

Life is Not Always Fair

1 Peter 5:6-11

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon Him; for he careth for you.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith,

knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory & dominion for ever & ever. Amen.

Have you noticed that life is not always fair? Have you been around long enough to figure that out? Sometimes you & I suffer unjust pain!

Sometimes it is a physical illness; at one time there was strength & vigor & vitality & health, then comes decline & disease set in & changes everything. You are given an alarming prognoses. **Life is not always fair!**

Sometimes it is financial crises, brought on by no fault of our own; "a corporate takeover" "down-sizing"; they are just new words for firing & laying off. **Life is not always fair!**

Sometimes it is rebellious children, who break their parent's hearts, & go the wrong way. **Other times it may be abusive parents,** who have caused scares & wounds that can last a life time. **Life is not always fair!**

Sometimes it is broken relationships. Issues are severe, things get cross-ways, go from bad to worse, things turn sower. **Life is not always fair!**

Sometimes it is the sudden death, the premature departure of a friend, or love one. **Life is not always fair!**

Suffering & pain, crises & trial, seem to come & visit each of us from time to time! **Sometimes we suffer unjust pain!** If we all took turns to **testify** this evening, we probably could make quite a list of unjust suffering & pain. **Life is not always fair.** Sometimes we suffer unjust pain.

Does the Bible have anything to say to us about this unjust pain & suffering? Let's look at the verse from **1 Peter 5:10**, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." Suffering, & that often unjustly, has been a part of the human race since the Fall of Mankind in the Garden of Eden.

Allow me to cite some **Biblical examples** of people who suffered unjust pain, for whom life was not always fair!

1. Let me tell you the story of Job! Life was not always fair to Job!

Job was immensely wealthy; in fact, he was the richest rancher in the entire area. He even enjoyed a large & loving family of 7 sons & 3 daughters. **No finer man could you find in all the land.** This man Job was a **good & upright man**, one who feared God & stayed away from anything that was evil. In fact Job was such a righteous man that whenever his children had a **big birthday party**, Job would summons them all together & '**sanctify them**' offering a burnt offering for each of them, saying: "**Perhaps my sons have sinned & turned away from God in their hearts.**"

Then **unbeknown to Job, a meeting took place in the Heavens between Satan & God.** Satan made the accusation that Job only served God because God had honored & prospered Job. So God said to Satan: "You may do anything you like." **Tragedy struck** & Job lost everything; his children were all killed; his crops were all whipped out; his herds were all driven away. His wealth, his family, everything was gone!

Life is not always fair; sometimes we suffer unjustly! Furthermore a **terrible case of boils** struck Job from head to foot, so much so that Job took a broken piece of pottery to scrape himself, & he sat among the ashes. **Even Job's wife** finally said to him: "Are you still trying to be a godly man? Why don't you just curse God & die?" **Life is not always fair. Sometimes we suffer unjustly!**

But in all of this, Job's attitude remained confident that God had not turned His back upon him; Job confirmed his faith in the words: "**The Lord giveth & the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!**" & Job did not sin.

I must add the fact that everything which came to Job had to go across God's desk first for God's allowance & approval. So in a **left handed short of a way** you might say that what **you** are going through is **God's compliment to you.** It went across God's desk first, before it reached your front door.

Peter said: "Cast all your care upon the Lord!"

2. Let me tell you the story of the Apostle Paul! Life was not always fair to Paul!

Paul had a **most dramatic conversion** to Jesus Christ, recorded in Acts 9. So much so that he even changed his name from Saul to Paul! Paul set out to preach the gospel to the Gentile world, & to establish churches everywhere he went. He has been described as the **world's greatest missionary!**

However in **2 Cor. 11**, Paul describes some of the suffering that he experienced as a missionary. He was put in jail repeatedly; whipped times without number; faced death again & again. Five times the Jews gave him their terrible 39 lashes; three times Paul was beaten with rods; once he was stoned; three times he was shipwrecked; he traveled many weary miles, & was in great danger from flooded rivers, & from robbers, & he faced grave dangers from mobs in the cities, & in desert places. He lived with weariness & pain & sleepless nights; often Paul was hungry & thirsty; he shivered with coldness, without enough clothing to keep him warm.

Paul was familiar with pain & suffering! He was broke; he was shipwrecked; he was stoned; he was beaten; he was left for dead. The funny thing about all this is the fact that when he woke up, the crazy guy went back into the same town that beat him up! **I'd gone to the airport; wouldn't you?**

I think Paul knew a little bit about suffering unjustly!

