

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON THE LETTER OF JAMES

GOD IS COMPASSIONATE AND MERCIFUL

James 5:11 “. . . the Lord is compassionate and merciful.”

The terrible, sinful behavior of human beings is before us on a daily basis. As I write this devotion, yesterday there was another horrific, violent mass shooting just west of Chicago. A number of people were killed, many were wounded and additional were injured as parade goers attempted to flee from the shooter.

Mass shootings, pandemics, personal catastrophic illnesses, life changing injuries and the everyday challenges of coping with life are commonplace. Looking on these situations, many of them quite harsh and unpleasant, the Devil wants us to pronounce an adverse verdict on God. Satan tempts us to say, “If God truly has our best interests at heart, He would not permit such things to happen.” He wants you to believe these life situations are so difficult and severe that there could not possibly be a good purpose to come out of them. Yet, God’s word says, “And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them.” (Romans 8:28 NLT)

James says in today’s Scripture verse, “. . . the Lord is compassionate and merciful.” (James 5:11 ESV) Another translation translates the two Greek words in this verse with the English words “pitiful” and “tender mercy.” Compassion or pitiful refer to feelings. Merciful or tender mercy are actions of God toward you. Compassion or pity is shown by God in that He does not permit you to endure more trials and tribulations than you are able to bear (see 1 Corinthians 10:13). Through God’s mercy He gives His good and richest blessings at the end of the difficulties that come your way.

These words of James call you to trust God to have a good purpose for what happens to you even if you are at the moment unable to understand what is occurring. God gives you faith in His Son and through His Son in Him not only for your salvation, but also to enable you to endure trials and tribulations that happen in your life. As the beloved words of Psalm 23 say, “You (Yahweh) prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head

with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.” (verses 5-6)

Prayer: Lord, grant me the faith I need to endure the things that happen to me in life that I cannot understand, are very difficult to endure and especially those that cause me to doubt Your love. Grant me “a faith that will not shrink tho’ pressed by many a foe.” In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Oh, for a faith that will not shrink Tho’ pressed by many a foe;
That will not tremble on the brink Of poverty or woe;

That will not murmur nor complain Beneath the chast’ning rod,
But in the hour of grief or pain Can lean upon its God;

A faith that shines more bright and clear When tempests rage without;
That, when in danger, knows no fear, in darkness feels no doubt;

That bears unmoved the world’s dread frown Nor heeds its scornful smile;
That sin’s wild ocean cannot drown Nor Satan’s arts beguile;

A faith that keeps the narrow way Till life’s last spark is fled
And with a pure and heavenly ray Lights up the dying bed.

Lord, give us such a faith as this; And then, whate’er may come,
We’ll taste e’en now the hallowed bliss Of an eternal home.
(TLH 396)