

Good News

From Getwell

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SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY ACTIVITY

SUNDAY

Bible Study.....9:30 a.m.
Worship.....10:20 a.m.
Worship.....5:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study.....7:00 p.m.

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ON THE HOME FRONT

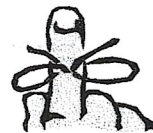
The Psalm of the Week

Psalm 8

- ¹ O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.
- ² Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.
- ³ When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
- ⁴ What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?
- ⁵ For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor.
- ⁶ Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:
- ⁷ All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;
- ⁸ The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.
- ⁹ O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

Ron Wallace

RON'S REMINDERS



God's Refining Shop

"Why me, Lord?" We have all asked it. Why does it always have to rain on my parade? Why did this have to happen to me? Why my child? Why my marriage? Why my job? Why? Why? Why?

The answer may be found in an obscure Old Testament passage where God is pictured as sitting over a refiner's fire making silver of His people. Malachi wrote, "He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Malachi 3:3).

A woman read this verse in Bible class and was curious enough to seek out a silversmith to see what it meant. She found him sitting before a crucible, gazing intently into a boiling pot. She asked, "Do you have to sit here all the time or just come back when it is finished?" He replied, "I have to keep my eye on the crucible. If it gets too hot, the silver is injured. I know the process of purifying is completed when I see my own image reflected in the silver." The answer to "Why me?" is found in the silversmith's shop.

THE REFINER'S POT

God values us far more than a prospector does his "mother lode," a miser does his coins, an addict does his fix, or a mother does her newborn (Psalm 116:15; Isaiah 43:4). He wants—and demands—the best for us. Just as the refiner's job is to increase the value of his product by removing impurities, God sees His job as removing the impurities—sins—from us.

Lehman Strauss knew the heartache of suffering. In the midst of dealing with his wife's stroke, he wrote a book entitled *In God's Waiting Room: Learning through Suffering*. As he attempted to better understand the events that had moved into his life, he likened his experience to childhood memories of his mother making cake. Dr. Strauss recalled the various ingredients—flour, baking

powder, shortening, raw eggs -that went into a cake. By themselves they were not very enjoyable snacks, but when properly mixed together and baked for the correct length of time, they collectively produced a delicious dessert. In our lives we experience ingredients that seem unpalatable, and our temptation is to tell God that He is ruining everything. At those times, we will find greater strength and peace when we acknowledge that God knows what He is doing.¹

What kind of furnace does the Refiner use? He uses the furnace of affliction, physical injury, disease, prolonged sickness (2 Corinthians 12:7-8), difficulty in rearing our children, problems with parents, financial reverses, or other overwhelming cares of life. Such suffering is an effective teacher in the great school of life. Some important lessons are learned only at her feet. Robert Browning Hamilton wrote the following:

I walked a mile with Pleasure, she chattered
all the way;
But left me none the wiser, for all she had
to say.
I walked a mile with Sorrow and ne'er a
word said she;
But, oh, the things I learned from her
when Sorrow walked with me!²

At the same time, God watches to see that the fire never gets so hot that it injures us. "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13). These things hurt us, but they do not permanently injure us—unless we turn from the Refiner.

THE REFINER'S PURPOSE

Amy Carmichael wrote,

A wise master never wastes his servant's time. No matter what set of circumstances we receive, God is not wasting our time. He is educating us; He is improving us; He is molding us. A young woman was suffering greatly and confided to an older Christian friend: "If God loves me as you say He does, why did He make me so?" The older woman replied, "He is making you now." God's purpose is to prepare us for heaven.³

The Refiner wants to make heaven attractive to us (2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1; Philippians 1:21-23; Hebrews 11:10; Colossians 3:1-2). It is through our tears that we see the farthest into heaven. Hard times can build good character (James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:7).

The Refiner wants to test our faith (Genesis 22:1; 1 Corinthians 3:12-15). The worthiness of the ship is not determined while it rides at ease in the harbor, but rather when it rides the waves of a storm. Our faith is worthless if it cannot get us through life's storms.

The Refiner wants to teach us to appreciate our blessings (Luke 17:17; Colossians 3:15). Domesticated bullfinches are placed in a dark room for several weeks before they learn to sing. When brought into sunlight, the bullfinch's song is sweeter and more beautiful than it would otherwise be. God often takes us into a dark room of suffering so that when we come back into life's sunshine, our song of praise will be sweeter than ever before.

The Refiner wants us to learn to comfort others (2 Corinthians 1:3-7). It is difficult to really feel compassion for someone if we do not know what he is going through. But when we have "walked a mile in his moccasins," we can feel sorry for the one with blisters. Suffering can help us help others. One remarked, "I asked for health that I might achieve. I was made weak that I might do better things."⁴ The divine Refiner wants us to learn to trust Him (Luke 14:11; Proverbs 16:18; James 4:10; Jeremiah 10:23; 2 Corinthians 12:9). Abraham Lincoln said, "I have often been driven to my knees by the sincere conviction that there was nowhere else to go."

THE REFINER'S PRODUCT

As the refiner told the Bible class student, silver is ready when he sees his image in its reflection. God also looks to see His image in our lives. Paul wrote, "We all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18; cf. Romans 8:29; Colossians 3:10).

A silversmith may make many pieces over the course of his days, but only a few of them are deemed worthy of display in his own house. God is fashioning of us what He wants to display in His own house. Ralph Waldo Emerson was once approached by a concerned and inquiring person who said, "Mr. Emerson, they tell me that the world is coming to an end." Emerson calmly replied, "Never mind, we can get along without it."

⁵ When God finishes refining us, we all will be very happy "doing without this world" and its suffering.

Endnotes

1. In God's Waiting Room: Learning through Suffering, Lehman Strauss, 1984. pp. 75-76.
2. Along the Road, <https://www.poetrynook.com/poem/along-road>.
3. https://s3.amazonaws.com/bsfl-media/biblestudiesforlife/files/2016/03/honesttoGod_session_6_text.pdf.
4. <https://www.wvtf.org/civil-war-series/2019-12-15/an-unknown-confederate-soldier>.
5. <https://wacriswell.com/sermons/1946/the-new-israel/>.

House to House Heart to Heart, Allen Webster
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