

The Flower of the Grass He Shall Pass Away

Christians are different than those in the world. Even the word “church” carries with it the definition of those who are “called out.” We are called out from the world to be a separate people. This is what makes us holy; this is what makes us sanctified. What is that that separates us from the world? It is the truth. John 17:17 states, “*Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.*” This is part of a prayer by Jesus about his disciples, soon to be His apostles. Jesus' time to be crucified had come and He realized that He was not going to be with His disciples any longer. He prays that God will keep His followers. In the prayer, we see how Jesus and the Father are one and how Jesus was sanctified. The spotless lamb of God then tells us that His disciples must be one with Him and the Father; they must be sanctified. He clearly makes the distinction between those of the world and those of the Father. The truth is the dividing line. In John 17:14 a simple, gospel fact is given to us, “*I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*” For all those who love and worship God, those who are Christians, we draw closer to Him. The closer we draw to Christ and the Father, the clearer the difference between us and the world becomes.

In James 1, we see that trials and tribulations force people to choose sides. True Christians, as we've discussed earlier, draw their strength from God (cf. Philippians 4:13). The harder life becomes, Christians rely more and more on their Father. For all those that falter under life's ebbs and tides, they draw closer to their father also, Satan. They begin to rely on self or on the things of this world. This shows through their actions: not attending services, reliance on drugs, etc. Christ tells us, “*If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me*” (Luke 9:23). We must give ourselves wholly over to God, “*If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell,*” (Matthew 5:29-30). Whatever keeps us from drawing closer to God we must do away with.

This is the spirit of the humble; this is what it takes to make through our trials.

“ But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position; and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away,” (James 1:9-11).

The humble are exalted in Christ and in their spiritual blessings. The rich of this world should glory in their humiliation because it puts them in a situation to draw closer to God and separate themselves from this world. The simple fact is, “*No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth,*” (Matthew 6:24). Trials make

you make that decision. Sometimes we try to rationalize our short comings with excuses: "I'll serve God when I grow older," "In a couple of years I'll have gotten myself in a better position to serve God," or "Its just to hard right now to serve God." All of these are feeble attempts to hold on to the passing pleasures of this life. We are as "flowering grass" that lives for a short time. If we put our lives into this world than our joy is short lived because everything around will pass away shortly and we can take nothing with us after we die. Christians put their treasures in God and Heaven. These are eternal possessions. When Christians die they gain more than anyone could here on this earth.

This does not just apply to possessions. If we choose family or friends over God, then we have not sanctified ourselves. As Christians, we are made to make some hard decisions. Some of us come from homes that do not serve the Lord. Our families are a part of this world, and some of our families threaten to reject us if we try to serve the Lord. Christ tells us, " "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:26-27). This is a hyperbole to make us come to a realization of the truth. Christ does not ask us to literally "hate" our parents or family, but He does require us to love Him more. This is something hard to do, but that is what makes it a trial and a tribulation. If it were not hard to do then it would not be a trial. In the next section we will view all of the rewards we receive through our trials and who is responsible for our trials.