord," just be glad in the Lord. When it says, "Rejoice," then you should rejoice. And if it says, "Shout for joy," try it sometime. Just shout for joy unto the Lord.

(Through The Bible c 2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Bible commentaries,1979-1986)

"A Candlestick All of Gold"; by T. Austin-Sparks

First published in "A Witness and A Testimony" magazines, 1949-1950

Chapter 1 - Its Function; Chapter 2 - Its Character and Form; Chapter 3 - Its Testimony; Chapter 4 - The Church as the Vessel of the Testimony; Chapter 5 - The Cross in Relation to the Testimony

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Its Character and Form; Reading: Rev 1:12-20.

In our previous meditation, we said that there are three things about the candlestick. One is its function, another its character and a third its form. We have already considered its function. Let us proceed to say a little about the others.

Its Character, All of God; The character of the candlestick - the statement is, "all of gold". Whenever this means of testimony is brought into view, whether in Exodus 25 or in Zechariah 4 or in Rev. 1, it is always stated to be of gold. We all understand that in the Word of God gold is the symbol for what is of God. This candlestick is of God; man has no place in it. As to its character, it is of God.

The Outcome of Suffering; But it is gold refined in the fire. Yes, it is all of God in itself, but when it comes into relation to us, when it becomes associated with the Church, with the people of God here, we find this extra factor comes in, that it is the outcome of fiery ordeal, it is that which is born of suffering and of travail. We must always discriminate in the sufferings of Christ. There are two sides to them. There are His atoning sufferings, which are uniquely His, and no one has any part in them; but there are those others which relate to His representative work as perfecting unto glory, the destroying of the ground of Satan's power. Now in Himself, of course, there was no ground of Satan's power; He was without sin; but at the same time He did take the place of man to be tested along one line, that is, as to whether He would exercise that Divinely-given responsibility of freewill in His own interests as apart from and independently of God. It was not that there was a wrong will in Him; but to what would He hand His sinless will? He was tested as to the use of that sacred gift and responsibility of choice, tested in the fires of terrible adversity, in sufferings of all kinds; and the one issue in every suffering was - would He choose other than God's will, in order that by so choosing He could be free from His suffering, He could escape and have an easier time? That was representative suffering. It is the suffering that we are in, and He was tested in all points like as we; in His case without sin inwardly, but on the same ground as we in this sense - there were intense fires of suffering, and He had only to hand His will over to Satan and take it out of the hands of His Father, and He could be free from it all. Would He do it on any consideration?

Having said that, we find that this is the point where testimony comes in. It is here the testimony becomes something more than words, truths and doctrines; it becomes something very real, it becomes power, effectiveness, impact, when it is established through suffering. I do want that we should be helped to see this thing. I believe it would help us a great deal if we could grasp it. While the Lord has called us to serve Him, and the majority of Christians interpret the Lord's service in terms of many outward activities - such as preaching the Gospel to the unsaved, or fulfilling a teaching ministry, or doing many things in different ways and of different categories, all of which are included in His calling and we must not in any way fail to recognise our responsibilities in those matters - we must, at the same time, see very clearly that it does not matter how much, how earnestly, how continuously we serve the Lord in those outward ways, we yet do not escape intense suffering. It might be thought that if only you are doing the Lord's work, going where He has sent you, doing the thing He has called you to do, knowing of absolutely nothing that is contrary to His mind, and being very open to Him and constantly having dealings with Him that there shall be nothing that offends Him, then the Lord ought to facilitate the doing of this work by every means in His power, acting sovereignly and allowing no hindrances, no adversities, never allowing you to be laid up or put out of the work to which He has called you. But it never was like that and it never will be.

Suffering Inevitable for Vital Testimony; Look at your New Testament; you can look at it from three standpoints. Firstly from the standpoint of the great servants of the Lord upon whom rested tremendous responsibility as the pioneers and the foundation layers of the gospel for this whole dispensation; consider the work that they did. Surely the Lord wanted the gospel preached in Asia and in Europe and everywhere? Surely He wanted those churches established? Yes, there is no question about it. Look how utterly abandoned to the Lord these men were, and see what close accounts they kept with the Lord as to their lives, that there should be nothing offending to Him - men simply poured out for God, and yet they talk about Satan hindering (1Th 2:18), and of being desperately ill. "Epaphroditus... was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow" (Phi 2:26-27). The Lord's servants were thrown into prison, on to beds of sickness, meeting every kind of adversity, all seeming to say that there is every imaginable hindrance and limitation and frustration of this very thing that God wants done. What a contradiction! There is something wrong somewhere! No! In the case of these very men it was like that. They did not escape suffering, suffering of every kind. Then there is the second standpoint, that of the individual churches, or the churches in the different areas. There are not many churches written to and represented in the New Testament without some reference being made to their sufferings. What those churches had to suffer! It was all in line with the Lord's purpose. They were there in the will of God, they were standing for God, they had come right out for God, but He did not shield them. He did not say to Satan, 'That is sacred to Me; touch not Mine anointed.' They suffered, and they were told that they would suffer; it was inevitable. Then there is the third standpoint, that of the Church universal. What a history! This sacred thing, this precious thing, this pearl of great price, this wife of the Lamb, what a history of suffering, of suffering unto death! Those early martyrdoms under Nero when thousands were just torn to pieces by wild beasts - what a story! The Lord did not intervene with an angel to save them; they went through it.

