

TRIALS & TRIBULATIONS

Michael Pickford

One of the great paradoxes in serving a loving God is the concept of pain and suffering. Job certainly struggled with this great paradox, and atheists often throw it in our faces in order to refute the reality of God. But we must not fail to see the great spiritual benefits of our own suffering.

Suffering affects our Purity. Going through trials in life can serve to purify us. When we are in pain, it often leads us to God, to beg His forgiveness, to renew our commitment to doing what is right and avoiding those things that are evil. Job experienced it all – loss of wealth, loss of health, loss of loved ones, loss of a supportive spouse; yet while going through the tremendous calamities he experienced, he declared, “When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10). He was saying he would be purer! (1 Pt 1:6-9).

Suffering affects our Perspective. When we are being tried or persecuted, especially because of the fact that we are Christians, this should lead us to focus more on what it’s all for, rather than getting down in the “Woe is me” dumps. Paul suffered many things at the hands of his enemies, and those sufferings pushed his mind and thoughts more towards the reward – the invisible. Heaven! (2 Cor 4:16-18).

Suffering affects our Pity. When we suffer, it brings us more in tune with the sufferings others. It helps us to be sympathetic, understanding, patient, and kind towards others who are suffering. Jesus could sympathize with our weaknesses because He experienced them Himself (Heb 4:15) 

The elements of our worship, as prescribed by God’s word, are as follows:

- **SINGING:** Ephesians 5:18,19; Colossians 3:16
- **PREACHING/TEACHING:** Acts 2:42; Eph. 4:11,12
- **PRAYING:** Acts 2:42; Acts 12:5
- **LORD’S SUPPER:** 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Acts 20:7
- **GIVING:** 1 Corinthians 16:1,2; 2 Corinthians 9:6,7

COME WORSHIP WITH US!

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY...9:00
SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP.....10:00
SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP.....6:00
WEDNESDAY EVENING SERVICES....7:00



- www.defendthegospel.com
- 1st Sunday Singing Night: 6 pm
- 5th Sunday Night: Guest Speaker
- Men’s Business Meeting. 1st Sunday evenings following services.



SOUTHSIDE SEARCHER

Southside church of Christ, 1167 South Lowry

Smyrna, TN 37167, Phone (615) 459-7854

“They...searched the scriptures daily...” –Acts 17:11

Volume 13, Number 03

January 15, 2017

PRIORITIES

Michael Pickford

A priority is something that ranks high in importance. Priorities differ from person to person. Priorities motivate us when it comes to accomplishing things. Therefore, our actions are very convincing indicators when it comes to others sizing up what our priorities in life are. Jesus said, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21). My heart will follow after the things I treasure, thus influencing my actions and displaying my priorities for all to see. Suppose a stranger came to town and wanted to discover what your priorities in life are? Let’s suppose he decided to interview you, and then to interview your friends, neighbors, family, co-workers, fellow church members, etc. Do you think they would paint a different picture than you would? Whose “testimony” do you think the stranger would put more stock in, yours or theirs? In fact, it might be beneficial for all of us to hear what others think our priorities are based on their observations of and interactions with the life we live. What might they say about the following areas...

- 1) Attending worship services.** Would others say that you place attendance as a high priority in life? It certainly should be (Heb 10:15), but what would they say based on their experience with you and your habits?
- 2) Others.** Would others say that you place a high priority on being attentive to the well being and needs of others? We should (Matt 25:35-40; Jms 1:27; Gal 6:9-10), but what would they say based on their experience with you and your habits?
- 3) Providing For Family.** Would others, based on what they observe, say that you placed a high priority on your family? Would they say that you loved them as you should? Would they say that you work hard with honest labor to provide for them? (1 Tim. 5:8).
- 4) Seeking The Lost.** Would others say that you have placed seeking lost souls as a high priority in life? Would they have observed you doing whatever you can to speak with others about the Gospel and God’s plan of salvation? Would they speak of you always bringing up spiritual matters in conversations, or passing along a tract, or inviting someone to have a bible study or visit the assemblies with you? (Lk 19:10; 1 Cor. 9:19-22; Acts 8:4).

The truth is, our highest priority should be to fear God and keep His commandments (Ecc 12:13-14). Our words and ways in this life should tell others that all of our top priorities in life are based on this – To serve God! 

