

The Nature of the Christian's Attitude in Battles and Persecution

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As Christians, we will have many battles to face in this world. However, the comfort is given to us that victory is certain once we apply the faith of Christ to our circumstances.

The scriptures tell us that this is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith (1Jn 5:4) But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1Cor 15:57).

We are therefore called upon to be soldiers and as follows of Christ we will have to suffer persecution. Therefore, we must be free from the entanglement of this world. For “no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who chosen him to be a soldier (2Tim 2:4). Then we need to endure as good soldiers of Jesus Christ (2Tim 2:3).

As we live godly in Christ Jesus, we will suffer persecution even as Christ, Himself suffered. For the servant is not greater than the master. (2Tim 3:12; Acts 11:19; Acts 8:1; 1Cor 4:12; 1Thes 3:4; Matt 10:23-24).

As Soldiers in warfare, we must know who our enemies are. For we are not fighting against flesh or blood (Eph 6:12). Therefore, this will mean that it is not things that are seen that bring or cause the conflicts.

We have enemies. But the greatest of the enemies that we have control over is ourselves or SELF. That is why we must die to daily to self (Ps 27:2; 1Pet 5:8; 1Jn 2:15-17; 1Cor 15:31; Gal 2:20).

The Spirit of Prophecy says:

“We cannot afford to let our spirits chafe over any real or supposed wrong done to ourselves. Self is the enemy we most need to fear. No

form of vice has a more baleful effect upon the character than has human passion not under the control of the Holy Spirit. No other victory we can gain will be so precious as the victory gained over self.” E.G White, Help in Daily Living pg 25

“So long as we are in the world, we shall meet with adverse influences. There will be provocations to test the temper, and it is by meeting these in the right spirit that the Christian graces are developed. If Christ dwells in us, we shall be patient, kind, and forbearing, cheerful amid frets and irritations. Day by day and year by year we shall conquer self and grow into a noble heroism. This is our allotted task; but it cannot be accomplished without help from Jesus, resolute decision, unwavering purpose, continual watchfulness, and unceasing prayer. Each one has a personal battle to fight. Not even God can make our characters noble or our lives useful unless we become co-workers with Him. Those who decline the struggle lose the strength and joy of victory.” Ibid. pg 28

But what is SELF? Our self is our own way of thinking and doing. Better known as the carnal mind or the thought of the flesh. “For to be carnally minded is death but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subjected to the law of God, neither indeed can be. For they which are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit the things of the spirit.” (Rom 8:6,7,5).

However, we must allow Christ alone to dictate what we ought to do. All our thoughts, emotions and actions must be subjected to the Mind of the Spirit. We must live by Christ and in Christ. (Gal.2:20).

Therefore, what should be our attitude when we are rebuked for our faults or attacked and accused of something we did not do?

Firstly, we must recognize that as Christians we will be persecuted because we are living in a sinful world and many rather darkness

than light. (Jn 15:20; Jn 3:19). And we all have sinned and shapen towards iniquity (Ps 51:5; Rom 3:23).

Therefore, when persecuted, whether rightfully so or wrongfully, our attitudes should not be to hit back, or to persecute but to bless and forgive. (Matt 5:11,44, Rom 12:14). For it is not the person we are fighting against but the unseen enemy who is working tirelessly to cause us to fail. (Eph 6: 12; 1Pet 5:8).

We should take things patiently as the Apostle Peter says “For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults ye shall take it patiently? But if, when he does well and suffer for it, and ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.” (1Pet 2:20).

The meditation of this text is important for us to grasp the significance of patience forbearing in the face of being confronted for our faults or for things that we did not do. Even better when you do no wrong but are accused of wrongdoing. How does God want us to look at this?

Firstly, why are we buffeted? It is because we do have faults, whether what is being done is true or not. It is not what you are being buffeted for is the issue it is being buffeted and your reaction towards it.

We must realize that we do have faults.

With that thought it will put in us the mindset of humility and for those with that mindset, our reaction will not be to defend but to take it patiently.

So, the first lesson is one of humility.

Self must not be protected, only the Truth of Christ we ought to defend and contend for (Jude 1:3).

The Spirit of Prophecy says:

*“We should not allow our feelings to be easily wounded. We are to live, not to guard our feelings or our reputation, but to save souls. As we become interested in the salvation of souls, we cease to mind the little differences that so often arise in our association with one another. Whatever others may think of us or do to us, it need not disturb our oneness with Christ, the fellowship of the Spirit.” **Ibid.** pg 26*

“Do not retaliate. So far as you can do so, remove all causes for misapprehension. Avoid the appearance of evil. Do all that lies in your power, without the sacrifice of principle, to conciliate others.”

If impatient words are spoken to you, never replay in the same spirit. Remember that ‘a soft answer turneth away wrath,” Prov 15:1. And there is wonderful power in silence. Words spoken in reply to one who is angry sometimes serve only to exasperate. But anger met with silence, in a tender, forbearing spirit quickly dies away.”

“Under a storm of stinging, fault-finding words, keep the mind stayed upon the word of God. Let mind and heart be stored with God’s promises. If you are ill-treated or wrongfully accused, instead of returning an angry answer, repeat to yourself the previous promises.”

*“If we have a sense of the long-suffering of God toward us, we shall not be found judging or accusing others. When Christ was living on the earth, how surprised His associates would have been if after becoming acquainted with Him, they had heard Him speak one word of accusation of fault-finding, or of impatience. Let us never forget that those who Love Him are to represent Him in character” **Ibid.** Pg 31.*

“Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.” “Not rendering evil for evil or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.” Romans 12:10’ 1Peter 3:9

Be not overcome of evil but overcome evil with good.” Rom 12:21.

“Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.” Ps 37:5,6

*There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known Lk 12:2.” **ibid.** Pg 27*

So how should we look at trials and temptations? (James 1:2-4; 1Pet 4:12,13)

The Spirit of Prophecy says:

“ It is because God is leading them that these things come upon them. Trials and obstacles are the Lord’s chosen methods of discipline and His appointed conditions of success. He who reads the hearts of men knows their characters better than they themselves know them. He sees that some have powers and susceptibilities which, rightly directed, might be used in the advancement of His work. In His providence, He brings these persons into different positions and varied circumstances that they may discover in their character the defects which have been concealed from their own knowledge. He gives them the opportunity to correct these defects and to fit themselves for His service. Often, He permits the fires the affliction to assail them that they may be purified.”

*“The fact that we are called upon to endure trial shows that the Lord Jesus sees in us something precious which He desires to develop. If He saw in us nothing whereby, He might glorify His name, He would not spend time in refining us. He does not cast worthless stones into His furnace. It is valuable ore that He refines. The blacksmith puts the iron and steel into the fire that he may know what manner of metal they are. The Lord allows His chosen ones to be placed in the furnace of affliction to prove what temper they are of and whether they can be fashioned for His work.” **ibid.** pg 9*

Conclusion

So, my dear readers, count it all joy when you burden the assaults of many. The Christian pathway is a cheerful one because of the hope that is before us. Turn the trials into victory as you possess your souls in patience. For “Here is the patience of the Saints, here are they that keep the commandments of God and have the Faith of Jesus Christ.” (Rev 14:12).

“For they that endure to the end the same shall be saved.” (Matt 24:13) May God add His many blessings.

Amen