

Crossroads Community Church

Sunday November 16th, 2014

There is no doubt that winter is upon us and cooler days are ahead but our hearts were on fire for the Lord as we worshiped Him for all the wonderful blessings He bestows upon us, Bob and the team lead worship with joyful exuberance. Pastor Don came forward to pray, "Father God We praise and thank You for your graceful guidance and your loving discipline. Help us seek to obey you in all things and accept correction when we need it, for we know you work in all things for our good, in Jesus Name we Pray Amen!"

Pastor Don continued his series on "Spiritual Maturity?". "Today I want to talk about trials and the message is based on 1Peter 4:12-14." Dear friends, we shouldn't be surprised if we face trials? these trials make us partners with Christ in his suffering, So be happy when you are insulted for being a Christian, for then the glorious Spirit of God rests upon you.

Jesus was given the special name of Christ to portray His relationship with God, the Greek definition for "Christos" means messiah and the Latin "Ian" means to belong to. So when we identify ourselves as Christians we claim that we belong to Jesus Christ.

Becoming a Christian is a process, we need Re-Birth, growth and trials. If you ever prepared dough for bread, you know that for the yeast to be activated you need to add it and mix it so it permeates the dough, let it rise then pound it down to proof the dough and let it grow again to double in size. Our Christian life is similar, Jesus comes into our lives, He permeates our hearts and helps our faith grow, then come the trials pounding us down to prove our faith, then we see our faith double,(John 3:3-5). Jesus teaches that we need to be born again to see the Kingdom of God, he explains the importance of spiritual birth, and when we are reborn we naturally want to serve the Kingdom of God.

Have we always been there? Many of us myself included have gone to church as children, went through the rituals of child baptism or dedication, went to Sunday School, partook of first communion and when we reached our teenage years we drifted away.

However there came a day when we realised we needed God and received Jesus. When we were reborn we began to develop a relationship with Him. We Attended Church we did some Bible Reading and we Continued to pray to reach a level of maturity, (James 4:7,8). We gained support from one another, we gained knowledge and strengthened our prayer life but then one day we were faced with a trial. We might have asked, "Why Me??", but I ask you why not you? Trials are used to help us grow; although hardships and spiritual attacks are not from God they are from our common enemy Satan and God transforms them for Good and uses trials to draw us near to himself,(Genesis 50:20). Satan might think he has the upper hand but God turns a trial into an opportunity to reveal Himself to us. We all have our own trial story in which God showed Himself mighty and merciful to bring us back to Himself, (1Peter 4:12). Trials help our faith increase and our relationship with God grow stronger. None of us can make it on our own; we could never be good enough. Trials help in removing bad habits, wrong behaviours and attitudes for we all fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:10-23). As mentioned before Satan is our adversary and he doesn't want us returning to God much less growing stronger in faith. So, sometimes God allows trials to test our faith as he did for Job. He was put to the test and when his own wife attacked him he responded shall we only receive good from God and never anything bad? (Job 2:1-10).

Beloved, being a Christian doesn't guarantee prosperity or that nothing bad will ever happen anymore than lacking faith guarantees poverty or that only bad things will happen. We don't always know why we are facing a trial, if we always knew then it wouldn't require much faith and we would miss out on opportunities to grow. How would we know our faith is growing strong if it is never put to the test? (Luke 22:31,32, Matthew 16:23). We are on a collision course with the world because God has called us to be different, so Satan uses everything at his disposal to attack hoping we will fail, but we have an advocate to help us,(John 15:18-20). This is why trials are different for Christians because we have Jesus always in our corner praying and doing battle on our behalf, He is our mighty defender ,number one encourager, and he is in control (Hebrews 13:5, 1Peter 4:13, Romans 8:28). Jesus took the ultimate trial in our place to spare us the suffering we deserved for our sins so we would not be eternally separated from God, He died so that we would turn to Him and have Life, (John 3:16). So if we suffer in our trials patiently and faithfully, as a way to become more like Jesus, the Spirit of God will rest upon us. Let us keep putting our faith in God my friends and until next time may He increase our joy! Asherey Shalom!

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