



## DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE

*Victory in the Furnace ... by Gareth*

- **Victory in the furnace** - Isaiah 48 v10&11a "Behold I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it:"
- **I. You will often find God's people in the furnace of affliction.**
  - If we go all the way back to the beginning of time when Adam & Eve are removed from the garden after which they had 2 children Cain & Abel one of which was the child of God? Abel is in the furnace of affliction of his brother's enmity and persecution.
  - Then there was Noah who built a large boat when there was no water in sight. Imagine the furnace of affliction as wicked people all around Him laughed and joked about God's plan. Every part of the building project laughed to scorn.
  - Then there was Abraham, Isaac & Jacob, these men were tried men and all they endured the furnace experience.
  - Think of the time Pharaoh, when God's people Israel are under Egyptian rule, whose cry of oppression only increased when asked to produce more bricks even without straw. Where were the people of God? They are in the furnace.
  - Moving on in scripture to David, the man after God's own heart He is found in the caves of Engedi 1 Sam 23:29.
  - Or the days of Ahab and Obadiah when Jezebel was killing God's prophets and they had to escape and hide in the cave. (1 Kings 18: 4).
  - Or the days of Christ's apostles who were persecuted. (Acts 5 v 41). There are many examples that time does not permit us to look at. But history bears record of God's people in the furnace right through scripture and right through time. True followers of Christ will be in the furnace.
- **II. The reason for the furnace experience.**
  - It's very much needed nothing that is precious escapes trial. Diamonds must be cut, if a diamond could feel pain one can only imagine the pain the diamond goes through during the cutting process.
  - Gold and silver must be tried too. Solomon tells us in the book of Proverbs 17: 3 "The fining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold". It is the law of nature that everything that is precious must be tried.
  - Jesus declared in this world you will have trial (John 16 v33). Not might have trial, but will have trial a certainty for every true born again believer in Christ.
- **III. Benefits of the furnace.**
  - It purifies us like the gold or the silver.

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## DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE (Contd)

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- You and I can sometimes be overcome by many things in life. But Paul the apostle urges us to present our bodies as a *living sacrifice* - *Rom 12:1-2*. These daily experiences are forming character within so that in due season we are purified.
- **IV. Comforts in the furnace.**
- It's a good thing to know what good the furnace will do (future tense), but it equally important to have some comfort in it. The first thing to look at is the promise within the text.
- "*I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction*". The furnace is hot but He has chosen me, uninviting but He has chosen me, times are difficult but He has chosen me the great comfort is that the son of Man is with you/me in the furnace.
- How do I know?
  - ❖ He was with the 3 men in *Daniel ch 3*
  - ❖ The psalmist who loved God and was chosen by God declared in *Psalms 139v8: If I go to the highest heaven behold thou are there.*
  - ❖ Joshua was able to delight in the promise of the Lord - *Deut 31v6 NLT bible "He will not fail you or forsake you"*.
- So in the furnace of affliction He is with you.. That furnace of affliction for you: May be a time of depression, He is with you.
  - ❖ Your time of sickness.
  - ❖ In the difficulty of your work situation He is with you.
  - ❖ In the pressure of University/school He is with you.
- *Isaiah 41v10 "Fear not, I am with thee be not dismayed, for I am thy God."* Fear not Christian, Jesus is in the boat with you.

## Events /Notices

- ▶ **January to March schedule** will be on display on church notice board this *Sunday*.
- ▶ **Special visit from Dandin Espina**, a partner of Tearfund in the Philippines, who will give update on progress of relief work in the wake of the typhoon Haiyan some years ago. This will take place next *Sunday 29th* during the main meeting. .

