

## God's Grief Over His People



David Wilkerson May 15, 1985

The final outcome of the church of Jesus Christ is glorious victory. In the end, the gates of hell shall never prevail against the true church, which is the invisible body of Jesus Christ on earth.

It is supposed to be a glorious church, without a spot or wrinkle, washed and secured by the blood of the Lamb. But anyone with spiritual discernment can readily see that the church of Jesus Christ at this present time is not victorious over sin or the enemy. The sad and pitiful condition of many believers is a great grief to our Lord.

Satan is trampling over multitudes of God's people almost at will. The lives of millions of believers are in total disarray. Our ministry receives thousands of letters weekly from Christians all over the world. What my wife and I read is heartbreaking, and our workers weep with us as we read the pitiful prayer requests from multitudes of despairing Christians who are at the end of their rope. So many homes and lives seem to be totally out of control, with some wanting to escape by suicide.

In one week we will hear from hundreds of Christian wives whose husbands have left or are in the process of leaving them. Many of these husbands were once on fire for God, but now they drink, they fool around with other women, and they are totally deceived by Satan. There are Christian wives who hate to wake up in the morning, and they go to bed each night crying themselves to sleep.

Children are rebelling and backsliding. There is chaos and confusion in too many Christian homes. We even hear from ministers whose wives are leaving them. There are so many once radiant Christians turning their backs on the Lord, and the backsliding is widespread and getting worse. Because iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold.

We detect from so many Christians a sense of helplessness and despair. Many are giving up hope, and there is no joy or victory anywhere in their lives. They seem so defeated, cast down, defenseless, trodden down, wearied, and troubled. From the way many talk, the walls and gates are broken down, and Satan is having a field day without a challenge.

We read these thousands of heartbreaking requests, and we are driven to our knees to cry out, "Oh, God - what is happening to your beloved people? How can the enemy walk over them and hurt them with such fury? Why are so many held captive by fear and turmoil? Why such havoc among Your dear children? Why aren't God's people rising up with holy indignation and crying out, "Enough!?"

My Grief Only Reflects God's Greater Grief Over the Pitiful Conditions in the Lives and Homes of the Lord's People - Because It Need Not Be So!

God does grieve over His people. He grieved for forty years over His people Israel because of the trouble and sorrow they brought upon themselves through unbelief. "But with whom was he grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?" (Hebrews 3:17).

God has promised to carry them in his own arms through the difficult wilderness. He promised to be their guide, their keeper, their shelter, their strong arm, their covert from every storm, their deliverer from every enemy, and

their high tower of protection. He promised that no weapon that was formed against them could ever prosper. They were to be the apple of His eye, the delight of His soul, the object of his tender loving care. Their enemies were to be their footstools; they were to be always more than conquerors.

Had they believed what God told them, had they believed his promises were faithful and true, had they rested in his mighty power to save and deliver them, they would have been invincible! They would not have been victims of despair and trouble. They could have walked through that perilous wilderness well fed, without thirst, without fear or despair, with every need met, with a song and great joy. They could have had a life of peace, rest, and victory in a beautiful land of promises; and all spiritual and physical needs could have been met! That is what God had planned for them! That was what He promised! He so wanted them to be victorious, joyful, peaceful, and blessed. He wanted to make their bed for them in their sickness; He wanted to perform all things on their behalf to secure them and keep them as a special people to Himself.

But unbelief destroyed it all! Unbelief blinded their eyes to the ways of God! They missed God's glorious plan simply because they would not believe his promises! "And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief" (Hebrews 3:18, 19).

It was not just their lust and immorality that brought upon them all their troubles and grief. God was gracious toward their sins, and the slain lamb provided all the forgiveness they needed. He provided atonement for sins of the flesh.

It was their blatant unbelief that tied God's hand so that He could not longer help or deliver them. Unbelief robbed them all their peace and rest and rendered all God's promises useless and powerless on their behalf.

The door to fullness, joy, and victory was open; but unbelief kept them from going in to claim it. They began to doubt God's love and care for them. They began to question His mercy and concern, and they turned inward to seek help from the flesh. It brought them to a sad condition of hopelessness, and troubles broke upon them on all sides.

We look over the pitiful history of Israel in the wilderness and we say, what a waste! What it could have been for them if they had simply believed God! They did not have to live in such fear and bondage! They did not have to fall into unbelief and bring upon themselves such trouble! It was self-inflicted! Why would they not choose the good way of faith and confidence, the victorious way, God's preferred way? Why did they have to die such a sad, horrible, death, defeated, broken, and helpless?"

**God Grieves Even More Over This Generation of Believers Because We Have Better Promises and Still Won't Believe! Our Unbelief is Inexcusable!**

"Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (Hebrews 4:1,11).