Evangelist & Editor: Michael Pickford, 615-471-1612, mpickford3@comcast.net

www.defendthegospel.com

SMALL CHURCHES

Mike Thomas

It is not uncommon for people to measure a church's success solely by the numbers it has in attendance. One of the first things I am asked when people learn I am a preacher is how big the church is where I attend. They will then use this as a benchmark for whether or not I am a successful preacher or if the church is a vibrant congregation. I guess I do the same thing when asking about others. For one reason or another, we are led to believe that all we need to know about a church is found in its numbers. This perception leads some Christians to ask, "Have we failed because we cannot get more people to join our effort? Are we doing something wrong when the numbers are low?" Many are convinced that churches will not remain small if they are truly dedicated to the Lord.

The church at Sardis had a reputation as a growing and active church, but from God's perspective they were dead spiritually (Revelation 3:1). Perhaps their pews were filled to capacity and everybody who was anybody went there; with other churches in the area measuring their efforts by what Sardis did. But Sardis was not the ideal church from God's point of view. When it came to serving God, Sardis had a lot to learn from Smyrna (Revelation 2:8-11) and Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7-13) in demonstrating faith and zeal. This does not mean that every large church has compromised with sin to get to that size (Acts 11:21). Nor does it mean that fewer numbers guarantees faithful, dedicated members. Some churches are few in number because they will not commit to a spiritual atmosphere that encourages love and dedication to God; forcing others to look elsewhere out of self-preservation. Some are overflowing with people despite the teaching and leadership. As long as a church is dedicated to the Lord's will, they should not feel like a failure when the numbers are not booming as in other churches. Sometimes the most dedicated disciples can find only a few to join them in serving God properly, as Noah discovered in preparing for the flood (I Peter 3:20).

A church with few numbers can still have a very positive, uplifting, and encouraging atmosphere if it is willing. One of the finest churches I know of has attendance in the 20's to 30's every week. The world looks at numbers like that and says it's time to close the doors and go elsewhere to worship, but don't tell these brethren that. They are genuinely committed to worshiping God in spirit and truth - with no thought whatsoever of self-pity and disappointment. Their time in worship is deliberate and unhurried. Their Singing is plentiful and with purpose. Their preaching (the kind they demand from visiting speakers) is straight out of the Bible. Any time they have together is time to let each other know how much they genuinely appreciate one another. They even keep the building up-to-date and clean. It's hard to believe a church like that will stay small for long, but then again that's measuring success in ways God does not.

In any setting and in all things may the attitude always be *"not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord"* (Romans 12:11). There is always reason to rejoice since Jesus promises that *"where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them"* (Matthew 18:20). -

THE FAITH

Michael Pickford

“Faith” is used both subjectively and objectively in the New Testament. It can refer to one’s personal belief, or it can refer to the truths recorded in the New Testament – the Gospel. In the latter sense, let’s make some biblical observations...

1. **There is Only One True Faith:** Eph 4:4-6
2. **The Faith Must Be Preached,** that’s the only way the lost can come to believe: Gal 1:23; Mk 16:15; Rom 10:17
3. **The Faith Must Be Obeyed:** Acts 6:7; Heb 5:8-9; 2 Ths 1:7-9
4. **The Faith Must be Contended For:** Jude 1:3; Acts 15:1-2
5. **The Faith Has Been Fully Revealed,** There are no prophets or new revelation today: Jude 1:3; 2 Ti 3:16-17
6. **The Faith,** not philosophies and traditions of men, **is what establishes us as true Christians:** Col 2:6-8; Mtt 15:8-9
7. **One Must Continue In The Faith:** Acts 14:22; Rev 2:14

DUTY LIST...

SUNDAY MORNING

- Announcements.....Michael Pickford
- Scripture Reading...Michael Pickford
Reading: Romans 10:14-21
- Song Leader.....Kenny Todd
- Opening Prayer.....Lynn Buttrey
- Lord’s Table:
 - Lead.....Kenny Johnson
 - Serve.....Frank Anderson
 - Serve.....John Nelson
- Closing Prayer.....Sam Miller

SUNDAY EVENING

- Song Leader.....Lynn Buttrey
- Lord’s Table.....Lynn Buttrey

WEDNESDAY EVENING

- Song Leader.....Lynn Buttrey
- Invitation.....Kenny Todd

Thank You For Serving!

GOD’S PLAN OF SALVATION

There is only one true saving plan of Salvation outlined in Scripture. No substitutes will do. Have you really been saved? Get out your Bible and study the plan below.

- Hear The Gospel: Romans 10:17
- Believe: Mark 16:16; John 8:24
- Repent of Sin: Acts 2:38; 17:30
- Confess Faith: Romans 10:9, 10
- Be Baptized: Mark 16:16;
Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21
- Remain Faithful: Rev. 2:10

Obey Today!

**Home Bible Studies
Available Upon Request!**