



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – November 30, 2008

Heart to Heart...

We do not like pain! I do not know anyone that likes pain. We go out of our way to avoid pain and suffering if we can. Some even go to the extreme to avoid funerals because of the pain caused! When pain comes into our lives, we simply wonder if God is punishing us from our past. I have heard that over and over from those in Christ. Do we not know the covenant we stand under? Maybe some have not been sincere in their faith to confess their sins from an honest, humble heart? Some have been taught a false doctrine that in Christ, you will not suffer. (Paul reminded Timothy that godly living will cause suffering. II Timothy 3:12) All of the above reveals how little we really know about Jesus and the God of our salvation.

Why is there suffering? Because there is sin in the world! Why did Jesus suffer? Because of our sins! Sin always breeds suffering in one form or the other. From the beginning in Eden, sin entered and with sin came suffering and pain. The difference between those of us in Christ and those outside is those in Christ realize (or should realize) that pain and suffering do not have the last words in their life and is not the final reality! Beyond suffering, there is life, the life of God we gained through Jesus. Our God and Savior allow suffering but do not permit it to be our lord. We should not permit it to be our lord! When diseases hit us or death touches our lives, we are safe and we need to realize that our Lord made a commitment to us! He controls it all and has made promises that He will never break.

Sometimes I wonder what we really believe. Do we really believe in the love of God for us or are they just empty words that religious people are suppose to say? God permits us to suffer but suffering should bring us closer to God. Suffering does not alter God's plan or change the covenant He has made with us. Suffering can make spiritual things come into better focus. Suffering helps us become stronger in our faith toward the Lord. Maybe we need to re-read and study these words from God: ***"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword?"***(Romans 8:31-32, 35) If Christ died for us, (and He did), and we were joined together with Him in baptism (and we were), what will keep His love from us? Sufferings? It will if suffering and pain has become our lord. But if we can realize that suffering is what helps our faith grow (James 1:2-4) and we are weak in faith, what do we need?

I don't like to suffer but suffering does not have the final say. My Lord has the final say and we need to take the proper attitude in our sufferings, looking to Jesus and not at the pain. Suffering reminds us the sin that entered into this world. Jesus tells us He took away our sins and promised us a future beyond words. Suffering taught Jesus to obey (Hebrews 5:8). What do you think suffering is supposed to do to us? Think about it!!!

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