

LIVING A LIFE OF WORSHIP

Overcoming the Accuser, part 2: "The Problem of Pain"

Pain touches every human life, and our lives as Christians are no exception. Live long enough, and you will inevitably experience a portion of grief in one form or another. And at those moments of suffering and vulnerability, the enemy of our souls is quick to respond with whispers of accusation that attempt to pour salt in the open wounds of our hearts. Let's look at some of his most commonly used lies in time of suffering:

- 1) **Accusing God** (*God wasn't good to you, or else this wouldn't have happened*)
- 2) **Accusing you** (*YOU aren't good, or else this wouldn't have happened - He's mad at you and is getting even*)
- 3) **Accusations about the future** (*your FUTURE isn't going to be good either - forecast calls for depression mixed with anxiety... this is an especially vulnerable area right now due to the current upheaval in our nation's economy*)

Believing any one of these lies (or a combination thereof) can prove deadly to our ability to bring God our very best sacrifice of praise. If we are going to grow in living a life of worship, it's vital that we learn to answer these accusations, lest they be allowed to steal our joy and silence our song. Let's look at some effective ways to respond (not react) to the lies and threats of the accuser:

- 1) **"God wasn't good** by allowing this problem, loss, or pain."
 - **Answer: the Cross.** *Only a good God would pay for my sins with the death of His own Son.* I may not understand why so many hard things have happened in my life, and I may not see what good can come of the trials I am in today - but I KNOW it will work together for good, for He has said so (and He cannot lie). My part is to believe His goodness, and *praise Him through the storm.*
- 2) **"YOU aren't good** (and God is getting even with you)."
 - **Answer: Psalm 103:10** ~ *"He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities."* God is not in the business of getting even (thank You Jesus!), or else we would all have found ourselves in the eternal convection oven long ago. Recognize this undeniable, unconquerable fact of God's Kingdom: WE DON'T GET WHAT WE DESERVE! Yes, we have all sinned; and yes, there are sometimes consequences of our choices. *Yet God is gracious still* - His **"mercy triumphs over judgment"** (James 2:13). And even (or perhaps especially) when He is correcting us, it's only ever for our good, and because He loves us (see Hebrews 12:5-11).
- 3) **"Your FUTURE won't be good."**
 - **Answer: Psalm 23:6** ~ *"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."* God is only good, and His plans for our future are only good (see Jeremiah 29:11). This doesn't mean that our future will be free from trouble or pain; on the contrary, Jesus Himself promised that His disciples would see some troubles when He said, *"In the world you will have tribulation."* However, He promises us His presence (Matthew 28:20), His peace (John 14:27), and His VICTORY through it all: *"but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33). And He's promised to work it all together for His glory and our good.

There's much more that can be said about the role of suffering in our lives as worshipers; while it can be a tool of the enemy to steal our song, it can also be an instrument of God's grace to deepen and increase our portion of His joy, character, and anointing! I will write more along those lines soon (Lord willing).

But for today, I pray that you have power from God to recognize the lies, fears, and threats of the enemy, and that you silence that accuser with the promises of God's Word. Put on the garment of praise, confess God's goodness, and praise Him for the victory that He's promised to give us!

Much love & blessings to each of you,

Pastor Matthew Casey

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