

A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT

August 2008

“THE REMINDER”

We all get reminders. By phone, e-mails, by regular mail, by the voices of friends and business associates, by our families and brothers & sisters in Christ, and by our leaders, we receive reminders of our obligations, commitments, and other important matters. Some good – some not so good. And even then – we sometimes forget.

There are also spiritual reminders. The Word of God reminds us of who we are in Christ, what is pleasing to the Lord, what our life is to be in service to Christ, what our character is to be and is becoming, who God really is, what our life will be after our earthly stay is over (Hallelujah – Heaven!) and so much more. I once heard a preacher call the Bible the “Manufacturer’s Handbook” –

Teaching us who we are and what we are to do with this life God has so richly given us in Christ. We have the Word to read and study and meditate on so that we may do it and grow thereby. We have the Word preached and taught (as much as we want), life experiences (they will teach us a lot about the Lord and ourselves) the voice of the Holy Spirit deep within us and the voice of our brothers and sisters in Christ. How privileged we are!

I think it is good, right and even excellent to be reminded over and over of the center and focus of our Christianity – even Christ the Lord of Glory! He is the express image of His Father – and His whole life was an expression and demonstration of the God who is love, and a revelation of His clear Heart toward not only us, but the whole world.

Most – if not all of us – know John 3:16. For this study we will examine Isaiah 53:2-12 in the Amplified Bible. These Old Testament Scriptures show forth Jesus Christ – who He was in relation to the Father, why He was sent, what He did for us – beloved of the Lord – and did for those who don’t know Him yet. This revelation was given to Isaiah the prophet, and recorded many, many years before Christ was born, lived as the Son of Man, and Son of God among men, and fulfilled His mission on earth in obedience to His Father. I chose this translation that our understanding of Christ and what He did would be made plain, enlarged and increased as we read this revelation of Christ.

“For (the Servant of God) grew up before Him like a tender plant, and like a root out of dry ground; He has no form or comeliness (royal, kingly pomp), that we should look at Him, and no beauty that we should desire Him. He was despised and rejected and forsaken by men, a Man of sorrows and pains, and acquainted with grief and sickness, and like One from whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we did not appreciate His worth or have any esteem for Him. Surely He has borne our grief’s (sicknesses, weaknesses, and distresses) and carried our sorrows and pains (of punishment), yet we (ignorantly) considered Him stricken, smitten, and afflicted by God (as if with leprosy). But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our guilt and iniquities, the chastisement (needful to obtain) peace and well-being

for us was upon Him, and with the stripes (that wounded) Him we are healed and made whole. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has made to light upon Him the guilt and iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, (yet when) He was afflicted, He was submissive and opened not His mouth, like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away; and as for His generation, who among them considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living (stricken to His death) for the transgression of my (Isaiah's) people, to whom the stroke was due? And they assigned Him a grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in His death, although He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it was the Will of the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief and made Him sick. When You and He make His life an offering for sin (and He has risen from the dead, in time to come) He shall see His (spiritual) offspring. He shall prolong His days, and the will and pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see (the fruit) of the travail of His soul and be satisfied; by His knowledge of Himself (which He possessed and imports to others) shall My (uncompromisingly) righteous One, My Servant, justify many and make many righteous (upright and in right standing with God), for He shall bear their iniquities and their guilt (with the consequences, says the Lord). Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great (kings and rulers) and He shall divide the spoil with the mighty, because He poured out His life into death, and (He let Himself) be regarded as a criminal and be numbered with the transgressors; yet He bore (and took away) the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors (the rebellious)".

It is amazing that Isaiah saw and recorded with such clarity and details what and who was to come! It is my prayer that as you read these Scriptures you will think, ponder, consider, and meditate on the One who gave you LIFE by His sacrifice – even unto death.

We read that He grew up before His Father (God's eyes were ever on Him) like a tender plant. He had no outward appearance or beauty that would draw men to Him, or desire Him. He was totally misunderstood – who He was, what His purpose was, what He accomplished in the daily doing of His Father's will, and His earthly end was incomprehensible. He was despised, rejected, and forsaken (Psalm 22) and many (even some of His own) could not figure out who He was, or what He was about – to the point of turning their faces from Him – walking away from the One God sent to purchase them to Himself. They did not know or prize the Gift the Father had sent.

We know from Scripture that before the Cross He was beaten until His face and body were unrecognizable. To many He was an object of horror and astonishment. On the Cross (the Chosen-by-God) wonderful Cross) Jesus did what no –one ever did or will do – with a cry for forgiveness. He bore – and yet bears – our grief's (sicknesses, weaknesses and distresses) and paid the total price for our sins and lives. It was our sin for which He was beaten and bruised. Someone had to pay for our sin. He suffered wounds and stripes on His back for us to be healed and made whole. Even in His suffering and pain He did not defend Himself or retaliate in any way. He paid by His life. We have life (and that abundant!) today because of Him – only Him!

Imagine the joy of the Father in His Son – who accomplished His Will and was obedient even unto death. Imagine the Son – who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross (Hebrew 12:2). The Father’s promise to the Son was that He would see His spiritual offspring, and that the will and pleasure of the Lord would prosper in His hand. He would see the fruit of the travail (suffering) of His soul and be satisfied. He would justify and make many righteous by what He did. For this He was given a portion among the great, He would divide the spoils with the strong, and great honor would be His. Out of death springs life!

May we respond out of a heart of love – grateful and thankful to and for the One who DID it all, GAVE it all, PAID it all, BORE it all, and BECAME it all – for us – even for us – and for those who are yet to come. May our lives – and all that makes us – draw those around you to Jesus – the Lord of Glory! May we walk as He walked, obey the Will of God as He did, love as He loved, and bring many souls to glory.

“Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory.” Romans 8:17 NIV

“Thank God for His Son – His Gift too wonderful for words.” 2 Cor. 9:15

In Christ ~

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