

ENCOUNTERING GOD THROUGH DIFFICULTIES

John 5:17-20

Introduction: God loves mankind very much and knows how different each person is from another therefore He has used different methods to make Himself known and heard through the ages, such as sending angels with a message, or speaking from a cloud or thunder, or a burning bush and even through a donkey once. Today God most often speaks through His written Word, the Bible, and through times of prayer with the Holy Spirit helping God's children understand what God is saying. There is another way God makes Himself heard today and that is through difficulties and situations in a person's life.

I. DIFFICULTIES ARE BETTER UNDERSTOOD WHEN SEEN FROM GOD'S VIEWPOINT

1. Sooner or later every Christian will encounter situations and look up at God and ask, "Why is this happening to me?"
 - The Biblical story of Job and all the tragedies that came upon him is an example:
 - Job's friends told him it was because of sin in his life that tragedy came.
 - Job's wife had no better answer for all that had happened.
 - Job went to God and learned God's viewpoint.
 - Jesus said that He watched God, the Father, and then, understanding God's viewpoint, did what God, the Father wanted.
2. It is not uncommon for a Christian in difficult times to look up at God and think that God is not "fair" or that God is mad about something and is punishing him/her but doesn't know what for.
 - Sometimes one even accuses God and questions God's wisdom and love and that God has to be wrong in what is happening. Why would God let this happen to me?

II. WHEN IN THE MIDST OF DIFFICULT TIMES WRONG IDEAS ABOUT GOD CAN COME

1. The question to ask God is not "Why me?" but "Show me."
 - Take God's Word, the Bible, study it, ask the Holy Spirit to help you to hear God, to understand what God is doing, talk to God without blaming Him.
 - Give God a chance to show you His viewpoint about your difficult circumstance.
2. Most often in difficult circumstances in a Christian's life, God is working to strengthen that person's faith as well as the faith of others, to increase spiritual knowledge, and to bring glory to God, Himself.
3. However, many arrive at the conclusion that God doesn't care that they are hurting and need His help, especially after praying many times for God to step in and end the crisis.

III. ONLY WHEN GOD'S VIEWPOINT IS UNDERSTOOD WILL A PERSON KNOW THE WHY OF DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES IN HIS/HER LIFE

1. Moses told Pharoah "God said to let His people go." Pharoah put hardships on God's people and they blamed Moses and Moses in turn blamed God.
2. God gently and patiently explained to Moses that He wanted everybody to know that HE was God. God's viewpoint was then understood.
3. Lazarus was sick and Jesus deliberately waited till Lazarus died and was buried before going. Everybody was upset with Jesus for waiting so long. Jesus explained that God was going to be glorified when He raised Lazarus from the dead.
4. Jesus stopped a funeral procession and raised a widow's only son to life. Why did Jesus wait? So that the name of God would be lifted up.
5. 5,000 people had been following and listening to Jesus and they were hungry. The only food were 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish. The disciples didn't know what to do. Jesus told them what to do and over 5,000 were fed and there was food left over. In the process God was glorified.
6. Only when one has found out from God what He has in mind can one really understand why he/she is in a difficult situation.

CONCLUSION:

1. When things get confusing and difficult, remember that God loves you and has your best interest at heart, therefore go to God and seek the answer from God. Do not blame God!
2. Hard as it is at times, get into God's Word, pray and wait upon the Holy Spirit to help you understand what God is doing and why.
3. Do not conclude anything until after you have heard from God and gotten His viewpoint.
4. Make adjustments as God reveals and in the end, you will be blessed and God will be honored.