

Jesus Christ is The Way of Escape

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By David A. DePra

Wherefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God [is] faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it. Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. (1 Cor. 10:12-14)

Most of us, when we read this passage, focus on the phrase, "way of escape." We welcome the thought that there is a way of escape out of every trial. So, we pray that God would create for us this, "way of escape." Or we ask Him how we might create it. This, "way of escape," can easily become our goal in any trial.

But if we read this passage carefully, we might be surprised as to what it actually says. It describes this, "way of escape," as that which makes us, "able to bear," the trial. Can we see that? Does that sound as if this, "way of escape," is a way OUT of a trial? No. It sounds as if it is the means by which we can stay IN the trial – and bear it by the grace of God.

That would be a rather disappointing promise if we did not know the purpose of God in any trial – and His means of accomplishing that purpose. The only way in which we can actually experience Christ in His resurrection victory – is not by escaping a trial – but by rising above it through Him.

This is usually a very difficult concept when we are in a trial. By definition, a trial of faith is beyond our ability to bear it. Trials will seem to be too much for us. They press us beyond ourselves. A trial of faith is exactly that – it tries our faith IN GOD - - beyond our present capacity. So, to be told that we must BEAR the trial might seem an impossible task. We easily cry out to God that He might deliver us. That He might open up to us this supposedly promised, "way of escape."

Naturally speaking, we often cry out to God to escape outward circumstances. We plead with Him to do something to us so that we can feel better. We might even allow ourselves to become deceived by teaching or by forces that offer exactly that. But God will not answer our prayer. He will be silent. We are wasting our time asking for any, "way of escape," other than the one which God has promised. This is because God loves us.

Jesus Christ is God's only, "way of escape." That is not some meaningless religious banter. It is real. It means that there is resurrection life in Christ that we can live in

that elevates us above that which would drag us down.

Notice that resurrection life does not necessarily take away circumstances, obliterate our inward emotions, or act upon us to stop our suffering. Rather, in Christ, God has given us a Person in Whom, and from out of Whom, we can live by faith. And if we do, then even though nothing else might change, we will be living by faith above all else and truly escape any spiritual harm.

God's way is never to subtract from us old man in Adam; the body of sin. No. Rather, it is to add to us Christ, and to bring us to realize Him – and then to teach us to live from out of Christ. Then all that is contrary to Christ will have no power to move us. The victory will be REAL, in experience, and eternal.

God's Way of Escape

As noted, God's way of escape is not from OUT OF the trial. Rather, it is through the trial, and on top of the trial – IN CHRIST. But in order for this to be the result, two things must take place between ourselves and God. First, we will need to have it proven TO US and IN US that we cannot survive the trial in our own strength, based upon our own righteousness, and even by our own faith. This is the work of the Cross. But secondly, we will need to see the Truth that Jesus Christ is our resurrection and our life – and that He is utterly and eternally faithful. If these realities are proven TO US and IN US then we will surrender ourselves – not to the trial – but to Jesus Christ as Lord in the trial.

Hopefully we can see that the essence of any trial is NOT outward, but inward. Circumstances can act upon us – but the results are inward. That is where the suffering takes place. And it is there that the core of our relationship with Christ resides. We do have an outward life. We need to obey God in an outward way. But all of it is supposed to be the result of what is going on between us and God spiritually within.

It is here that we must see a great Truth. A trial of faith is NOT God's way of building US up in ourselves – trials are never used by God to, "bring out the best in us," or to somehow form in us, "Christian character" -- many believers define Christian character as personality development. No. Trials are used of God to shake us, to bring our confidence in ourselves to a catastrophic crash. But all of this is unto the purpose of bringing us to where our faith will be solely in Christ – and it will be REAL.

Note how faith comes to be in us. We must be reduced and He must be magnified – and we must SEE. Then faith will be there. Faith comes by hearing or seeing the Truth.

None of this would be possible if every time we encountered a trial God delivered us out of it. No. We cannot experience actual victory over the enemy, over our flesh, and over anything else unless we face these enemies and obstacles head on IN CHRIST by faith. Victory is never, "on paper." It is experienced in life – and can only be experienced IN the trial unto being OVER the trial by faith in Christ. In short, Jesus Christ is God's WAY of escape.

God's Purpose

It might seem to be a contradiction for God to promise, on the one hand, to never allow a trial that is above our ability, but then on the other to allow just that – a trial that is too much for us. By definition a trial **MUST** be more than we can handle on our own. Otherwise, it would not be a trial. So, how do we reconcile this?

God is simply telling us that our present trial is **NOT** beyond faith in Christ. But it is beyond us. We **ARE** able to bear our trial through faith in Christ, even though we will not be able to bear it otherwise. This is His promise.

Trials are not things unto themselves. Rather, they are God's means of developing a relationship between us and Himself through faith. This can only be done by crucifying all of our confidence in ourselves, and in concert with this, by bringing us into an inward realization of His Son. This is the purpose of God in trials, and cannot be accomplished through any other means.

What does a trial of faith look like? Paul gave several good descriptions:

We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. (II Cor. 4:8-11)

For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raises the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us. (I Cor. 1:8-10)

Here we again see that the purpose of the trial of faith is that we might we might seek and find the Lord in a deeper way. God uses trials to bring us to repentance – because often the worst is brought out in us – and uses them to open our eyes to Christ. The two go together. Of course, some refuse. But that does not negate the purposes of God.

Now, if suffering in a trial was for this age only, as Paul says, we are the most miserable of all people. But it is not for only this age. It is for the eternal ages. God wants to bring His sons and daughters into a relationship with Himself through Christ wherein they can become living manifestations and expressions of Christ – and then become extensions of Him unto His eternal purposes. God is planting the seeds for that in His people now – often through trials.

Do we mean business with God? Do we really want the Truth? Are we willing to allow God to do whatever it takes to bring us into His full will and purpose in Christ? God will often use something that means a lot to us as a vehicle – not to necessarily take away what means a lot to us – but to actually bring us to where we can live in it to His glory. Jesus Christ wants to be Lord of all of us. But not just in theory. This is to be a living and dynamic relationship – only possible through the trials of faith.

So the next time we are in a trial of faith, rather than ask God to deliver us from the trial, we ought to ask God to reveal in us His Son. If that happens, we will find victory in Christ – a victory that will bring us out from UNDER the trial to where we can IN CHRIST rise above it.

Jesus Christ – life in Him; faith in Him – a REAL experience of resurrection victory in Him – this is God's way of escape. It is an escape into HIS LIFE and HIS PRESENCE out from that which is of the flesh, the world, and the forces of evil. It is the only real escape. Jesus Christ is the One under Whose wings we can safely abide.

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