The Lord More Concerned for a Testimony Than For A Work; What does this mean? It means that the Lord is more concerned for a testimony than for a work. We need to get clear on that. A good deal of confusion comes in when you begin to think of things in the light of a work. When you get a lot of people leaving their employment to go into 'the work,' all kinds of complications arise; and really the Lord is not, in the first place, after the work. I am not saying you are not to work for the Lord, but in the first place it is not the work the Lord is after, it is a testimony, it is a fight, a living flame. As I was saying, it is here that testimony becomes something more than a system of truth and teaching. Do not be too concerned to pass off on to other people certain terms, certain ideas, certain truths. 'Have you seen the truth of this? Have you seen the truth of that?' What you mean by such language is truth as a teaching, as a concept. Be infinitely more concerned that there shall be a living impact of life, before you say anything. People will see you have something before you speak. 'You have something I need.' That is the testimony. That is only born of suffering. "To you it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer in his behalf" (Phi 1:29). It is granted to you! You will not reach out your hands eagerly to receive that! It is given, a gift - to suffer for Him. The testimony comes that way. If you ever should think that in getting into the work of God you are going to find a good deal of gratification and satisfaction and pleasure, that it is going to answer to something in you that you long for - to be 'in the Lord's work!' - you are destined to disillusionment, for you will find that it might have been easier for you to have stayed where you were than to get into what you call the Lord's work. Let me say further that it is just here that real effectiveness is secured - at the point where suffering begins. It is a law established now in this very universe since Adam failed, that every bit of fruitfulness of the earth, of human lives in every realm, is the outcome of travail, the result of some fiery ordeal. Fruit for God in the spiritual realm, the real effectiveness of testimony, is born of suffering and travail. It is here again that the Lord gets something more than our activities. He gets something which cannot be expressed in mere language, that is, in terms of truth; something which cannot be found in mere external activities. It is something wrung out of the soul, it is the travail of the soul, that satisfies God. It is there that He gets something.

That To Which the Holy Spirit Commits Himself; Now, this is the character of that which has the testimony; and being like that - something dealt with in the fire, and which is not the fruit of only one fiery ordeal but of many - that is the thing to which the Holy Spirit commits Himself. You notice in Zech. 4, where the prophet describes what he saw - the candlestick all of gold, the olive trees, and the oil flowing from the olive trees to the candlestick, maintaining the living flame - the next declaration that is made is, "This is the word of the Lord... Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit". To what does the Holy Spirit commit Himself? We pause here to ask ourselves, What can we do without the Holy Spirit, after all? What is the use of anything without Him? There is not a Christian who will not readily assent to this, that if the Holy Spirit is not with us, we had better give up. We are absolutely dependent on Him, there can be nothing without Him. What, then, is it to which He will commit Himself? It is to a candlestick like this - something born of the fire, the furnace, something wrought and beaten out with hammer blows. Yes, hammer blows - but not of God's hand. Oh, do not be mistaken about this! It is not God's hand that is striking you. Satan says that it is God Who is striking you, and all the time it is Satan himself. There is only one passage where God is revealed as the striker of one of His own, and that is Isa 53:1-12, and the Stricken One is His own Son. We read, "we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted". But that refers to the work of atonement. God is not striking you and me in that way. Dr. Pierson illustrated it in this way. He had been down to the smithy and seen the smith and his helper at work. They had the iron upon the anvil, taken out of the fire, glowing, flaming. The smith himself had a little hammer, just a little one, but his helper had a big one. The smith just touched the iron and then the other man came down with a terrific blow at the place touched. The smith rapped again, at another spot, with the little hammer and down came the heavy hammer at that spot. A little boy looking on, said, 'What a silly thing! Why does the smith have such a little hammer?' Dr. Pierson said, 'My boy, he is only pointing out the place where the blow needs to be struck, and he is leaving the other one to do the striking'. Dr. Pierson says it is very often like that. The Lord sees something that needs dealing with, straightening out; He just indicates, and the devil does the rest. So the Lord is making the devil do His work to perfect His saints. It does seem to be true in principle. Do not let the enemy tell you that it is the Lord Who is doing all this hitting and knocking about. It is the devil who is doing it, and the Lord is letting him and using him. The fact is that what God is after is a wrought work, a beaten work. It is the result of first, the fire, and then many a blow. It is after many a blow that God gets something more in our lives, or something in our lives is taken out of the way. Any vessel that has not gone this way is only a candlestick without a flame - an ornament. There are plenty of beautiful ornaments in the way of candlesticks, but that will not do. The Holy Spirit commits Himself to the thing that has gone through the fire.

