

# Hope Springs Eternal

*"Yet when I hoped for good, evil came;"  
Job 30:26 (NIV)*

I recall a particular individual in a church where I was the pastor many years ago.

Somehow he felt a calling to seek me out prior to the Sunday morning church service each week with some tale of woe that would cause tears to flow from the stony eyes of a statue. Never in my life had I ever met a man who could depress a person so swiftly and thoroughly as he could.

I was fascinated by his capacity to describe some terrible disaster in a very few sentences. It seemed he was only with me for a moment yet the sense of gloom that descended on me would last just until the church service was over.

He would communicate the horror and then conclude with a very sincere word like, "Well, the Lord bless you as you preach this morning Pastor." As he departed I would mutter something under my breath such as, "Well the Lord had better bless me after you shot that torpedo at me."

He never learned that I developed a strategy of ducking into a doorway here or there in the church building as soon as I spotted him coming after me. It was a cat and mouse game every Sunday morning as he was determined to spread his personal

gloom all over me. I was equally set on escaping his clutches until the service was over. I am sad to say that his radar was more effective than my efforts to escape him.

Some people really have the uncanny ability to draw disaster after them. They seem to be among the kindest and most likable of people. But there is a magnetic quality to their being that somehow is able to attract the worst events imaginable. Disaster lurks around every corner as they stumble through life.

Yet, as a student of human history, I have seen that these same people—who have evil come upon them when they hope for good—can be among the most influential people on earth.

Many a time when discouraged I have turned to a history book on some Christian whose life was full of misery and yet they kept pressing on for the Lord. I read of the pain and suffering they endured and marvel at how they show God's amazing grace.

Annie Johnson Flint (1866-1932) was disabled with arthritis as a young woman and suffered considerably. Not able to earn a living she had serious financial problems. Yet from her suffering came heartwarming poems to encourage those who suffered

with her.

The great Baptist preacher C.H. Spurgeon suffered great pain from physical illnesses and had several serious bouts of depression. Yet his ministry was a blessing to millions in his day—and ours—and his written works are still being published.

Job, the man who uttered the words of our verse today, could never have dreamed of the profound influence his suffering would have on the people of every generation since his time.

The words of the apostle Paul are so helpful when disaster strikes again and again. 2 Thessalonians 3:16 says, "Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you." (NIV).

Christians, do not give up. The real test of genuine Christianity is perseverance. We may stumble and fall, but our Good Shepherd comes along, picks us up, holds us close to His heart to heal our wounds, and then gets us back on track. Rest in the arms of Jesus today and be made ready for the next stage of your journey home.

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