Think for a moment of God's grief as He sees what is happening once again in the lives of his people! God is saying, in this very text, "It should be different now! You have My promise to bring you into a place of perfect peace and rest - if you will only believe! You have an example before your eyes of the danger of unbelief! Take heed from the tragic example of My people in the past."

Israel had no example of the destructive power of unbelief! They could not read a detailed, step-by-step account of a people who lost everything by foolish unbelief. But we can! We have the same promises - promises of a life of full and complete rest and deliverance in Him! We serve the same God! But even more, we now have a high priest in heaven who looks after all our interests. Ours is a better hope, built on better promises. We have a Man in glory who is touched, by personal experience, with the very feelings of our troubles, care, and needs.

God say, "You have a reason to hold fast to your faith - a reason Israel did not have! You have a high priest who has passed into heaven - a priest who invites you to come boldly into his presence." "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

**When Will There Ever Be a People of God Who Enter Into His Perfect Rest? If We Do Not, No Generation Ever Will Because We Are the Last!**

So often it is the Lord's own people who bind his hands so that He cannot help and deliver. It is the unbelief of his chosen ones that hinders most His divine power. So it was when he walked this earth in the flesh. He went into His

own country, among his own people, and they were offended by Him. "And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (Matthew 13:58).

When Jesus wept over Jerusalem, he cried out, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, I would... but ye would not." Jesus wanted to take them under His wings and protect them from the coming storms, but they refused through their unbelief. Such dread blindness! They were in such dire need, and there He was having all they needed, and their unbelief could not see it or appropriate it.

There is not a single reason for believers to live as victims to such horrible fear, anxiety, and torment. What is happening in the lives and homes of Christians today is as senseless as the self-inflicted bondage of the Israelites. It should not be - it need not be!

In These Last Days Those Who Have Not Learned to Trust Him in Everything Will Be Consumed by Their Fears and Troubles! They Will Be Overwhelmed!

All the Israelites who came out of Egypt, except Joshua and Caleb, were consumed in the wilderness. They died out of God's will, without hope, without peace or joy - they died alone and forsaken. And it should not have ended that way. They should have all been delivered and brought into the land of rest and peace.

Before he died, Moses told them why they would be so dreadfully consumed. He reminded them, "God promised to fight your battles... He bore thee in his arms as a man doth bear his son... yet in all this you did not believe the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 1:30-32). Moses said, "And the Lord heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and swore saying, Surely there shall not one of this evil generation see that good land... turn you, and take your journey into the wilderness... Go not up, neither fight; for I am not among you... the Lord will not hearken... nor give ear unto you" (Deuteronomy 1:34,35,40,42,45). God told them it was their continual unbelief that damned them to such a horrible end.

Do we think God does not hear us when we complain and when we doubt him? God says, "I heard what you said in your discouragement! I heard the words of your doubts and fears! You refused to trust Me! You even think doubts!"

Oh, saints of God, beware of your language in your times of testing and trial! It may be you truly love the Lord, pray, you read His Word. But what about your thoughts and words to Him - He reads your mind! God takes this very seriously, and He must be trusted. Unbelief is the greatest grief you could cause him.

Do you believe Him when His Word promises, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him" (Isaiah 59:19)?

Is the enemy coming against you, your home and your loved ones? Is there a flood of difficulty and trouble roaring down upon you? Do you despair, fear, and blame God? Or do you turn to the Lord, cleave to Him in the time of trouble and need, resting in his promises to bring you through, and give Him complete trust and confidence - no matter how bad things look?

It Is a Great Evil in the Eyes of the Lord for His Children to Speak or Think Doubts About His Love and Care for His Own.

Isaiah said, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression" (Isaiah 58:1).

What was the great transgression? Amazingly, Isaiah was speaking to those who "sought the Lord daily, who delighted to know his ways... who did righteously... who forsook not the ordinances of their God... who took delight in approaching to God" (Isaiah 58:2).

Isaiah was addressing genuine lovers and seekers of God. They were not wicked sinners - these were the very best of God's chosen people - yet they were guilty of this grievous sin of unbelief! They served God without believing He was concerned about the details of their lives. They prayed to a God they really didn't trust. They were coming to a God they did not believe was answering their prayers or working miracles for them.

Listen to their unbelief! (Wherefore we have fasted, say they, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge?" (Isaiah 58:3).

Let me explain what this means, because many are being severely tested in the same way. You begin to seek the

Lord with all your heart. You tear down all the idols of self and flesh. You get hungry for God and begin to pray and seek his face. You honestly want to please the Lord, trust him, and live a true and victorious life. For a while all goes well. But one day the enemy comes with his horrible lies to test you! He whispers, "It doesn't pay to be so holy and pure. Nothing has really changed. There are no miracles happening for you. You try so hard, yet you are no better than you were. Look at all the trouble and pain in your life. God is no more at work in your life that when you were cold. It isn't working for you."