The Form of the Candlestick - Plurality in Oneness; Now a word or two about the third thing in connexion with the candlestick - the form of it. We have the full description in Exo 25:1-40. Summing it all up, it amounts to this - it is something corporate. It is a plurality in oneness. There are six branches to the central stem. In the Revelation, the figure somewhat changes but the principle does not. There we read of seven golden lamp-stands, but there is One like unto the Son of man in the midst, and He holds them all in His hand. He makes them one by His own person. It is the oneness of one Divine Man, and yet multiple; many, but One. My thought here is this - that God gets His testimony in fulness, not in detached and unrelated individuals or parties but in something that has been wrought into a oneness by His fires. Oh, when God really does weld children of His together through suffering, you have something very precious to the Lord. When we have gone through the fires together, have met the sufferings and the sorrows through the years together, and by reason of them God has done something in making us one - not the oneness of an outward arrangement, an outward agreement - and in the sufferings Satan has not been able to disrupt and divide; then there is something which is very precious. You notice Satan always tries to use suffering to divide. When you suffer, your first inclination is to separate yourself, to get away, or to blame somebody else. That is the work of Satan. When God brings two or more, a company, into His fires, He is seeking to remove all that personal element that detaches and divides and separates and sets against, and to bring together. If you have never suffered together, you do not know what true unity is. Those who have gone through life together in trial and adversity attain to a maturity which is very precious; it is thicker than blood.

Oneness Through Suffering

It is something like that between the Lamb and the bride, and it is to be like that between the members of His Body. It will only be brought about by suffering. Therefore God allows companies to suffer. A church goes through trial together; it comes out with something of an inwrought oneness which represents something very much of God. You cannot explain this except from God's standpoint. It is something very precious to God. It is therefore significant that when this presentation of the Son of man in the midst of the golden candlesticks is given, the very first thing that is said about Him is that He is clothed with a garment down to the foot. Before you begin to touch on details, aspects, you get the whole - that seamless robe, that garment which envelopes all, that which brings every member into oneness, that which makes Him complete, one Person, the Son of man; one garment from head to foot. You see the point.

He is coming to the churches, and the first church is Ephesus; and He will speak there about first love. Oh, the fires of Ephesus! What fires that church went through! Evidently, there was some very wonderful love wrought into that church. Now He, clothed in His all-embracing, all-encompassing robe, comes to Ephesus and says, 'Something has happened here, something has gone wrong, first love has been left'. Oneness has come out of His death, His Cross. In the power of His resurrection He has overcome all that is against oneness - all division, all schism; He has destroyed it in His death. He comes forth as the One in the encompassing of one robe from head to foot. Now He finds what is so contrary to the work of His Cross - division, loss of the first love. The thought is this - that we have to go into the Cross in this sense, that we have to know the suffering which gets rid of the self, which deals with all that divides, we have to come up out of a travail into a fire-produced oneness, and the Lord gets His satisfaction.

This is not meant to be oppressive, but it is something we have to look at. We are concerned about effectiveness, what we have called impact, spiritual influence; not words, not teaching, not a framework of things, not a form, but the flame which is something so much more than words, the registration of that power of living light. That is what the Lord is after, and that is why He deals with us as He does. We have to commit ourselves to this. It will help us to understand the meaning of our sufferings. May the Lord give us grace to do the hardest thing for anyone to do naturally, that is, to give a new interpretation to suffering - that it is a deposit, a trust. It is something which has bound up with it the real thing that we are after. If I understand the Christian life and the ways of God at all, I have found it always to be like this, and I have seen it so often, that when people have asked the Lord for more power, more life, more blessing, more spiritual wealth, for some gain - when they have really meant it, it has not been long before they have gone into something exceedingly testing, and the Lord has answered their prayer in that way. They did not ask for that; probably they would not have asked for anything if they had known what would result; but that is how the Lord does it in the mystery of His ways. Let us see that it is real value He is after. He does not protect from adversity anything that is most precious to Him. It is that which is precious to Him which He seems to feel is most worthy of His refining fire.

(Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 838-839)

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Spiritual Warfare and Sin: Wrong Judgment

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.—Galatians 6:7

Sin, I repeat, in addition to anything else it may be, is always an act of wrong judgment. To commit a sin a man must for the moment believe that things are different from what they really are; he must confound values; he must see the moral universe out of focus; he must accept a lie as truth and see truth as a lie; he must ignore the signs on the highway and drive with his eyes shut; he must act as if he had no soul, and was not accountable for his moral choices.

Sin is never a thing to be proud of. No act is wise that ignores remote consequences, and sin always does. Sin sees only today, or at most tomorrow; never the day after tomorrow, next month or next year. Death and judgment are pushed aside as if they did not exist and the sinner becomes for the time a practical atheist who by his act denies not only the existence of God but the concept of life after death....

The notion that the careless sinner is the smart fellow and the serious-minded Christian, though well-intentioned, is a stupid dolt altogether out of touch with life will not stand up under scrutiny. Sin is basically an act of moral folly, and the greater the folly the greater the fool. Man: The Dwelling Place of God, 47-48.

"Keep me from sin today. To sin is indeed so foolish, and yet the tendency is so strong! Deliver me from 'moral folly,' again in the power of Your Holy Spirit. Amen."

Tozer