

TO HIM WHO IS ABOUT TO FAINT

The world parties while the sufferings increase; indifference that causes blindness toward compassion, expresses itself in obvious manners seen in the victims of circumstances. This is seen in one of the parables of YAHSHUA to answer a lawyer's question, "Who is my neighbor?" A neighbor is anyone we encounter in the path of life. There is such a warm feeling in the word neighbor in its meaning. It connects all of us to forget ourselves in order to help, to serve, and to love those who are in difficulties, including foreigners. The behavior of a neighbor should be one that does not measure sacrifice to help one in need, no matter who the person is, even our enemy. Be it psychologically, financially or in any other way we are faced with, compelling us to help. Leaving our comfortable zone, interrupting our schedule to extend a hand is to be a "Good neighbor." For the believer in YAHSHUA, it is imperative to perform actions of a good neighbor to fulfill the command of our Lord, "Love your neighbor as yourself." The church of Christ is to be the lighthouse, beaming its light to save one from perishing in the storm of suffering. The beams of light are expressions of the love of YAHSHUA sent out through us into the world lost in sin, and perishing, chained to its power. Proverbs 24:11-12 commands us "to deliver those who are drawn away to death, and those who totter to the slaughter, to hold them back. If you [profess ignorance and] say, Behold, we did not know this, does not He Who weighs and ponders the heart perceive and consider it? And He Who guards your life, does not He know it? And shall not He render to every man according to his works?" This is a solemn warning not to be ignored.

The Patriarch Job was found in a miserable situation, when his friends became accusers instead of comforters. They separated themselves from him, when treating him as worthy of the circumstances brought to his life, even when not his fault. It is easier for us to act this way than to invest our time with those in need. However, we forget that tomorrow we could be found in their situations and in need of help from them, for no one is exempt from sufferings life brings. The Bible tells us to strive to save others, snatching [them] out of [the] fire; on others, take pity with fear, loathing even the garment spotted by the flesh and polluted by their sensuality (Jude 23). The world is filled with such people today. Taken by addictions, which controls the mind causing the loss of self-identity, losing the core of whom they are, becoming more like animals than humans, yes, probably guilty of wrong choices made in their life time. The odor they project for not having had baths and their outlook appearances, separates them from society. They are treated as leprous, when in fact, their mental estate requires a little compassion to position them back to human standards. After all, that's what they are. YAHSHUA died for them, too. If He, being God incarnate, lowered Himself as to become human in order to reach out to sinners, why is it that we can't have the heart of God to touch another human with His love? God's love is to be passed on, like a river that overflows to its tributaries. "To him who is about to faint and despair, kindness is due from his friends, lest he forsake the fear of the Almighty" (Job 6:14). Ignoring to help one in need, touches the heart of God. Solomon wrote, "He who oppresses the poor, reproaches, mocks and insults his Maker, but he who is kind and merciful to the needy honors God" (Prov. 14:31). Our response to the needy – positive or negative, connects us to the very presence of God. Our Lord was often criticized by the religious men of

His days for being with those forsaken by society. In Mark 2:15-17, as we read the report of YAHSHUA eating with sinners, that is, the tax collectors: "And as YAHSHUA, together with His disciples, sat at table in his house, (Levi's) many tax collectors and persons with sin were dinning with Him, for there were many who walked the same road; and the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that He was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to His disciples, Why does He eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners? When YAHSHUA heard it, He said to them, Those who are strong and well have no need of a physician, but those who are weak and sick; I came not to call the righteous ones to repentance, but sinners." Israel's religious authorities often separated themselves from the rest of the people, for they considered themselves holier than the rest, when as a matter of fact, YAHSHUA defined them as whitewashed tombs—beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people's bones and all sorts of impurity. Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness (Matt.23).

There, stood One Whom John said of Him, "I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of His sandals" (Luke 3:16). John was not just a mere man; he was the one the prophets prophesized about, the one chosen to be the precursor of YAHSHUA, preparing the way for Him. "And you, little one, shall be called a prophet of the Most High; for you shall go on before the face of the Lord to make ready His ways, to bring and give the knowledge of salvation to His people in the forgiveness and remission of their sins." (Luke 1:76-77). YAHSHUA, our Lord, being God, did not consider His status of Son of God. When He came down to earth, He came to substantiate His love for sinners, lost and separated from Him, and that means men. In His sight, there is none righteous apart from Him. So, when we see a miserable person in his rags, dirty and forsaken, remember, that is the spiritual condition of all who rejects God. That's the way He sees us, yet with compassion. He said, "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Next time we see a homeless man, let's not turn away from him, but let our eyes meet his, to convey the love of our Lord and Savior, YAHSHUA. After all, that's Whom we represent. Doing otherwise, we are misrepresenting Who He is; we are misleading others about Him, and leading others to abandon the faith. We are acting as Pharisees- hypocrites, an action YAHSHUA condemned.

Suffering comes to all in its appointed time; there is none who has been born that will escape the wrath of suffering. In everything that happens to man, there is the control of God's timing. We suffer the results of bad decisions we make; we also suffer unjustly in the hands of those who hate God; man, also suffers the result of sin in his life. But when someone is found prostrated, it is up to us to give him a hand. This way, we are associating with him in the fact that we are also prone to suffering. In the case of Job, he clearly expressed his emotional pain toward his friends' judgment against him by saying, **"My friends scorn me, but my eye pours out tears to God. Oh, that there were one who might plead for a man with God and that he might maintain his right with Him, as a son of man pleads with or for his neighbor!"** (Job 16:20-21).

When the conscience does not accuse us of wrong doing in the midst of our suffering, peace will lead us to the final day of our ordeal, we have extended our hand to the needy and poor, as

the Bible says: those who have considered the weak and the poor, the Lord will deliver them from the time of evil and trouble. He will protect and keep them alive; they shall be called blessed in the land; and God will not deliver them to the will of the enemies. He will sustain, refresh, and strengthens them on their bed of languishing; all their bed, the Lord will turn, change and transform in their illness (Ps. 41:1-3) (Paraphrased). The Lord God has a special place in His heart for those who are suffering hopelessly, no matter the roots of their suffering; and He will reward those who will consider the poor and those who are suffering, as the verse above stated. When YAHSHUA saw the crowds, He was filled with compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. (Matt. 9:36-37). YAHSHUA'S compassion compelled Him to carry our cross to be crucified on it, in order to save us. Paul wrote to the Galatians, "Carry one another's burden, and this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal.6:12). Like sheep, we all went astray and we were doomed to eternal condemnation, separated from God. But it was in the love, and compassion and mercy of our Savior that we were saved from it. The world is getting ripe for God's judgment to fall on it; let God's love reach out through you and me before it turns to its way of no return.