

How Hard And Rugged Is The Way

Lloyd Hymnal 391 C. M. *The exercises of saints various.*

(sing to 83b Sacred Harp, The Weary Souls)

- 1 How hard and rugged is the way, To some poor pilgrims' feet! In all they do, or think, or say, They opposition meet.
- 2 Others again more smoothly go, Secured from hurts and harms; The Saviour leads them gently through, Or bears them in his arms.
- 3 Faith and repentance all must find, But yet, we daily see, They differ in their time and kind, Duration, and degree.
- 4 Some long repent and late believe; But, when their sin's forgiven, A clearer passport they receive, And walk with joy to heaven.
- 5 Their pardon some receive at first, And then compelled to fight, They feel the latter stages worst, And travel much by night.
- 6 But be our conflict short or long, This commonly is true, That wheresoever faith is strong, Repentance is so too.

I awoke this morning with these words in my mind and heart, along with the thoughts of my recently widowed niece, her children, and her family.

As I pondered these words "***How hard and rugged is the way, To some poor pilgrims' feet! In all they do, or think, or say, They opposition meet.***" I thought of the long hard struggle in life that this family has went through; seven years of battle against cancer., while acknowledging; everyone has their struggles of living for many various reasons.

Some words, we should remember, which should bring comfort to our hearts, as we wrestle with the struggles of life, which are found in the bible in: ***Joh 16:33 "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."*** What a great consolation, and encouragement, we are given here by Christ Jesus. When we have trials, troubles, and tribulations, in our lives; we can remember this scripture truth, from Christ, and be encouraged. Why? If you have trials, troubles, and tribulations, in your life; "***In the world ye shall have tribulation***" you have evidence that you are a born-again child of God.

Thus, we can rejoice, in the midst of our miseries here in the world, and give glory, and praise, to our Saviour and Lord. How do we do this? When we exhibit total faith, and trust, in the finished work of Jesus Christ, we are putting on Christ, as commanded by scripture, and displaying to the world the greatness of our Saviour.

In other words, you are letting the light of Christ shine brightly in your life, as commanded in: ***Mt 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."*** One of the greatest testimonies you can give, as a child of God, is to let your light shine while enduring trials, troubles, and tribulations. What do you mean?

Ministers of the gospel, who teach and preach the word of God, may preach great sermons, may teach great lessons from the bible, and you may personally have a great grasp and understanding of scripture, but none of these preach a message to others as our personal walks in life. There is to be

agreement, and communion, between our talks and walks. When our feet take the pathway of salvation, the things people remember, the most, are what they see in our life, our actions, and our reactions to trials, troubles, and tribulations.

This is the only gospel preaching that many people in the world will ever hear. Who knows whose life may be touched, by God making that person aware of the brightness of the light of Christ in you? You may well be the tool God uses to draw others unto himself, which brings glory to his name.

Now, back to a personal application. During the woes of life; do you feel the peace of Christ in your heart? You should, and this should again bring you much comfort. Why? Because, again, you have evidence of being a born-again child of God. One who has a bright hope of an eternal home, in an eternal heaven, which Christ Jesus has gone to prepare for us, seen in: ***Joh 14:1-3; 1 "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."***

This "**hope**" is not like the hope that the world at large uses in their language. Hope, as used in the text below, is from the Greek word "**echo**" and means: *to hold as possession*. We are speaking of a biblical hope, which is defined in scripture as:

- ***Heb 6:18-20; 18 "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: 19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; 20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."***
- ***Heb 11:1 ¶ "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."***

You can easily see from this text, this is not a worldly hope, but it is the knowledge, of the surety of your eternal salvation in Christ Jesus. How can you have knowledge of hope? In **Heb 11:1** we have two words that tell us this: substance and evidence. Both are tangible things. Things which are definitive and can be seen and handled, which can be presented to bring knowledge to light.

This is the difference in biblical hope and worldly hope, which can be seen in: ***Lu 6:34 "And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye?"*** There is no sureness in the hope of the world. Does everyone who buys a lottery ticket win? Do they all hope to win? Yes, but their hope is not a biblical hope, which is based upon the finished work of Jesus Christ. We have a biblical hope that is sure and steadfast, and we have evidence, which produces knowledge, seen in: ***1Jo 3:14 ¶ "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."*** Thus, we see; biblical hope is to know you have been saved eternally.

One last thought about trials, troubles, and tribulations. We are not speaking of those things, which we bring upon ourselves by doing things we ought not to do. Example: I leaned a ladder against a tree, knowing that this is not the proper thing to do, without assistance or some way to anchor the ladder in a steady position. The ladder twisted and fell, with me upon it, and the result was I broke my ankle. I will suffer from the consequence of my ignorant action the rest of my life. This is a trouble in my life that was caused by myself.

Such times, as my niece, and her family, have had to suffer through, are not brought on by self. They are in our lives for some reason, which is unknown to us, and they are used by God to bring strengthened faith, and trust, in Christ in our lives. I can attest to this in my own life, with my Meniere's disease, which causes me to be disabled. It has proved a blessing in my life, and thereby, it has proved a blessing in the lives of others. God is good, faithful, and true, in all that he does.

I understand; this message does not take away the pain and agonies of our life here. However, during these painful experiences in our lives, it is a message to remind us; Jesus suffered beyond anything any person can image, that we might have the knowledge, of this glorious hope, of eternal life with him. I remember a song, 383 in the Sacred Harp book: *Eternal Day: O what are all my sufferings here If, Lord, thou count me meet, With that enraptured host t'appear, And worship at thy feet. Give joy or grief, give ease or pain, Take life or friends away, But let me find them all again, in that eternal day.*

I tell you all this to remind you, and me, when times are tough, and there seems to be no other way, remember that Jesus said: "***In the world ye shall have tribulation.***" Tribulations don't mean you have been forsaken, it is in those times that Jesus picks us up and carries us in his arms.

May the Holy Spirit presence, in the heart and soul of the born-again child of God, always stir us up to remembrance, of the greatness, and abundance, of the mercy and grace of God. May we feel the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, when we are enduring the storms of life. May the brightness of the glory of Christ Jesus shine forth from us, and bring glory, honor, and praise, to our heavenly Father, and our Saviour and Lord, Christ Jesus! Hallelujah! Praise ye the Lord!

Clarke Lee, 01-26-2022