

nov 20

pressure and time make diamonds  
(a repeat daily)

"we are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed – always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body." 2 cor 4:8-10

no, Jesus never promised us a rose garden; at least not in this lifetime. He bids us come and die. "if anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." matt 16:24 one is required to give up that which they can never have for that which they can never lose.

God is doing a work. it's not a trivial thing to become "partakers of the divine nature," (2 pet 1:4) but that's just what God has in mind for all those that love Him. there must be great pressure for diamonds to form; after that, it's just a matter of time. there must be a firey furnace to purification, a sifting to sort the chaff from the wheat. after all, the prize is not just a few more years added. He's offering us the crown of life.

i look at myself and wonder if my endurance will allow me to win that prize. can i withstand the pressure? will the anguish of the fires cause me to draw back or maybe the sifting reveal me as chaff?

satan desires us, great and small,  
as wheat to sift us, and we all  
are tempted;  
not one, however rich or great,  
is by his station or estate  
exempted.

even now multitudes of christians around the world are enduring torture and death. "it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake." phil 1:29 which of us would plead to be excluded from such a grace? i do not say this to scare but to prepare. prepare for whatever the Lord has appointed for us in this life. i think of when the disciples asked Jesus about the man born blind, "who sinned, this man or his parents?" Jesus said, "neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him." john 9:3

what are we willing to endure so the work of God may be revealed in us? are we willing to endure much if it was to glorify God? are we going to set a time limit on it? it takes pressure and time to form those diamonds but it is only so He may gather us up as His jewels. it is for Him alone we deem the sacrifice worth it.

"we must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God." acts 14:22 are we up to it? are any of us up to it? only by grace. "being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it." phil 1:6 my mind always goes back to the story about corrie ten boom and how she worried about what was coming, even as many of us today are worried.

let me repeat this quote for you. "father sat down on the edge of the narrow bed. 'Corrie,' he began gently, 'when you and i go to amsterdam - when do i give you your ticket?' i sniffed a few times, considering this. 'why, just before we get on the train.' exactly. and our wise Father in heaven knows when we're going to need things, too. don't run out ahead of Him, corrie. when the time comes that some of us will have to die, you will look into your heart and find the strength you need - just in time." worrying about what might happen is running out ahead of Him.

i'm not what i ought to be  
not what i should be  
and that's easy to see  
not what i wanna be  
not what i'm gonna be  
when Jesus gets through with me

no, He's not through with us. the train hasn't left the station yet. i fail everyday of my life. i stumble in many things. we all have stumbled and will again. be not afraid. "the Lord will perfect that which concerns me." psa 138:8 He will perfect that which concerns you as well. maranatha!