

While We Were Still Helpless by Hendrik Joubert

There were times during my young life when I found myself in some rather desperate circumstances where I had nowhere, or no one to turn to for help. During the most desperate of these I determined to be there for others in similar circumstances at every opportunity I would get. The challenge is to not be gullible and be abused by unscrupulous people. It is indeed possible to be foolish in this regard. Some use the kindness of the Lord to justify foolish support of those who do not *deserve* it in the simplest sense of the word. It is through Paul the Lord teaches us a basic principle of life...***if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. 2 Thessalonians 3:10.***

I knew I would make some errors in judgment, but I was not going to let it discourage me or cause me to close my eyes by rationalizing – *I do not want to contribute to the delinquency of others*. There will be some who need a friend in their helplessness I would miss if I am insensitive to the needs of others. I would not let the fear of looking foolish discourage me either. Notice the accusation of the Lord to those who considered themselves righteous: ***"Then the righteous will answer Him, "Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? ³⁸ "And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? ³⁹ "When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' ⁴⁰ "The King will answer and say to them, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me."*** (Matthew 25:37-40)

Have you noticed how materialistic we are in our consideration of not only others, but our needs also? This is not altogether wrong, as is suggested by the words of the Lord mentioned above, but our thoughts are dominated by physical needs. Perhaps it is because it is a need man has the ability to take care of. People do not always need financial help. At times they need what money cannot buy, companionship, someone willing to hold their hand and just be there.

There is a need that no man can take care of, no matter how wealthy you are in the things of this world, or in the compassion you may have for others. Even if you find a person you consider worth dying for, you cannot fix this problem for him, or for yourself. Even if you were to go to the extent Paul suggests in his discussion of love; ***...if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned,...*** (1 Corinthians 13:3) you cannot undo the guilt and the consequences of even your sins.

I fear that we may be incapable of grasping the ***utterly sinful***ness of sin. I say this because we so easily put it out of our minds, and we are so easily entangled again. Certainly the grace of God allows us exactly that, to escape feelings of desperation, and that is wonderfully magnificent – or how else you may wish to improve on this expression. It still does not mean that I completely appreciate the gravity of the following explanation by Paul, perhaps because I am in the flesh:

For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. (Romans 5:6-10)

When someone rescues you out of a potentially catastrophic situation, do you not feel compelled to reciprocate? Is it not the greatest motivation to *return the favor*? We are hopelessly incapable of living up to that saying in this context, however solve the paradox in the following statement: ***So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. (Philippians 2:12-13)***

Do not the words from God, contained in **Romans 5:6-10**, motivate you to ***both will and to work for His good pleasure*** – for the One who was willing to die for you ***at the right time***, when you needed it? Oh, the insult of Calvinism, suggesting that the Son of God died for a few elect when God says: ***"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16)*** And then continue to change the simple requirements that bring our faith to life so we may be saved. (**James 2:14-26; Mark 16:16**)