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# Why Did That Happen?

## Radio Message by Dwight Porter, D.D.

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CAN YOU REMEMBER the last time you asked honestly the above question? Usually it is a time of personal stress when we question why we should go through such an ordeal. We attend few funerals independent of this pressure. Many times in the midst of sickness, difficulty and anxiety we make this same inquiry without stopping to realize there is an answer available from God through His Word.

### Are You Sure?

There is no hope of understanding what is happening to us independent of personal relationship with God. The issues are too grave for us to meander through this life without the positive assurance of reaching Heaven. If you do not make it there, you can right now have full assurance of Hell, for there are only two places of abode after this life – Heaven or Hell! Be assured that the foundation of fellowship with God is based on absolute assurance. We *must* know that He has forgiven, cleansed and received us into His family.

You say, "Wait a minute, can one know that?" Absolutely! Before you sleep tonight, confidence and assurance can be your portion. The biggest problem we face is honesty about our sin. Since Jesus Christ died for sinners, we must acknowledge the same, if He is to save us from Hell and provide the righteousness necessary for us to enter Heaven. God has revealed our actual condition in the sight of a holy God. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). No one is excluded in the contamination and consequence of sin. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). If we are honest about our guilt in the sight of God and repent of our sin, - the Holy Spirit reveals the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will become our Savior if we trust Him. Our only hesitation will be an honest appraisal of ourselves. Remember, the Philippian jailer was prostrate on the floor, trembling and crying out, *What must I do to be saved?* He admitted his condition and inability. He cried out for direction. It is only to a person in this same attitude that God says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31).

### God's Plan and Purpose

Upon possessing the absolute assurance of Heaven, the next best thing to know is that the Lord has a purpose in everything coming our way, from the time we are in His family (by means of the New Birth) until we are ushered into His presence. What a comforting confidence! Surely we do not think things happen to us by mistake? The great God of the universe has absolute control over ALL THINGS.

In Romans 8:28 we read these words: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Here is one of the most precious verses in the Bible. If you will plant it deep in your mind; and allow the Holy Spirit to impart it into your heart and soul, you will find many answers that otherwise will never be grasped.

We know! Reality can dawn upon our consciousness when we look into God's Word with experiential assurance that all things are working together for good. All things! Whether we classify our happenings as good or bad, whether the good comes now or later, we

rest in the wisdom and the power of God to accomplish His purpose, which will always be for the good in every situation. I can hear somebody say, "Well, I am not too sure about that. I have been through some ordeals without any assurance of seeing things working out for my benefit." Do you think for one moment that the Bible characters knew the outcome ahead of time?

### Demonstrations of Difficulty

Joseph, where are you? Jonah, tell us about your experience. Daniel, were they real lions? Why was the furnace heated seven times its normal temperature? Paul and Silas, what are you doing at midnight in the Philippian jail?

Joseph did nothing wrong to end up in the dungeon. His experience was the consequences of doing right. He said NO to an adulteress woman. He was a faithful witness to every prisoner. Do not despair, for you will soon rule the land of Egypt. Of course he didn't know it while in prison. God's plan was going to be realized despite the immorality of a lady in the court. Joseph is the man God used to keep the seed of the Messiah alive. Eventually Joseph understood, as he stated to his brothers: "And Joseph said unto his brethren, come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: For God did send me before you to preserve life" (Genesis 45:4, 5).

Why was Daniel placed in the lion's den? After the king's decree, Daniel maintained his private devotions, which were not so private, because he knelt by open windows crying out to Jehovah. He did nothing wrong in the sight of God. Therefore God has the responsibility to care for His own, who stand without compromise upon His Word and promise. The result? Listen to the king, "I make a decree, that in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and steadfast forever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end" (Daniel 6:26).

Look inside the furnace! The three Hebrew children are there. What a place to be! Why are they there? What sin had they committed that a God of love would allow them to go through such mental anguish? Having obeyed God, by refusing to bow before a graven image, their confidence was in God Who would take care of them. They knew not if they would live or die. One fact remained – they would not bow to the music of men. "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O King. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou has set up" (Daniel 3:17, 18).

What a glorious fellowship these three had in the furnace. "He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God" (Daniel 3:25). Many a person who resists tribulation will miss such a glorious intimate fellowship with Christ.

They could have complained and found fault with their circumstances, but not these young men. Their God was on the throne to see them through all difficulties resulting from persecution that followed a refusal to compromise their convictions. The result? Listen to the king as he states, "Therefore I make a decree, that every people, nation, and language, which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces and their houses shall be made a dunghill; because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort" (Daniel 3:29).

