

## **The forge of God**

There is an increasing regularity of "consumer Christianity" appearing in churches abroad today, and also amidst the mainstream media outlets of common culture. Televangelists and teachers of all sorts are preaching a health, wealth, and prosperity gospel, hanging it on a cross of polished wood, and so ignoring the blood stains and sacrifices that were once born on that cross. It is a tepid and superficial Christianity that bares little or no spiritual fruit, or depth of faith, so when the boat starts to rock amidst a period of hard times, they collapse into fear. For that which they had put their faith in, their health, wealth, and prosperity, was washed away with the storm.

*"And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it." Matthew 7.26-27*

And those words ascribed to Christ, mentioned above, are the ones found in chapters 5-7 of the book of Matthew, the Sermon on the Mount. I pray someone tell me where in the words of Christ did he preach such a gospel. No, Christ preached a gospel of love, and there is no love without sacrifice. Yet, those who practice and preach the "prosperity gospel" are unwilling to make such sacrifices, attached to the wealth of the world of which they have attained. Truly, there is no love, or love for God in them. What kind of faith is this? What is a life worth living if nothing holds your heart and conditions so strongly that you are willing to die for them. Woe to the man who would die for the paper in his wallet though, for it burns like all else on this earth, and will not follow you to the grave.

Adversity reveals the true color of one's heart.

*"Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him." James 1.12*

When a person is exposed to the fires of adversity, so testing their will and depth of faith, it is only then that the true substance of one's heart, the contents of their soul, is made known to them. Otherwise, is it possible for one to truly know the strength of one's heart, their spirit within them, and the steadfastness of their resolve? Without being first tested in trial we may never honestly know the full depths of our own soul, and the depth of one's spiritual resolve therein. Without the fires to temper and forge our spirit against the anvil of tribulation, by the hammer of God's will, we may never become the person we need to be to full fill that will. Also, without being tested, we can never learn the true strength of God within us, and develop the confidence in Him over all things.

Only God knows our hearts, so therefore knowing what must be done for our spirit to be forged into acceptable instruments of His will, the tools he needs us to be for the execution of that act here on earth. We are the body of Christ, the hands, the feet, the eyes and the ears, so we must be exercised and trained appropriately so that we have the strength and capability to push through to the other side of all trials and fires before us. We need the trials of our life to help bring us to completion, shaping us in the fires of the forge of God.