

Praise the Lord!

*"The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away;
Blessed be the name of the Lord."
Job 1:21*

I well recall reading some books given to me, that were written by an author I had never heard of before. As I read the books I grew concerned by the ideas the author had.

For example, the main thrust of the books concerned the matter of praising the Lord at all times. With such a teaching I heartily agreed—but the author went on to say that we were to praise the Lord FOR all things. That was when I started to become concerned.

The author gave an illustration that if our unmarried daughter came home and told us she was expecting a child we were to praise the Lord for this new situation in her life.

I could not accept the idea that God was to be praised for a sinful act that had been committed.

If a young person was pregnant outside of marriage, this was wrong according to the Bible. Hence Joseph decided to divorce Mary when he learned she was expecting (Matthew 1:18-19).

Obviously Joseph did not

praise the Lord for the situation, rather he quietly chose to divorce Mary. An angel stopped Joseph from legally separating from Mary and explained that the situation was not sinful, rather God was at work to redeem His people through the child she would bear. (Matthew 1:20-23)

People quote Ephesians 5:20—where Paul calls on his readers to give thanks to God for all things. This verse seems to have suffered abuse from some people who insist Paul meant all things without exception. If that was Paul's meaning then it logically follows that he tells us to thank God for sin. Can you imagine God wanting us to thank Him for Hitler or Stalin and the massacres they did?

When Job blessed the name of the Lord after learning of all his sudden tragedies, he meant that he was submissive to God regardless of his confusion over such tragedies. He did not understand the reasons for his trials but he decided he would honour God regardless of what God did or allowed.

No one expects you to praise God for your sorrows in this life

but, like Job, you are called on to give praise to God in spite of your pain. Job arrived at a place in his suffering when he said (Job 13:15),

"Though he slay me, yet will I trust him."

This amazing word of faith comes from the lips of a person who suffered more than any other person in his time. No, Job never gave thanks for the problems, but he certainly kept on blessing the name of God in spite of his sorrow.

How easy it is to say, "Praise the Lord" when life is good. It is far more remarkable to speak the praise of God when life turns against us.

Can you say with the Psalmist (Psalm 34:1 KJV),

"I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth."

May you have grace today to bless the name of the Lord.

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