

Facing Life With God

Jeremiah's words fell on deaf ears. The men of Judah refused to listen to the word of the Lord, arguing that they were better off without God! "Since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine," they said (Jeremiah 44:18). How could God's people be so blind? Did they really believe their own words? Had they swallowed hook, line, and sinker the devil's deception? It seems that they had.

I cannot imagine facing life without God. He is light, and in Him is no darkness. John also informs us that "God is love" (1 John 4:8). Although God is so much greater than we that we do not comprehend Him, where would we be without Him? Life is tough, and as one song says, "I cannot bear these burdens alone." On the other hand, when God is our all, life becomes much easier. That is not a promise of health and wealth, as is so commonly taught, but with God at our side, what have we to fear? What harm can man do to us that has eternal consequences? None at all!

Exodus 1–2 covers centuries, but in a few words Moses gives a description of how things went after Joseph died. Times became extremely difficult for Abraham's descendants, just as God had said: "They shall afflict them four hundred years" (Genesis 15:13). The king of Egypt imposed laws that brought fear and anguish and death. In their agony, the Israelites cried out. God heard their cries, saw their burdens, and remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exodus 2:23–25). Israel was about to witness the power and mercy and wrath of the God of their fathers. Their deliverance from bondage was imminent.

Moses, who had grown up in Egypt, came back to the country with a message from God: "Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness" (Exodus 5:1). Pharaoh, with a hard heart and a stiff neck, would hear none of it. Instead of release, Israel's burdens increased! The people cried out, accusing Moses of being the cause of their increasingly difficult lives. God was not finished, however, and in His time He delivered His people from the oppression of their taskmasters. In the plagues He sent on Egypt, He showed His power over all the gods of the Egyptians. God prevailed in Egypt, He prevailed in the wilderness, and He prevailed in Canaan. We wonder, therefore, why Israel turned her back on Him.

This is not about Israel, however; it is about you and me. How steadfast are we in walking with God? Do we trust Him enough to give Him our all? Are we willing to go where He leads and do as He says, trusting Him to meet our needs? Is God always in our thoughts? Is our every decision designed by God's will? What part of our lives are we

unwilling to yield to His will? Ponder these questions carefully before you answer them, and be honest with yourself.

The day is gloomy as I write this. It's spitting rain, and perhaps your plans had to go on the back burner because of the weather. Work outside had to be postponed, because of the threat of rain. Maybe the trip to town was canceled because of a flat tire. The washer doesn't wash; the dryer doesn't dry. A phone call turns our world upside down, because a longtime friend is angry with us and doesn't tell us why. Need I go on? Life seems to attack at times. Nothing seems to go right. Murphy's law blindsides us. What are we to do?

Could we talk with the apostle Peter, he would surely tell us to keep focused on Jesus. Remember the time when he stepped out of the boat and walked on the water? Imagine the courage it took to step into that tempestuous sea! Scripture tells us that Peter walked on the water until he saw the wind; then he began to sink. What happened? He obviously lost his focus on Jesus. In his helpless state, Peter cried out, "Lord, save me" (Matthew 14:30). Therein lies the beauty of the story. Peter knew the source of his salvation. Like David, he could say, "In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God" (Psalm 62:7).

Job thought he experienced life without God, but the Lord had simply pulled down the hedge and let Satan work his work. We can take heart in Job's story, for it teaches us that God is in control of all the situations in our lives. Not one tear falls from our eyes without God's seeing it. Pain, whether physical or emotional, is seen by God. He hears every cry, knows every sorrow, and is with us to take every care that we release to Him. Nothing in our lives goes unnoticed by our Father.

Sitting at the right hand of God today is Jesus Christ, who lived in the flesh, suffered more than we can imagine, felt physical, emotional, and spiritual pain, and experienced death, not because of disease or natural decay of His body, but death by crucifixion. On the cross, He bore the penalty pronounced by His Father: "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Galatians 3:13). He knows the pain of sin; He understands our needs.

With Jesus Christ as our Intercessor, Mediator, and Advocate, we have an audience with God. In the storms, He is our shelter. In the battle, He is our shield. When our heart breaks, He is our comforter. When we are weak, He is strong. God understands us because Jesus understands, and it is He who promised, "I am with you always." Life with God is good.

—Dale E. Andrews