

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume V

Issue 2

Published occasionally for Zion's mourners

Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

THE MOURNERS

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Matthew 5:4

Someone recently asked me why this paper has in its masthead the phrase “for Zion’s mourners.” He was concerned that the use of this phrase, might cause some to think that the contents of the paper were dark and dismal and would possibly cause some not to read it. Perhaps he is correct. For well nigh onto 70 years the humanistic mantra of the “power of positive thinking” has so permeated the mindset of many, (even numbers of the true children of GOD) to the point that a consideration of true believers as mourners must now be explained. Very seldom does one hear them described so in the day in which we live. The modern religious world is content to have its conscience soothed with a “placebo” gospel (which I believe to be no gospel at all) and has in essence been stripped of any discernment that it might have ever possessed. As the prophet of old said, “*And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken.*” (Eze 22:28) The lines between the gospel and entertainment have been so muddled that very few (it seems) even of those who are true possessors of faith can tell the difference.

Man is the central figure in the vast majority of so called preaching in most churches. Everything is designed around his feelings and stimulation unto supposed good works which are purportedly produced by a multitude of programs, systems, and endeavors of motivational teaching. Faith is described as some sort of “rabbits foot” or “shamrock” which men are supposed to exhibit in order to insure their continued blessing from the LORD. The message of a shallow peace and safety, prosperity, and triumph is the order of the day and men love to have it so. I am reminded again of one of the old prophets who said, “*They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.*” (Jer 6:14) Laughter has replaced repentance as the desired state of GOD’s children.

Mourning is not a state into which one is brought by choice or decision nor can one be taught how to properly mourn. Mourning is not a state in which a man by nature desires to be in and in the flesh will do everything possible to escape it. By its very nature, sadness is that which men try to avoid. Those whose hearts are satisfied with their present condition cannot enter in to such a state by their own power or choice nor can a man pretend to mourn. Those who are called mourners in the scripture were brought into that state by the unfolding of events and the actions of another. Their state of mourning is an evidence of the blessing of GOD and the outpouring of HIS SPIRIT on HIS own. “*And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.*” (Zec 12:10)

Some will surely say that the LORD came to deliver us from a state of mourning and I would be the first to agree. However HE must first bring us into a state of mourning in order that we may recognize the glory that awaits those who mourn now as we traverse this lowland of sin and sorrow in which we are temporarily housed. How else can we view such scriptures as *“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:.”* (2Cor 5:1-2) A man cannot earn or receive the blessings of GOD by lamenting his condition nor saying woe is me louder than the next person but the blessing of GOD is surely evident in those who:

Mourn over their own sin. David exemplified the heart cry of the true child of GOD when he said, *“For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.”* (Psa 51:3-4) The greatest heartache for the sons of GOD comes because they are painfully aware of how far short of obedience they constantly come. The “righteous” think themselves to measure up to some degree to the standard of righteousness which the LORD has established, yet “sinners” know themselves to have no hope apart from the perfect righteousness of CHRIST which is imputed to them. Well did Paul say, *“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”* (1Tim 1:15)

Mourn over the death of their SAVIOR. How can it be that such an ONE as the HOLY LAMB of GOD should stoop to die a sinner’s death? On the one hand we rejoice that HE has paid our debt and loosed us from bondage but we are compelled to remember HIS death till HE comes. Those who are blessed by GOD to mourn their sin must nonetheless shed tears of sadness when they view HIM bleeding in their behalf, even while their heart cries out with great rejoicing that by such HE has redeemed them and delivered them forever from any and all condemnation. *“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.”* (Isa 53:4) Now that we see HIS suffering was endured in our behalf we cannot help but mourn over the cause of HIS affliction.

Mourn over the state of the LORD’s church. Had it pleased the LORD to do so HE could have made HIS church to be a treasure highly regarded and gloried in by the world. Yet HE has caused his saints to wander in a state of semi-darkness, subject to all of the weaknesses which are common to this sinful flesh. (see Heb.11:38-40) Even though we have been brought out of total darkness we yet see through a glass darkly and lament the cold and disobedient state that we see the church often walk in. The LORD is pleased from time to time to visit HIS vineyard and cause the spices of HIS garden to abound but alas it is not always so to the same degree. I believe that generally speaking we are walking in a very dark time which must cause the true sons of GOD to lament our coldness and cry out to HIM for mercy. *“O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O LORD, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.”* (Hab 3:2)

Mourn over being a stranger in this world. The longing of the sons of GOD is to put off this sinful world along with this mortal body that we may be clothed in that immortal body which HE has purchased for us. We have here no continuing city. Weeping may endure for a night but joy comes in the morning. The gospel is intended for those who mourn. *“To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.”* (Isa 61:3)