

(FOR THOSE WHO LOVE AND OBEY GOD'S WORD)

“All Things Work Together for Good”

The First Century Gospel Church/Philadelphia

#217R

WED/7/28/2021

When going through a trial in the testing of our faith, the devil often tries to blind us to the promises given us in God's Word. (Rom.8: 28) "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." That is a verse that should assure and encourage us as a believer in God; but would not be assuring to those who do not love and trust God in faith for things in this life. Things will work out for the worst for those who are not believing on God, nor on the power and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

At times in the life of a believer, things may appear to be bad on the surface, but when we meet things right by faith and in a Scriptural way, the eventual result will be for our own spiritual good. The above verse is meant to remove fear and worry about things that take place, because those things are what the devil uses to put doubt in a person's heart. Doubt is a main tool of Satan to deceive and rob people of their victory in Christ, and there also is no reason to be anxious about something which (when met right, by faith) will be used by God for our spiritual benefit and growth in the Truth.

When a farmer sows seed in the soil, they do not worry about them, because they know they will eventually receive far more in return than what they put in the soil (which is like putting our circumstance in God's hands), after the farmer's seed decays (like self being removed from our heart), it then grows to yield a good harvest, (like all things "working together for good" for us when worry and self-efforts are gone, and our faith is centered on God and His Word. So, when difficult circumstances are met right in a Christian's life, we need to understand and know from God's 'promise', that they will eventually work out for our spiritual good if we put God's Word first and keep our trust on Him.

Putting God and His Word first in our life, may mean the ending of the friendship of worldly friends for the sake of the Truth; it could mean resigning a job because of being asked to do something that goes against the Scriptures; it may involve some changes in our attitudes; getting rid of something; or giving up some activity outside the will of God. When in God's will, we would want to realize that everything that crosses our path is necessary for spiritual growth and learning. (James 1:2-4) "Reckon it nothing but joy, my brethren, whenever you find yourselves hedged in by various trials. Be assured the testing of your faith leads to power of endurance. Only let endurance have perfect results so that you may become perfect and complete, deficient in nothing."

Once we realize that, we will not worry about things, but be glad for hard places that come about, and know that all those things can be placed in God's hands and will work out for our own good. Our only

concern should be, HOW to meet those circumstances, in order to receive the spiritual benefit God has for us. We must consult the Scriptures to see what God's plan is for meeting that trial or situation, and then we should respond to it as God's Word says to do. That is necessary to get all the spiritual good there is, in every circumstance we meet.

Surely, we are encouraged when delivered out of some trouble, or God answers a request for us, but our main need is to know how to meet a trial according to God's Word and within His will. In our natural state of mind, we cannot hear, speak, or understand anything about God's plan for our life, because our thinking is totally opposite to the way God wants us to think. Just as opposite as Heaven is from Hell.

If we want to receive God's blessings, a huge change needs to take place in our heart; a change from our not being able to see, hear, or understand God's Truth must take place; but that is our choice to make. Instead of the power of Satan controlling us as in the past, we need to have the power of God directing us, and then the life of Christ will be in our heart. Instead of seeing things from a worldly point of view, we will be taught to see them from a divine viewpoint. Instead of doing things the way the world says, we are to do things as the Word says.

That necessary big change must come about (from what we were, to what God wants us to be). (Hebr.12:5) "and you have quite forgotten the encouraging words which are addressed to you as sons, and which say, "MY SON, DO NOT THINK LIGHTLY OF THE LORD'S DISCIPLINE, AND DO NOT FAINT WHEN HE CORRECTS YOU; FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES: AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE ACKNOWLEDGES."

So, we should not take lightly God's teaching and training of our character, rather, we are to value it very highly. (Hebr.12:6) "For whom the LORD loves He chastens and scourges every son whom He receives."

Circumstances arise at times, that will at first, seem to be of no spiritual benefit, like, how could this work together for good! But (Hebr.12:11) reminds us, "Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." So, to enjoy peace and the divine love of God, is well worth going through anything God has for us in His training program.

God never resents the terrible way people slander His Word and treat Him; but most of our own troubles are caused by our resenting the way people treat us. If we truly believed that all things work together for good to them that love God, then all resentment would be taken from our heart. Anything that touches us (big or small) is placed into God's hands and left there to be resolved and work together for our good.

If a spiteful thing is said or done to us by someone, we are to place the matter before God and leave it there. We should give that person all the rope they want, because there is to be some spiritual good in it for us. God would not have allowed it to happen to a believer in the first place, if it would not work together for good. We cannot resent anything that anyone might say or do toward us, because

our resenting would hinder God from having the matter turn out for our good.

When we accept God's Truth we will lose worldly friends, because they have no interest in His Truth, until perhaps God may convict them also. So, we can, however, trust God to have such things work together for our good (and for those other people). Anyone or anything we lose for the Kingdom of God's sake, His Word promises us one hundred times as much in this present time, and then eternal life as the ultimate reward.

The apostles told Jesus that they had "left all" to follow Him; so Jesus said; (Mark 10:29-30) "There is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time, (houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions), and in the world to come, eternal life." (Or "in the coming age the Life of the Ages." (That is God's Promise).

God will always be true to His promise, and He promises us something that is far better than what we gave up for His sake (whoever it involved) if we meet it in His way and give up something or someone so we can keep God and His Word first in our life. There is so much spiritual work to be done in our heart, and the need for us to be prepared for the return of Christ, is so great, that we cannot afford to allow anything, or anyone, to hinder our spiritual preparation for Eternal Life.