Midnight! We see two preachers who had come to Philippi to hold a great crusade. Paul, where are you? I have checked every hotel and motel in town and have been unable to locate you. Paul answers, *Come to the jail.* What position are you in? *I have my feet in the stocks.*

Paul, I see blood coming down your shoulders where they beat you. What have you done wrong to deserve such horrible treatment? Do you know his answer? Here it is: *There was a woman following me and kept talking continuously of the things she knew by the inspiration of the devil. I took it as long as I could, and in the Name of Jesus Christ, I commanded Satan to come out of her. But it made a few people mad, because of losing their income through her ability to tell fortunes. They whipped me along with Silas, and here I sit in jail.*

What would you have done in such circumstances? Some of you would have threatened everybody connected with the City Fathers, who would allow such a horrible thing to happen. Others of you would have gotten bitter and planned your strategy of revenge when your lawyer finally arrived. Others would be screaming for the one free telephone call to which you were entitled. Some would have concluded that you must have done something wrong and this was God's punishment. Would you question being in the Lord's will, if you ended in this same situation?

No sir! Not Paul and Silas! Listen to their course of action: "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them" (Acts 16:25). What happened? The jail, that was built to hold them, fell apart along with all the chains that bound them. By the way, we would be having more places of adversity and difficulty falling apart if we would stop complaining and begin to rejoice in our midnight hour. God has a plan that in the long run will mean GOOD for all concerned.

The dungeon, fire, and jail are some of the positions and challenges that God says are going to work together for the good. Every circumstance of life that comes our way, God has a definite will, plan, and purpose to be realized. This means that we, who are resigned to His will, loving Him supremely, will receive definite benefit. If you believe God's promises you need never ask, why did that happen?

What does it take to contaminate your spirit? Are you easily discouraged? What does adversity, criticism and sickness do to you? What brings your castle tumbling down to where you begin to question yourself, others, and God? Everything that comes to the Christian is always with God's definite purpose resulting in good.

In resistance to Bible truth, your first reaction will be to question why. Next, you will have a tendency to recognize the difficulty as God's judgment. If you survive the exercise of these first two, your third impression will be to feel sorry for yourself. *No one knows the trouble I have! You do not understand what I am going through.*

Never forget that if God desires to chasten or chastise us, it is His business. If He wants us to know the reason He can easily inform us. He may not! So what? His plan and purpose is being worked out and we will be stronger for having gone through it. A good word in the Bible is ENDURE. God has sufficient grace for us. Paul learned this by the thorn in his flesh. God will put us through trials and testings, but not because of His lack of knowledge about us. The purpose is to reveal our actual condition to our personal consciousness.

The promise of chastening is very real: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Revelation 3:19). "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Hebrews 12:6). If you have reason to conclude your suffering is chastening, do not ask for immediate deliverance until you have learned the lesson He intends for you.

Only good will be the consequence. All adversity is not the chastening of the Lord. Some is for testing and proving our personal knowledge. Put your trial where it belongs in "all things." Believe God to accomplish His purpose which will always be good. "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: The Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11).

Some people declare that sickness is always the consequence of doing wrong. Not so! "Jesus answered, Neither hath this (blind) man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be manifest in him" (John 9:3). Just because we do not have control, in no way does this indicate that God has lost His control over all things. The Bible states that with Him all things are still possible.

### **We Are His Responsibility**

In the midst of all difficulties, we are still children of our Heavenly Father. All anxieties and difficulties must be filtered through His love. How dare we have fear, anxiety and frustration with a Heavenly Father who knows and says: *My Son, here is one of the "all things" that will work together for good; for I know you love me and are resigned to the fulfillment of MY PLAN and purpose.* He knows the alley we must go through to conform us to His image and make us that which He is able to use for the accomplishment of His purpose.

Some must go through more difficulties than others, but you dare not demand an explanation. Trust and confidence forever settles the course of action by a loving God. You, who are suffering physically, let me remind you this suffering will teach you things that nothing else will. As a result of it, you will be more mature in your witness and testimony. Of course He will care for you until in His glory and presence at the Marriage Feast of the Lamb. The God, Who loves you and gave His Son for you, can only mean well in His procedure of dealing with you - His child. His perfect love casts out all fear as to the consequence of what might happen. (I John 4:18)

### **We Are His Workmanship**

God provided us with a heavenly relationship. Eternal life is His gift to sinful man through His Son. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). We have been worked upon. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10). Hear the convictions of the Apostle Paul as recorded for us in the Holy Scriptures: "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless Jam not ashamed: For! Know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Timothy 1:12). "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

If this message has brought you conviction, encouragement, or rebuke, let me know of your action, that I may pray with you!

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