

For ages, man has pondered the problem of the existence of human suffering. 'How can God in his Goodness allow pain and misfortune in the life of man?' A general answer is that man's God-given free will and his resulting sin make it inevitable. God's punishment for sin is death and suffering for all. But the question we would really like to ask is, 'If I am trying to live right, why doesn't God give me what I want?' If God has all power and loves me, then why do things keep going wrong in my life? We know Romans 8:28 tells us that 'all things work together for good to those who love the Lord.' Now, assuming that we love the Lord, we have to realize that God does not deal with us as though we were the only person on earth, but as only a part of an entire family. For this family He must weave a providence which encompasses the best for all of His children.

Our 'suffering' many times is a result of our 'material world' undergoing a setback. We must get away from the idea that material things can produce happiness. Once we can glimpse the real glory of God and the meaning of Christian living, we see how unimportant 'things' can be. God's 'good' is an inner thing which affects our heart.

But let's look at this from the point of view, 'What does God want from us?' I believe God wants those who will love him he doesn't give them everything. Just consider Job. Satan accuses Job of loving God only because of all the things that God had given him. But God knew that the relationship went much deeper than that! By allowing Satan to take what Job had away, God made good his boast about his servant Job. This lesson was recorded because that is what God wants from us!

We must become believers in the idea that we should not pray for ease, but for strength. Strength is the only thing that God has really promised us. As Paul tells us in Philippians 4:13, 'I can do all things through Him who strengthens me'. It takes a certain spirit to live that. Once a group of people wrote to David Livingstone, the African missionary/explorer. They told him that if he had found a good road to his outpost, there were others that wanted to join him. Livingstone replied, 'If you have men who come only if there is a good road, I don't want them. I want men who will come if there is no road at all.' God has not promised us the easy life; but he promised us the best possible life that could be (the abundant life: John 10:10). God wants us to come to Him no matter what our circumstances in life might be.