The devil will taunt you, "You are the same old person you always were - lonely, forsaken, hurting, a rug for others to walk on. God is not answering your prayers. The troubles and problems won't go away. Even your fasting doesn't get results. Why not relax, be like all the others? Why put so much effort into being holy when you don't see much in the way of results? Why read the Bible, why pray, why live separated and pure lives when it doesn't seem to change things?"

Be very careful during those testing times! Don't let thoughts continue in your mind that God is not at work in your life! Don't relax and give in to the lying spirits of fear and unbelief. It is a grievous sin against God to doubt his interest in you! Prayer is changing you, and that is more important. God is at work, and what he is doing is hidden from our eyes - but every prayer moves His loving heart, and He still bottles every tear.

We Are Approaching a Time When Only Those Who Fully Trust God Will Survive! If You Can't Trust Him in the Good Times - What Will You Do When Judgment Comes?

Jeremiah warns, "If thou has run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, where in thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling Jordan?" (Jeremiah 12:5).

In other words, "If you can't make it now, trusting God - in this easy race, when all is peace and prosperity - how will you ever make it when the floods of judgment come rolling in? The majority of God's people are not ready for the judgments at the door. If they can't trust the Lord in these good times, where will they find faith in the days of sorrow and perplexity?"

Brother, sister, we are in a race right now - but it is just a slow foot race compared to what is soon to come. We must soon contend with the horses of the apocalypse - with judgments falling upon a sinful nation on all sides. God is saying, "if you can't trust Me in a time of peace, where you are not being persecuted or put to death for your faith, what will you do when it does come? If you can't trust Me in times of security and relative prosperity, how will you trust Me when everything is shaking and coming apart?"

Believe me, children of God - we face a swelling Jordan, a time of overflowing judgments and evil days. Those who can't see that coming are spiritually blind, deaf, and dumb - and they will end up being shipwrecked in faith. The Spirit is making a cry to all sleeping virgins, "Awake, put on your strength, O Zion!" We had better start trusting our dear Lord now, in all things, while He is near and ready to deliver.

I think of all the doubting, fearful, despairing children of God, living right now in such turmoil, and I say to myself, "What will happen to these poor, dear souls when real trouble comes? More trouble will only cause more doubt, more unbelief."

God help us! This trend toward helpless doubt and debilitating unbelief must stop! God's people must put an end to every single doubt - they must rise up in holy and righteous anger and cry aloud, "Devil, I am a child of an all powerful, all caring, heavenly Father - and you can no longer trample me into the dust of despair and defeat! I will trust my God! I will pray and believe God is hearing!"

God is sounding his trumpet. He is making a midnight cry. He is trying to awaken His bride! He calls out a people who will cast themselves upon Him, who will believe in His saving, keeping, delivering power!

Don't look at conditions! Don't look for evidence! Trust Him even if you see no visible results at all. "Blessed are those who have not seen, yet believe." Absolute faith and trust in God will lift you above any and all trials and problems! Faith will declare, "It may not happen the way I think it should. God may not do it my way, but He will do what is right for me! He will keep me! He will sustain me! His presence will go with me! He will one day wipe my tears away! He will be faithful!"

We had better start "casting" all our cares upon Him - now! He wants to lift every care from our shoulders! He

wants to be trusted with every single need and problem. It has been His grief that so few trust Him, but it will be His great joy to find a body of believers who have cast every care upon Him! Turn everything over to Him! Your home! Your children! Your work! Your needs! Your mate! Your future!

Do you believe Him when He says, "I care for you"? God must weep for joy when He finds a people who are anxious for nothing because they are resting in His care!

David said, "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in his commandments. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord" (Psalm 112:1,7).  
Is Your Heart Fixed? Are You Fully Trusting in the Lord in All Things?

Then no bad news will ever move you. You need be afraid of nothing! Let the economy fail, let the banks close, let the violence rage, let the world tremble with fear, let the hydrogen bombs fall. My heart is fixed - anchored! I trust my Lord! Live or die, I am the Lord's.

Those who put their trust in the Lord can shout with joy even when the floods of judgment roll in. "But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee. For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield" (Psalm 5:11,12).  
His Word Calls Us to a Life of Trust.

"Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them. Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings" (Psalm 17:7,8)).

"Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues" (Psalm 31:19,20).

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him. O fear the Lord, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him" (Psalm 34:7-9).

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3).

"The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth, and with my song will I praise him. The Lord is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed" (Psalm 28:7,8).

"Our soul waiteth for the Lord: he is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name. Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in thee" (Psalm 33:20-22).

"They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever" (Palm 125:1).

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5,6).

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