

Child of God, you are Loved & Precious in God's Sight!

God Awareness: there is no greater 'parent' than God, our Heavenly Father. Scripture uses the desire human parents' have to give 'good gifts' to their children (e.g. love, care, help, etc.) to emphasis, "how much **more** will your **Father** who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" (Matt. 7:11). The comparison is like me saying, '*if I can walk a 1/2 a mile - as a bilateral amputee - image how far an Olympic medalist can go!*' **Point Taken - No Comparison!** Similarly, if human parents can set aside their own self-interests & love **their** children, image the **incomprehensible love of God** for **YOU, His child!**

Because the Lord loves you, He promises, "**When** you pass through waters, **I will be with you & through rivers, they won't overwhelm you. When** you walk through fire you **won't** be burned ... the flame will not consume you. **Because you are precious in my eyes ... and I love you ...**

Thus says the Lord, Who **makes a way** in the sea, **a path** in the mighty waters,
Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert" (Isa. 43:2-6; 16-19 ESV).

God's love for you is **so** amazing it's beyond imagination. **So, God** ... described it in a multitude of ways in Scripture so we can glimpse it's magnitude, especially **WHEN** we go through fiery trials or floods of tears ... **WHEN** we become terrified, confused or lost. As a Christ-believer, did you realize you might go through a horrific event or experience heartbreaking loss? I didn't; not really. I wasn't prepared for life crises. Not really.

I'm not sure **how** the notion Christians were insulated from tragedy took root in me. Cognitively, however, I **KNEW** the truth "... all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer" (2 Tim. 3:12). It should have sunk in; my stance should have been, 'just wait for it,' right? But no, even when the prequel to my missions' experience included biographies of martyred missionaries, I still wasn't prepared for the flames (above) that burned through my own life. From some responses I received during my bi-lateral amputation days, I'm not sure today's Christian culture is prepared, yet, either. Instead, it seems the '**lecture-rebuke**' style - that Job's friends initiated - is mounting a resurgent, though **God rejected this style** as a picture of *His heart* long ago.

Additionally, another treatment for sufferers apparently won't die a graceful death, either. When Christ's disciples met a man, blind from birth, it seems they 'saw' an *opportunity* to enrich **themselves** through '**academic-inquiry**' rather than gaining God's compassion to 'love of their neighbor.' They wanted Jesus to validate their skewed beliefs and asked Him if it, '**was his sin or his parents' sin that caused this?**' Their **compulsion to blame sin** for **all** suffering gave them *tunnel-vision & blinded them to the (normal) human need for comfort, lived-out in Scripture's prescriptive way:* "to weep with those who weep" (Rom. 12:15).

Following John chapter nine's narrative on, it seems the disciples' '**academic-inquiry**' distanced them from 'their neighbor' and fueled naturalistic assumptions that totally discounted God. Their hypothesis was flawed; this man's blindness **and** Christ's healing of him were both providentially designed to glorify God. God would use this miracle of Christ's, and others as well, **to make one truth evident to the world: Jesus is the Son of God, the Savior of the world.** Christ would be revealed as the visible expression, "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15) *through* this man **because** he was blind, not despite it - glorifying God, the Father.

What surprises me - now that tragedy visited me like an uninvited guest with no plans to leave - is how **many** verses there are **PREPARING** our minds for trouble & our hearts to suffer in a way Christ is formed *within* us, made evident *by* us & God glorified *through* us. **PLEASE re-read** the passage above: God says **WHEN** (not IF) suffering comes and tells us what we need to hear from Him: "I **will** be with you ... I have **my eyes on you; you are precious to me** I **love** you ... I **am** doing something here... and I **will** make a **way for you** to get through this!! **God is** present! He is **aware, available, adoring** you & **acting 'for' you** in the midst of it all ..."do you not perceive it?" (Isa. 43:18). Trust Him! God *will* make a path; **He loves you, child of God!**

Warmly, Jody