

WHERE IS THE GOOD?

"There be many that say, Who will show us any good?" (Psa. 4:6)

"And we know 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)

We who know the Lord as personal Savior believe Romans 8:28. Yet, in the midst of our trials, we would often like to SEE some of the "good" promised to us. Sometimes we do see the good which God is able to bring out of our trials, but what about the times when all seems only heartache, suffering and darkness? A look at the context of verse twenty eight, in the rest of this eighth chapter of Romans, will be instructive and helpful. The one who KNOWS that all things work together for good is, at the same time:

- Suffering (verses 18, 23).
- Compassed with infirmities (verse 26).
- So desperate in his need that he doesn't even know what to pray for! (verse 26).

Verses twenty six and twenty eight should be linked together in our thinking: *"-- we do NOT know what we should pray for as we ought . . . but we DO know that all things work together for good."* The good is there, but if we could SEE it, it would not be part of our walk by faith. *"Faith . . . is the evidence of things NOT SEEN"* (Heb. 11:1).

Notice, in the following verses of Romans eight, the condition of the believer who knows that *"all things work together for good"*:

- Many, perhaps all, are against him -- but GOD is FOR him (verses 31, 32).
- He is accused and condemned by men and by Satan (the accuser of the brethren) -- but JUSTIFIED by GOD (verses 33, 34).
- He is greatly in need of prayer -- but constantly prayed for by both the Holy Spirit and Christ Himself (verses 26, 34).
- He is undergoing tribulation, distresses, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword -- but he is assured that all this is for Christ's sake (verses 35, 36).
- He is opposed by death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present (where our trials are), and things to come (where our worries are) -- but NOT SEPARATED from the LOVE of CHRIST (verses 38, 39).

Have we too long taught only the security of our salvation from these verses? They do teach this, but they teach much more. They teach us to expect little but trouble from the world, but infinite love and understanding (in the very MIDST of our trials) from our Savior.

Some of us may be so used to living in comparative luxury that we need to hear anew the cry of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, *"For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin"* (Heb. 12:3, 4). It is almost certain that trials and testings will increase for the believer as this age draws to its close. Many of us (in America at least) are so spoiled by soft living that I wonder how we will fare if we are called upon to lay down our very lives, and the lives of our loved ones, for Him. When Christians were thrown to the lions (and

not delivered as Daniel was), or burned at the stake (and not rescued as the three Hebrew children were), how much good could they see being worked out for them? Yet they KNEW that the good was there, and died with songs of praise on their lips. God may show us some of the good even now; He may deliver us dramatically tomorrow -- but "IF NOT" (see Daniel 3:18), then may we rest BY FAITH on Romans 8:28 and expect that "*whether by life or by death*" (Phil. 1:20), whether by deliverance from trials or by joyous victory in the midst of them, we may glorify Him.

When we are burdened and distressed because of the THINGS the Lord allows to come into our lives, we can KNOW, by faith, that He is working ALL THINGS together for our good -- and rejoice that "*in ALL THESE THINGS we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us*" (Rom. 8:37).

"These little troubles (which really are so transitory) are winning for us a permanent and glorious reward out of all proportion to our pain. For we are looking all the time not at the visible things but at the invisible. The visible things are transitory: it is the invisible things that are really permanent" (2 Cor. 4:17, 18 -- Phillips).

So let us praise the Lord for the good that we do NOT see -- it is LASTING goodness!

---- William P Heath Bible study # 67 -- a tract (Also published in The Berean Searchlight)

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