

The Wednesday Word, February 28, 2018: Is Jesus Enough for your Reward? Part 1

" . . . wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Luke 2:49

We often think that Jesus must have had it reasonably easy. Apart from having to go through the few hours of the cross, He had a pretty agreeable time of it, didn't He? After all, there He was walking about the place as 'God incognito'; the all-powerful one cleverly disguised as a man. How hard could that be?

So just how difficult could His life have been? Was His 33 years here a relatively good and pleasant experience?

Actually, humanly speaking, it was not. In some ways, it was pretty awful!

Let's look for example at His early life. I'm sure you have often heard it said that we know almost nothing of those years, but this is not strictly the case. We know, for example, that by age 12 He knew His will was set apart to do that of His Father (Luke 2:49). But is there any more information available about those early days?

Yes, there is. Take for example the Psalms. Many of them contain the prayers of Jesus. They may have been spoken and cried prophetically by others; nevertheless, many of them were the expressions of Christ's heart. Part of Psalm 69, for instance, prophetically gives us insight into what it was going to be like for Jesus growing up in Nazareth and it was ghastly! Verse 7 reads, "Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face."

Many think this is a direct reference to the rejection He would get from some people because of the Virgin Birth. Consider this, when He was born, He was born to a virgin. Joseph was not His Father, God was! He was the Son of God, not the Son of Joseph! Can you imagine bearing that stigma? "God is your Father? A likely story!" From His earliest days, He always carried the stigma of being bastard-born. This may be no big deal today, but in those days, it was pretty dreadful. Not all of His day despised bastards, but many did.

Someone has said, "God made the countryside, man made the cities, but the Devil made the small towns." That's more truth than poetry. I grew up in a small village in Northern Ireland and can testify that it seemed as though everyone knew everyone else's business. I knew who many of the children born out of wedlock. We all knew! So, I can well believe that the 'upstanding' parents of Nazareth warned their children, "Don't have anything to do with that Jesus one, he's from bad stock. Joseph didn't marry his mother till after he was born." Then we read,

"I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children" (Psalm 69:8).

The truth is this, His brothers and sisters didn't like Him. He was always going on about that "God stuff." And besides that, they knew He was different and yes, they'd heard the stories and yes they'd heard that there was a claim that God was His real Father. They didn't much care for

Him. Rejection started within His own house. He was a stranger and an alien in His own home. It was, in fact, not till after the resurrection that any of them became His followers.

So, what was He like to be around? We get the answer in the next verse, verse 9; “For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up, and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.”

The reason I bring all that up is to emphasize that that kind of suffering is all in the past. For Him, earthly life with all its rejections and shunning has gone forever, He has entered His well-earned rest. He has gone,

From humiliation to glorification;
From degradation to exaltation;
From the curse to the crown;
From the place of horror to the place of honour;
From the gruesome tree to the glorious throne;
From receiving wrath to receiving worship.

As His follower, life may be tough right now. You love Him and have taken a stand for Him and it has brought you nothing but trouble. But don't lose heart, your reward is yet to come. Do not become weary in well doing (Galatians 6:9). As Paul says, our light affliction is but for a moment. Fix your eyes upon Jesus for there's an eternal weight of glory just up ahead (2 Corinthians 4:17-18).

We will continue this thought next time (DV)

And that's the Gospel Truth!