

## Cry

*Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! Job 23:3 KJV*

*To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar, A Psalm of David. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. Psalms 22:1-2 KJV*

*And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Matthew 27:46 KJV*

Oh, can we not hear the lament of the soul in those verses? Do they not speak to us of our own laments; our hearts crying out, needing God? Is there not something in their cry that stirs something deep inside? Something we can relate to? Is it not the cry of a desperate lonely soul who longs to come into the presence of his maker? Could it be the cry for the sin of our soul?

I cannot tell you of great accomplishments in life, nor of great literary works, but I can tell you of the power and goodness of the Lord. I will lift my heart in praise to Him who is the grace and power in my life. Often, I have come to Him in desperation like the Psalmist, and like Job. At times I have even felt a little forsaken, wondering why I had to go through a certain trial. Often, I have cried out for strength to endure and overcome; asking Him to drive away the darkness and shadows, desperately longing for Him to fill my life with light. At times, He lingers, till it seems all hope is gone, and prayer futile. Then the warmth of His love breaks through like the sunshine on a cloudy day, and my heart can relate to these words penned by apostle Paul so many years ago.

*We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. 2 Corinthians 4:8-10 KJV*

I am not special; I am a needy person full of mistakes. I have no credits to my name. I am someone who has faced the fire of tests and trials and have not always been successful. Other times the heat of the fire has almost consumed my soul. I have seen, or rather felt, the darkness creeping in like a blanket, smothering the light. The presence of evil sent to squelch any hope I may have in the Lord. Through experiences like these, I have come to a deeper understanding and love for God. I have learned that my hope is in God, and Him alone.

*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. Psalms 42:5 KJV*

Is it a small thing to put our faith and hope in God? Are we afraid He will not understand us, or that we will go unnoticed? Is there hope in any other? No, He alone is our all in all. There is no other way we can make it to those heavenly realms. If we are going to walk on streets of gold, we will tread the earthly path of pain and sorrow.

Do we think we are above suffering for the Lord? Would we be willing to deny ourselves a little for His sake? Are we better than He? We would say, "Of course not; no one can begin to be as perfect, Holy and righteous as He." And yet we so easily faint when tests and trials come upon us and we cannot stand the temptations of the flesh. Our spirits sink and languish in discouragement at the smallest trial. Are we too good to bear even a small portion of what our Lord and Savior experienced for us? Do we expect that when we enter into a walk with Him that it will be a smooth path? Oh, that it was, but few find it so. When we walk with the Lord, we must rely on Him. God has designed it that one cannot live a Christian life without

Him. We will not have the strength or courage to live successfully without Him by our side as our strength and stay.

*Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he would put strength in me. Job 23:6 KJV*

*The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all. Psalms 34:17-19 KJV*

As much as I would like to have a smooth easy ride through life, it is not to be. It takes the wind to strengthen the roots of trees. The crashing of water upon the rocks smooths their rough edges. It takes the sandpaper on the board to prepare it for the finishing. The perfume of the rose is strongest in the dew of the morning following the dark of the night. It takes the heat and cold to make the sap in the trees flow. It takes the cracking of the shell of the nut, to reveal the meat inside. Only from the clouds and storms comes rain to water the earth. And so, the storms of life that toss us about, and the darkness that seems to hide the sun, are but working the work of the Lord if we let Him use them to His benefit. In so doing, we will find in our hearts a greater dependency on God, a soft heart for others, and a greater understanding of the works of God.

Many years ago, my father got into growing tomatoes to sell. One day we visited the man who was growing our seedlings. He showed us how he would take a blower and blow it across the small seedlings to strengthen them. He said, without simulating the outside environment, they would be too weak to endure the elements once placed in the ground. By blowing air across them, it strengthened the stems and roots making them more resilient. So, we must view our struggles.

God may not cause the wind, and storms of life, but He is ready to use them as He sees fit. Remember the story of Elijah on the mountain? There was the wind, the fire, the earthquake, but where was God? In the quietness afterwards. No doubt He stood guard watching that the elements would not hurt Elijah, but it took the stillness to hear His voice.

When the lightning flashes and the thunder rolls, it may sound like the wrath of God. At times God uses the power of the storm to speak, much like He did in the account of Elijah. However, when it was over, Elijah had no difficulty understanding God's voice. Likewise we may not be able to hear the Lord's voice clearly during the storms of life. But if we patiently endure, He will speak and we will hear. God's voice is heard in the quiet after the storm, like a rainbow which appears after the rain. It took the display of the power on the mountain to show Elijah, that though his life had been threatened and he had to flee, it was but a storm. He was not forsaken, for God was still there, unchanged as always, quietly undergirding him.

Could it be that the Lord withholds Himself at times to see if we really love Him? It is easy to take His love for granted and that He will always be there. Perhaps His desire is for us to pursue Him, to seek for Him. In so doing we realize what we have lost and our soul becomes desperate. Then like a lost child calling out for help, we begin to do whatever it takes to find Him again. Oh, the sweet pleasure and love we feel when we do. We find we are not forsaken, and He has not forgotten us.

*By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me. Song of Solomon 3:1-4 KJV*

This may not entirely answer the questions of why tests and trials come. However, I know that God is faithful; He has proven over and over to me that He is good! May our hearts echo these words of Job written so many years ago.

*For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Job 19:25-26 KJV*

**The Unlikely Writer**

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