
SOLA FIDE

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It is Well

In 1961, the Great Chicago Fire decimated Horatio Spafford's home. As a result, he was forced to send his wife and four daughters to England. Unfortunately, during their voyage, the ship carrying his family crashed and sank. Horatio's wife survived, but his daughters did not. In his journey to reunite with his wife in England, Horatio sailed pass the location of the fatal accident. Reminded of the grievous event, Horatio would write, "When peace like a river, attendeth my way; When sorrows like sea billows roll; Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, It is well, it is well with my soul." How was Horatio Spafford able to sing, "It is well with my soul" during his darkest and grievous moment? What did God teach him to be well with his soul? In an earthly sense, Horatio's response to his suffering seems so foreign and almost inhumane. Like Horatio, we all go through various sufferings and losses. They may come in different forms and degrees, but as Christians, we must remind ourselves of the hope in Christ. The gospel message can remind us of three truths during times of difficulties: the sovereignty of God, the love of God, and the promise of the resurrection.

The first gospel truth is the sovereignty of God, meaning that God is in control of all things. God has all authority, all power, all wisdom, and that He is all good even in our sufferings. This truth gives us amazing comfort, knowing that our pain and sufferings are not accidental and meaningless. We may not always understand and know the purpose of our sufferings, but our sovereign God intends all things for good. Joseph understood this truth as he told his brothers, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good..." (Genesis 50:20). We can look at our situation and wonder, "what possible good can come from this suffering?" Yet, we need to remember that the sovereignty of God reminds us that God uses our sufferings for good, one example is solidifying our faith. We see this throughout the Scripture in the lives of Job, Joseph, Peter, John and many more. We recognize that their faith had become more refined as they faced their sufferings. In our times of sufferings, we must remind ourselves that God is sovereign and intends all things for our good.

The second gospel truth is the love of God. The love of God is the most emphasized, but also the

most commercialized characteristic of God within the Christian community. God indeed loves us, but the love of God is much more than a "coffee mug" quote. God demonstrates His greatest love by sacrificing His one and only Son, Jesus, so that He can save sinners like you and me from eternal condemnation; He has given us a new life and an everlasting joy for those who accept Jesus as the Lord and Savior. As you face various trials, hardships and sufferings, remind yourself of God's sacrificial love for you. God is not a sadist who enjoys inflicting pain and suffering upon His children. As mentioned previously, God intends all things for good, and good in love. Because He loves us, God allows seasons of sufferings to draw us near to Him and to refine us. With this gospel truth of God's love, let us cling unto Christ and turn our times of sufferings into times of endurance.

The last gospel truth is the hope of the resurrection in Christ. To Christians, the resurrection of Christ is the reassuring promise that we will also be resurrected on that last final day (Romans 8 : 11). Our hope of resurrection in Christ reminds us of the unfathomable joy and hope of reigning with Christ forever. Often in our suffering, we lose sight of the eternal perspective. We question, "why this and how do I get out?" In the process, we can get discouraged, stressed and even lose hope. However, we have to remember not to be devastated because "he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence" (2 Corinthians 4:14). The resurrection of Christ promises that there is an eternity for us with Christ, where there are no pain, sorrow, disabilities, guilt and sins. Therefore, brothers and sisters, do not let the sufferings of this life overwhelm you. We are just passing through this world as aliens. Our true hope and joy lie ahead of us, where we will be with Christ. Until then, let us hold fast onto Christ and persevere well.

In the hymn, "It is Well," Horatio Spafford writes, "My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought, my sin, not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more, praise the Lord, praise the Lord, o my soul." Personally, this section of the hymn reminds me that one day there will be an end to all sufferings. Though painful the experiences may be, let us endure the different present trials with the conviction for God's sovereignty, God's gracious love, and the promise of resurrection in Christ. As we suffer, let us be reminded of these gospel truths and exclaim, "It is well, it is well with my soul."

"...in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:37-38