

Greeting to my brothers and sisters and Africa. I am thankful for opportunity to write to you.

Even though we live in different continents, the Lord desires that we unite our faith and prayers.

He taught in John 10:16 "There shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

My message today is "Finding Peace through Jesus Christ."

First, we will all face adversity, trials, and temptations in this life even if we follow Christ. We may suffer illness, financial problems, or the death of a family member.

Furthermore, we may also be troubled by news reports of war, terrorism, crime, famine, hurricanes, earthquakes, and tsunamis.

There are no easy answers as to why these tragedies occur. Some are the results of man's wickedness, but even righteous people suffer.

Experiencing and overcoming trials is somehow part of God's plan for us. The holy scriptures are filled with stories of men and women who experienced great trials.

Job is one example.

Joseph was sold as a slave into Egypt. He was then imprisoned on false charges.

Stephen was stoned (Acts 7:59).

Paul and Silas were beaten and sent to prison (Acts 16).

The apostle John was banished to the isle of Patmos (Rev 1:9).

The Book of Mormon, Alma chapter 7, gives the following prophesy concerning Jesus Christ:

11 And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people.

12 And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities.

At times, we may feel that the Lord does not care about about our suffering.

Recall the story in Matthew chapter 8 of Jesus and his disciples taveling in a ship. A great storm arose over the sea. The disciplines feared that they would die. Jesus however remained asleep. Finally, the disciplines awoke Jesus.

And he (Jesus) saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm (Matthew 8:26).

The Lord thus expects us to be patient and have faith as experiences the storms of life. At times, we may feel that God has abandoned us.

Jesus himself suffered in this way:

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Matthew 27:46)  
Yet great blessings may follow great trials.

Although he was crucified, Jesus arose from the garden tomb on the third day, with a glorified resurrected body. Through Jesus' great sacrifice, we too will be resurrected after we die. We will also be reunited with family members.

Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 15:20-22:

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

The Book of Mormon, Alma 40:23 gives the following teaching concerning the resurrection:

The soul shall be restored to the body, and the body to the soul; yea, and every limb and joint shall be restored to its body; yea, even a hair of the head shall not be lost; but all things shall be restored to their proper and perfect frame.

Jesus thus desires that we maintain an inner peace even in the midst of severe trials.

Here are some teachings concerning peace, as given by apostles, prophets, and by Jesus himself.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Matthew 24:6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

Luke 24:36 And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

1 Peter 3:14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

Isaiah 52:7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

And here are the inspired verses from Psalms 23:

1 THE LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Finally, remember Paul's teaching:

Never forget that all things work together for good to them who love God. - Romans 8:28

May the Lord bless you with peace!

Tom Irvine