But listen to what Paul said about suffering in Rom. 8:18, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Otherwords the stuff we go through **here is so light weight**, when you compare it to where we are **headed**, that **it doesn't even deserve to be compared with our eternal reward!** Want some good news? You are headed for a better world! That is what Paul had to say about unjust suffering! **Peter said: "Cast all your care upon the Lord!"**

3. Let me tell you the story of Jesus! Life was not always fair to Jesus Christ!

Jesus was the only truly perfect man who has ever lived upon this earth. He gave up His right to be God & demanded nothing; He came unto His own, & they received Him not. He went about doing good, but the religious leaders were constantly plotting on how they would kill Him. He chose 12 disciples, & poured His life into them, & one of them betrayed Him, selling Him off for 30 pieces of silver. Even though His motives were perfect, Jesus was often misunderstood & spitefully criticized. He was called a glutton, a wine-bibber, a friend of sinners. Although completely innocent of any wrong doing, Jesus was given a mock trail, spat upon, a crown of thrones was placed upon His head. He was made to carry an old rugged cross -- & He was nailed to that cross & crucified between two thieves! **Jesus certainly knew something about unjust pain & suffering.**

In this day of **cotton-candy, hyper-positive religion**, it wouldn't hurt us once in a while to remember that we follow a Jesus Who said **there is a cross for us to bear!** Jesus said: "If anyone is really serious about coming after me, let him deny himself, & take up his cross & follow me!" (Matt. 16:24).

But what was Jesus' attitude about all the criticism & suffering & unjust pain that He experienced? Jesus said: "**My nourishment comes from doing the will of God**" (Jh 4:34 LB). In essence Jesus was saying: "If all of this is part of God's will for my life, then so be it!" In fact, we are told in Hebrews that Jesus **learned obedience** from what He suffered (Heb 5). That is why in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus was able to pray: "**Not my will, but thy will be done!**" **You see, God knows best, He knows what it takes to mode you into the person He wants you to be. Peter said: "Cast all your care upon the Lord!"**

Conclusion: Now let's return to our Scripture reading! Peter was not out to lunch! He was no idealistic air-head! He knew & understood the realities of life! He too was familiar with unjust pain & suffering. He knew deprivation. He too experienced unjust pain.

Look again at what he tells us in 1 Peter 5:10, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while," The New International Version reads, "After you have suffered a **little** while..." One of the things I am going to ask the Father when I get to Heaven is: "**Sir, with all due respect, what do You consider to be a 'little while'?**" Have you ever felt that way?

I have an idea that God doesn't wear a wristwatch, nor does He have a calendar on His wall.

Later Peter wrote: "With the Lord a day is like a thousand years -- & a thousand years are like a day" (2 Peter 3:8). **We will just have to leave the timing up to God in His sovereign discretion!**

"After you have suffered a little while" **the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory, God Himself**, will "make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." God does not delegate it to some Angelic Committee! I understand God has a whole lot of "Angelic gophers" that could work for Him if He wanted them too. But this is a deal where God handles the job **Himself!** He still is the God of all grace! **God says: "I will handle this one all by myself!"**

He promises to deliver a **quartet of blessings** to you personally! These four blessings are **natural by-products** of our times of suffering: --

1st -- He will "make you **perfect**" by means of your trials. The purpose of affliction is to make us perfect, to perfect our faith! That no defect may remain!

2nd -- He is going to **establish** you, that nothing may overthrow you. The Greek word means "to set fast; to fix firmly; to render immovable."

3rd -- He is going to **strengthen** you. He will **make you firm** where you have been flabby & out of shape, **spiritually** that is! He will give you the strength to bear what is unfair & unjust pain.

4th -- He is going to **settle you**. Literally, to rest you firmly upon the best & surest foundation. The allusion here is to a house which is so firmly fixed on a foundation that it will not be moved by winds or floods. Like the wise man who builds his house upon the Rock, Christ Jesus! (Matthew 7:24 ff.). God is going to **make you steadfast** where you have been flaky & inconsistent.

Four great blessings God delivers to you, Himself, in person! He is going to **make you perfect**; He is going to **establish you**; He is going to **make you strong**; He is going to **set you firmly upon a sure foundation**. **No wonder Peter concludes with the great celebration!** "To him be the glory & dominion for ever & ever. Amen!"

Did you know that Life is not always fair? Sometimes you suffer unjust pain. Sometimes it is physical; sometimes it is financial; sometimes it is relational; sometimes it is circumstantial. **You cannot control what comes your way, but you can control your response to it!**

Now the question that remains: are there those among us who would benefit from a few moments to "**Cast all their cares upon the Lord**" before you go home this evening? Is it financial? is it physical? rebellious kids? abusive parents? a sudden death? a broken relationships? **You fill in the blank!** It has already been on your mind. Wouldn't this evening be a good time? And wouldn't this altar be a good place to **cast** your all?

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