

BIBLE QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY DR. AYODEJI AWE

QUESTION 72- PASTOR HELP ME TO UNDERSTAND WHY GOOD AND GODLY PEOPLE SOMETIMES EXPERIENCE BAD THINGS AND DISASTERS. WHY CAN'T GOD COMPLETELY SHEILD US FROM ALL EVILS?

ANSWER:

No man on earth is perfect though he may be godly or good; ultimately he is not immune against bad experiences or even sometimes outright disaster. Our best shot is at the place of prayer, wherein as Jesus did teach, that we can call on God to deliver us from evil (Matt. 6:13b). There a number of reasons why good and godly people may experience the bad:

1. The world as we have it right now is bad, and evil infested. Its problems started when Satan was thrown down the earth from heaven shortly after his insurrection against his maker, God. It was the understanding of the gravity as expressed by the heavenly dwellers that hinted us: "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! For the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Rev. 12:12b). The simple practical logic was that Satan with all of his followers: the demonic angels found a new abode in the earth and they took it over with all of their acts and antics. As they poured in, the earth became contaminated with their evil pastimes. Jesus opened our eyes when he informed us that the thief cometh but to kill, steal and destroy, in contrast to himself (the son), who came that we may have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10).

Satan is the master of mischief and with his fallen angels actively waiting upon him, there is plenty of disasters waiting to happen or have already happened. The sad part for a godly man is that because we live in the world, it may be particularly impossible to avoid all the miscreants. If one doesn't get burnt, one may not totally avoid the smell of the smoke at the least, or even as David did mention, the righteous, enjoying divine covering often might see the sinner get recompensed (Psa. 91:5-6). The challenge is that sighting evil or horror nearby may not necessarily elicit joyful emotions.

Satanic activities are expansive. Jesus gave us a dimension of it when he told of the story of the good husbandman who planted all wheat but the enemy came by night to sow tares in the midst, which eventually grew up with the real plants. By the time these strangers were discovered, it had become extremely daunting a task separating the bad from the good without some of the good suffering the fate of the bad. The result is not pretty. The owner has to evolve a new management tactic of nurturing both good and bad until harvest time. The risk here is that some of the wheat may experience choking because of the exposure to the tares (Matt.13:24-30). Translated in human experience, that was not joyful. Many who should be entitled to a peaceful life sometimes had to deal with matters that are challenging: the container is simply contaminated.

2. The second reason why good people may have a stint of bad experience is because of the availability of temptation, following the doses of evil in this world. While temptation in itself may not be exhaustively calamitous, how a man reacts may be the nail that seals the coffin. Apostle James enlightens believers to resist temptation because when it is given a breathing space, it coagulates into sin and by this time, its wages may not be avoided (James 1:13-15, Romans 6:23).

No man may live through this earth without encountering temptation. The affirmation of this fact was established when we are taught that Jesus himself went through all facets of encounters with temptation but thank God that he did not succumb and ended with an impeccable record. We are encouraged- we do not need to give in to temptation. However, from here and there we found some with a holy tag caving in. When this happens, the result has not been beautiful to watch. No wonder the Lord teaches us to pray against it- "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"(Matt. 6:13).

Temptation often comes as a thing that is not ours, but is beckoning unto us to take. Man, beware of a woman that is not yours and woman vice versa. Let us all be cognizant of money or other valuable things that are not ours and determine to keep our eyes, attention and hands away from such. God, through Moses reciting the Decalogue warns us in the tenth commandment: thou shall not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's (Exodus 20:17).

3. Third, God was never heartless in his relation with his own people. Regardless of the presence of Satan and his cronies on earth, God has always set up an agenda for man that will afford him enough guidance towards the mapped out success for everyone. Like a shepherd, the Lord leads his own, through his words and instructions. The introduction of God to us is intended to guide us into our wealthy places and fulfillment. The key is that we must obey whenever he instructs, if we will benefit from the guide.

