

outreach

The Newsletter of the Churches of God, UK

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Matthew 28:19-20

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GOD CARES!

Life has purpose. That, surely, lies at the heart of the Christian message. Yet Christians often feel they have drawn the short straw. That life has it in for them. Even that God has forsaken them in their blackest hour.

As Christians we recognize we are on a pilgrimage. But few - if any! - Christians escape the pilgrimage without pressing problems of one kind or another. Illness, often. Loss of income. Low pay and its consequences. Bereavement. Family pressures and disruptions. Loneliness. The life of the Christian is not strewn with roses. And the occasional rose often has its thorns. As the apostle Paul wrote "If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable" (I Corinthians 15:19)!

But this is the life to which a loving Father has called us, and whatever the trial we can be assured that it has been filtered through His love. A godly reaction, on our part, to our trials ensures that we learn valuable lessons. Strength built during today's trial prepares for the next one! And enables us to encourage others. Just as with athletes, our spiritual muscles are built as we lift current spiritual burdens. And our mettle is hardened as we endure today's fiery trial.

Sadly, many don't stick the pace. They opt out of God's training programme for eternal life. It's not God's fault, for He assures us that "everything works for good with those who love him" (Romans 8:28), and that "no temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but will with the temptation also provide a way of escape, that you may be able to endure it" (I Corinthians 10:13).

Note that. *There's a way out* - but it doesn't necessarily mean the burden is removed! What God does is provide ways and means to help us bear that burden.

Means Of Grace

The path each of us treads is unique. What is child's play for you may be a faith-threatening challenge for me. But whatever the challenge, whatever spiritual battles we face, there is for each of us personal individual tuition. God has in His Word and through His Church, by His divine power "granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3f). The "means of grace" are there.

Let's look at some of them.

First, God has through Jesus Christ placed within *the assembly* of His people every gift we need to conquer every foe, win victoriously every battle, overcome every challenge life throws at us. This is why it's vital for Christians to keep in close contact with one another - where possible by visiting and assembling with other brethren, and through letters, or by phone. Only by contact with one another can we bear one another's burdens. Jesus Christ has placed in you gifts to serve the assembly! Even when "scattered" we can't afford to be an armchair Christian!

Manual for Living

Then there's God's manual for righteous living, *His Word*. Every life situation is catered for at least in principle. No matter how often we dig into the pages of our Bible there are new treasures to unearth about coping with the daily grind. Read - and study - it *daily*! Absorb God's prescription for "life with a capital L" as faithfully as you swallow the doctor's prescription!

Next, every Christian is endowed with *God's Holy Spirit* - God dwelling in us. The Spirit prompts us to obedience and service. Heed what the Spirit says to you and to your church! Work out your salvation by expressing in your life all the divine "fruits of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22 ff). Being filled with the Spirit is obedience to the Word of God.

Prayer, now. Are we anxious, care-worn, worried? Paul tells us to "have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by

"Dead Parrots and Sectarianism"
*Does your salvation hang by a thread? Why
 division in the church?*
 If you haven't heard this important taped
 message by Ronald Dart, you are invited to
 request a free copy from Lincoln

TABERNACLES 2002
 Yes - it's Filey. *The Churches of God, UK* (in
 association with the *Churches of God Outreach
 Ministries* and the *Church of God International*)
 will celebrate the Festival this year in Filey, Yorks .
 A brochure with suggestions for accommodation
 will be mailed shortly to those who have expressed
 an interest in fellowshipping with us in this
 delightful seaside town.
 The festival will be observed **September 21 to 28**

FESTIVAL PROFILE

The divine plan for man's salvation is portrayed by the weekly and annual round of festival days. Most Christians are familiar with the typology of the Passover. The other Bible holy days, too, are significant for Christians - and for mankind in general.

The **Festival of Tabernacles** is an autumn festival originally rooted in the harvest. It lasts for seven days and pictures the entire time of God's direct dealings with flesh and blood mankind - a time of His judgment. Tabernacles pictures man's temporary existence, represented in the festival by God's instruction to 'dwell in booths (*ie* temporary dwellings)' for seven days.

Within this period is what has been called '*the millennium*' - a period of one thousand years of 'rest' when Jesus Christ, together with resurrected Christians, will conquer all human government and reign supreme over all the earth. The millennium is typified by the weekly seventh day Sabbath. (Each day of the week represents a notional thousand years of human history.)

At the end of this thousand years - also within the typology of Tabernacles - will be a period of turmoil on earth when Satan will roam free. It is followed by a general resurrection of those who have never responded to the divine call - or never heard it ('The Great White Throne'). This latter is represented by 'the Last Great Day' - the *seventh day of Tabernacles*. These billions will have free access to God's Spirit: "If anyone thirsts let him come to me and drink" said Jesus on that day (John 7:37, 38).

The *Festival of Tabernacles* is immediately succeeded by an annual Sabbath, an *eighth day* - called in Scripture a 'closing day'. It is the culmination of the divine plan, and typifies *eternity*, when all will be in spirit form and no longer subject to death. Earth will be transformed, and God our Father and Jesus our Saviour will dwell with us on this Earth - for ever (Revelation 21 & 22).

GOD CARES!... cont'd

prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And [as a result] the peace of God will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7). The Psalmist adds: "Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us" (Psalm 62:8). And the apostle Peter writes, "Cast all your anxieties upon him, for he cares about you" (1 Peter 5:7).

Let us all by faith roll our troubles, our concerns and anxieties upon the broad shoulders of our loving and merciful God, who in Jesus experienced the same kinds of trial that we undergo. "For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in times of need" (Hebrews 4:15-16).

God is not afar off - but present with us through every situation. Moses wrote: "The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deuteronomy 33:27). The God whose power created the heavens and the earth has also the power to see us through all those dark tunnels through which every Christian wanders.

All our experience, if we react to it in a sound manner, is well worth it when we consider the hope that is set before us as heirs of God and fellow-heirs with Christ. Our present sufferings "are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

In a sense, God by creating man "subject to futility" places us at risk. All are subject to life's storms, to accident, to "time and chance". It is our response to life events that prepare Christians for a glorious eternity in the service of God.

Let's use every "means of grace", every resource God provides to achieve the full potential of that glory. And let us allow God to take upon Himself our cares, as He has promised!

← FESTIVAL OF TABERNACLES →		
1000 YEAR REIGN OF MESSIAH <i>7th-day Sabbath typology</i>	Rev 20:7-10 <i>Satan unbound</i>	Rev 20:11-15 <i>White Throne</i>

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