

The Word Works (February 23, 2020 by Rev. Anthony Menzel)

Someone in the congregation expressed to me this week that they are discouraged...It has been so hard to get the new church building...So many people are dealing with trials...People tithe, and they have not received major financial blessings...The person said to me, it seems like the Word of God does not work...I am here to encourage everyone that the Word of God DOES work...

The issue is that blessings come in the time and in the way that God wants, not in the time frame or the way that is most convenient to us...

God is more concerned with our heavenly reward and our spiritual well-being than with anything else...

Sister Lorena received a special Word from the Lord on Friday...I want us to study that passage as part of what we need to see that the Word of God works...

Scripture 1: 1 Peter 4:12-19

¹² Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; ¹³ but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. ¹⁴ If you are ^[e]reproached for the name of Christ, blessed *are you*, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. ^[f]On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified. ¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a ^[g]busybody in other people's matters. ¹⁶ Yet if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this ^[h]matter.

¹⁷ For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ Now

"If the righteous one is scarcely saved,
Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls *to Him* in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

This life is going to involve suffering...

Scripture 2: John 16:33

³³ These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you ^[f]will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

The Lord Jesus does NOT promise us a life without suffering...He does NOT promise a life without trials...

What He does promise us is to help us through the trials, sometimes by working miracles, sometimes by giving us His provision, and sometimes by giving us the strength to withstand the trial...

The Apostle Paul had such a miraculous ministry that he was even used by the Lord Jesus to raise people from the dead...However, he himself battled illness...But the Lord Jesus gave him the strength to withstand that trial...

It is not always the case, but in some cases, the Lord Jesus has a purpose for allowing us to go through pain or illness...

Scripture 3: 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

³ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any ^[a]trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

Scripture 4: 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

⁷ And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to ^[b]buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. ⁸ Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹ And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Sometimes the Lord Jesus allows suffering in our lives to keep us closer to Him...

One thing I do know is that the devil and his army of demons also do attack us...

Scripture 5: 1 Peter 5:8-11

⁸ Be [c]sober, be [d]vigilant; [e]because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. ⁹ Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. ¹⁰ But [f]may the God of all grace, who called [g]us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, [h]perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*. ¹¹ To Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Scripture 6: James 4:7-10

⁷ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded. ⁹ Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your* joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

So today I felt led to shorten the praise and worship at the beginning of the service and to change the order of the service so that we could have a special time of intercession...

The enemy has been attacking us especially hard...

When I look at the Leadership Team (Yo, Maria, Luis, Juana, Mami, Leandro, Brenda, Carmen, Virginia, William, July, Thomas, Lorena), everyone is going through something...

I know many people in the congregation are also going through trials...

This week we are collecting, for example, for the death of Brenda's aunt...

Next week we will be collecting for the death of Teresa's uncle, God willing...

I feel that we need to have a special time of prayer...

In this way, we will show the Lord Jesus that we are making our refuge in Him, like I shared on Friday...

Scripture 7: Psalm 91:1-2

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

² I will say of the LORD, "*He is my refuge and my fortress;*
My God, in Him I will trust."

We will start by praying for the people watching through Facebook...