Severally in the scripture, he teaches us -"And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt diligently hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth and all these blessings shall come on thee....The Lord shall cause thine enemies that that rise up against thee to smitten before thy face.." (Deuteronomy 28:1-14). Following, he warns against the repercussion of not obeying or heeding his voice- poverty, sickness, disaster (v.15ff). Devolving, the scripture accounts recorded many who belong to him but chose to disobey his words but never got off the hook. It mattered not that one is a child of God; disobedience brings the anger of God. This, he forewarned!

Adam and Eve lost a lifetime of care and pleasure when they disobeyed God (Genesis 3). In addition they presented their progenies for all generations, gift of death resulting from the imputation of their original sin that directly resulted from their disobedience. It teaches us that as parents, we ought to avoid disobeying God because the repercussion may not stop with us, but flows into generations coming behind. God's desire is that godly parents lay down good inheritance like wealth for our children and not curses of generational proportions (Prov. 13:22).

Jonah turned west when the instructions for him was to head east. For his disobedience, he was sentenced to 'hell' in the belly of the fish. He would live to remember that disobeying God was never a play! (Job1-3).

What of the powerfully anointed young prophet that was instructed by God to carry out an assignment at Bethel. He went and the Lord showed up in no small measures but at the end, listening to the voice of an older prophet, a direct opposite to the original instruction of God sidetracked him to a waterloo. He was

killed by a lion on the way. His disobedience of the direct instruction not to eat nor drink until he returned led to his ruin. He did not fulfill his life purpose: typical sad ending to all who could not wriggle out of the aftermath of disobeying God's voice! (1Kg.13).

4. Sin is another reason why a godly man may get burnt by the evil and disasters of this world. For instance, disobedience to every instruction of God is a sin and unless otherwise stated, every sin has a wage. Our prayer is that such a wage will not be too costly to dwarf the stature of a child of God.

Come to think of a fine line between forgiveness of God and punishment for sin. Even for the ones among us who know how to quickly address our sins before God, obtaining pardon may not necessarily erase punishment. When the punishment comes, it may be glaring but with the outsider not knowing the underlying cause of the 'ugly' experience. In other words, the reverberations of the punishment for our sin may not be easily decoded.

For instance, Moses sinned against God, though in the level of man's understanding it was the case of Moses striking the rock while he was asked to speak to it. So what's the big deal? It was a rock, a nonliving thing not given to experiencing pain unlike a living thing. And by the way, the end justifies the means: water still came out and people drank. Therefore, purpose accomplished! (cf. Num. 20:1-13).

But I believe God saw more than a man would deduce. He saw sin from the heart and proceeded to mete out a punishment that to me was second to none in severity - Moses would not enter the Promised Land like the so many common sinners and rebels who perished ignobly in the desert. However he was forgiven in that God took him up into a posh enclave and gave him a glorious heavenly burial that was also second to none (Deut. 34:5-6).

This teaches us that sin will make a godly man experience hell on earth but on his way to heaven. A child of God must always be sensitive to sinning against God, if only for the reason that sometimes punishment for sin may not be avoided even though sin in itself will be forgiven. For instance, a child born out of wedlock may still have to be raised in situations and circumstances that constantly remind the mother of her veering off the path of chastity.

Sometime ago I had to minister to a man who narrowly escaped being stabbed to death by his 'stepson'. The tale was: for two years he and his lady shacked, never getting married, thus failing the guidelines available for believers. Eventually he left the woman alongside her kids from the original relationship. Things then became extremely hard for her and the children. With the motive of avenging for her mom, the assessment of the young man (the 'step son') was that the man was responsible for the hardship. According to his words, he ruined his mom's life and he had to pay for it. Thank God he was not butchered on that Thanksgiving Day, the day that all was filled with happiness and excitement. God spared his life to be in the hospital bed brutally bruised. The only bright part of the story was his being disposed to receive a visible counsel from me, for when he would be out of the hospital. Imagine how many have not been that fortunate!

TO BE COMPLETED IN THE NEXT EDITION.

I WISH ALL OF OUR READERS AND THE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF CHRISTIAN HERALD A BEAUTIFUL CHRISTMAS AND A PROSPEROUS 2017. MAY WE BE KEPT IN GRACE.

For prayers, counseling and to have your questions answered, contact:

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