

## **THE SWEETEST LEMONADE – Exchanging Challenges for Cheeriness**

Contemplation of Current Crisis and Conveyance of Consecrated Care for Concerned Contemporaries in Covenant (God takes care of His own in times of trouble)

The global economy is in severe distress with billions of people lacking basic essentials. On the home front, employment and foreclosure losses have wearied the resolve of the American people. Political agendas have further assaulted the values, hopes and dreams that previously fueled our national pride and ensuing progress. We are in a tough season but before I allow myself to worry, weep or whine, I will willingly worship! I believe this is what God had in mind when He asked the children of Israel to build altars of remembrance that their hearts would not fail in times of distress and that they would find the courage to press on toward the upward call on their lives; irrevocable, irrepressible and inescapable.

*“You shall make an altar of earth for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen; in every place where I cause My name to be remembered, I will come to you and bless you.” Exodus 20:24*

*“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9*

*“I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”  
Philippians 3:14*

*“For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” Romans 11:29*

God is absolutely for us.

*“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?” Romans 8:31*

Here are some thoughts to ponder as we contemplate the need and call to be thankful.

Do I know that God loves me? Most people don't. Do I hear His voice most of the time? Most people don't. Do I have the ability to see, smell, taste, walk, dance, write, sing, talk, hear, and work? Some people don't. Do I have people in my life that love me and enjoy my company? Some people don't. Do I have clothes to wear and food to eat and a roof over my head? Some people don't. Do I experience high energy, laughter, and enthusiasm? Some people don't. Do I understand that complete forgiveness is mine and that I live in covenant relationship with the Creator of the Universe? Some people don't. Have I received healing? Some people have not. Have I witnessed or even participated in miracles? Some people have not. Have I experienced God's overwhelming presence so much so that I wept

uncontrollably at the embrace of such limitless passionate regard for me? Some people have not. Have I heard God whisper insight and understanding to my heart and mind regarding issues of life that captivated me in wonder and amazement? Most people have not.

And on the other side of the coin, I have also suffered loss with tears that have poured out from a heart crushed in betrayal, and felt so alone that my breath was captured in the vacuum of my thoughts creating a sensation of respiratory failure? Perhaps that is where the term "drowning in my sorrows" comes from. I have been robbed, slandered, deceived, and treated as worthless, left homeless and penniless? I have also wanted to retaliate with an angry vengeance so rapacious that it would devour the innocent just to experience the blood of revenge? I have been there. Cruelty can unsettle the gentlest heart especially when the circumstances seem relentless. So I pray and I cry and I pray some more, wondering what I did wrong to bring such calamity. What secret sin did I allow to fester that generated such repercussions to my previously peaceful and pleasant life? When or how did I fail to be obedient? Did I miss some instruction along the way that charted such a violent course in my journey?

Then in the midst of all this turmoil, I remember His faithfulness. I left monuments. I have markers. I have memories. I have history of answered prayers and miracles without number. I remember long conversations, and the overwhelming presence of His Spirit with songs I have sung, or in moments of bible study. I have memories of His mercy, kindness, compassion, and great generosity. I know the sound of His steps in the garden and the tone of His whispers and the smell of His garments. I know the cadence of His heartbeat and the feeling of being lost in His arms, disappearing in His embrace and finding the only home I need is Him. To discover at last that loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength has a price. Pain and suffering are not only part of the equation, but an essential part. As I scour the Scriptures, I find Jeremiah, Job, Paul, Stephen and Jesus. Death to self brought about through the blessing of suffering and pain seems part of the course for intimates. And through it we discover a face of God that makes all loss seem trivial and the bitterest lemons into the sweetest lemonade.

*"You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13 "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things." Philippians 4:4 "I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul will make its boast in the LORD; The humble will hear it and rejoice. O magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together. I sought the LORD, and He answered me, And delivered me from all my fears." Psalm 34:1-4*

## **BENEDICTION**

We hope this teaching was a great blessing to you in better aligning your beliefs with that of the Scriptures. Our earnest prayer is that the Spirit of God will woo your heart even further into greater intimacy with Him, that you might come to know the fullness of faith as He desires for you to know and experience with great joy. Blessings & Shalom (Peace)!