We are all in need of making progress toward the place of having a perfect love for God in our heart, a steadfast faith on His unchanging Word and Promises, and to making a total surrender to God. The most assuring part of God's plan for us, is that He is working with us to accomplish that goal of surrender in our life. We must have the life of Christ in us; opposite to the ways of the world controlling our heart.

Meeting things in God's way, so that they "work together for good" for us (and for the other person) is of great importance. Many people have lost a close friend because of their wanting to follow and live God's Truth. If that happens to us, we are not to be worried or upset, for God promises to replace them with true friends who are true to His will and Word. "Who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time, (houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions), and in the world to come, eternal life." No one can allow a friend, or anything, to come ahead of God. (Exodus 20:3) "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

No person or thing or interest on earth could be needed ahead of having God and His Truth in our life. God has something far better, for anything, or anyone that we lose for His sake, because His power, love, and never-ending resources, will take the place of whatever we lost, if we meet that situation in His way, and according to His Word.

If we get upset over the loss, and we try in a wrong way to get the friend or anything else back into our life, it will eventually work out for our worst interests, instead of the best. If any person or supposed friend turns against us because of our trust on God and our faith in

Christ, then they were not a friend, but, rather, a 'spiritual enemy'. Jesus said (Matt.10:36)" A man's own family will be his foes." (Micah 7:6).

Many people have had things taken from them, or had money stolen or borrowed from them, and it was not returned. To have that money or the item returned is not their greatest need, however, instead, for them to not resent it, be delivered from the ways of self, and to have the life of Christ in its place, is the great need. The incident took place for a reason, that is to see how it would be met in their heart and mind. The only way to have that accomplished is to not resent it, nor plan in some way to have it restored, because if we meet it as God's Word says, then "all things will work together for good", and, God will see that it will be replaced and given back to us a hundredfold.

Anything; anyone; and any interest can come between us and God's Will and Word, and so, become a god to us, to take the place of the true God within us. We have to be careful and be aware of what the devil is attempting to do in our life and home. Even a good experience can be used by Satan to become an idol in our life, and to overshadow what is truly most important. The one true God, and our faith in Him, is the only thing that we really need, and when we do not go outside of His plan by allowing someone or thing to come between us and God, then He will see to it, that "all things work together for good."

Things that happened to Job in his life, were so tragic that it looked as if no good could ever result from them, but even those worst of calamities "worked together for good", for Job. God revealed to him that his self-righteous attitude, would surely have taken him to the Lake of Fire. However, Job still refused to blaspheme God because of those calamities in his life, and once he was shown that hiding place of Satan (and still having a desire to keep God first in his heart), Job confessed the 'sin of self' in his heart, and later received many times more than he had lost. (Job 42:10)" And the LORD restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed, the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before."

The same was true for Joseph. The meanest and most contemptible things were done to him by the members of his own family, but God made it all work together for good, and through many remarkable circumstances as Joseph kept his faith in God. The promise given in Scripture (Romans 8:28) was worked out in real practice during those days of the Old Testament, just as much as it will work out for us in these days since the New Testament was written for us to follow in our life.

We must make the choice to meet God's conditions, in order for things to "work together for good." The first condition is that we are not resentful or upset about things that take place, since they are permitted for the reason of exposing any shortcomings that may be hidden in our heart and life. The second condition is to not use any plan, power of self, or strategy of our own to straighten out the circumstance or trial, instead, to place the matter into God's hands, and to leave it there for Him to work out for our good and the good of the other person.

The third condition is (as always) to believe that the victory is already won for us, solely on the authority of God's written Word and fulfillment of His promise. If we will make our decision and resolve once and for all, that we are not going to be resentful or upset about things that cross our path, and our decision is final in not doing anything of ourselves to correct the matter, then we are assured that "all things work together for good."

If we are mocked and rejected, while someone else is admired and accepted, we must let it go without any hard feelings or envy on our part. God has a greater reward and blessing for those whom He approves.

God's plan is for us to be down, first, and then He exalts us in His time. (Proverbs 22:4) "By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, and honor, and life."

God's great commandment is given for us (Matt.22: 37-40) "THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD," Jesus answered, "'WITH THY WHOLE HEART, THY WHOLE SOUL, THY WHOLE MIND.'" This is the greatest and foremost Commandment. And the second is similar to it: 'THOU SHALT LOVE THY FELLOW MAN AS MUCH AS THYSELF.'" The whole of the law and the prophets is summed up in these two commandments." (He said).

When circumstances and insults are met right according to God's plan and by Jesus' example of how to meet things right, and, God's Word and His Will are put and kept first in our life, ... then," all things work together for good", "for those who love and obey God."

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Some main points:

1. The message emphasizes that things do not work out well for those who do not love and trust God in faith for things in life, but for faithful 'believers' who do trust on God and the power of Jesus' Blood and His resurrection to Life, then, as God promised, "all things will work together for Good." (With spiritual blessing and progress in the full Truth of God, that will lead a person to "see the Lord".

2. We should rejoice in God when we are in trial, and be assured that "the testing of your faith leads to power of endurance.", (as we are informed by God's inspired Word (James 1:3).

3. As God's Spirit works through our faith on Him to remove all the hindrances of worry, anxiety, doubt (and other aspects of a 'life of self' from our heart), then we can enjoy "all things working together for Good" in our life. Also, Jesus promised us that we will be rewarded one-hundred-fold for anything that we give up or lose for the sake of the 'Kingdom of God' (by putting God first in our life).

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