

How Will They Know We Are Christians We Love In Spite Of Trouble

⁷The end of all things is near; therefore, be alert and sober-minded for prayer. ⁸Above all, maintain constant love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹Be hospitable to one another without complaining. ¹⁰Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve others, as good stewards of the varied grace of God. 1 Peter 4:7-10

I. Trouble is real

- a. THESE are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Thomas Payne 1776
- b. ""We've got some difficult days ahead, But it really doesn't matter with me now, because I've been to the mountaintop ... I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land" Martin Luther King, Jr. 1968
- c. "Trouble in my way, I have to cry sometimes
I lay awake at night, But that's alright
Jesus will fix it after while"
- d. One who is righteous has many adversities,
but the Lord rescues him from them all. Psalm 34:19
- e. There is a Word from the Lord for our troubling times.

- **1** Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ: To those chosen, living as exiles dispersed abroad in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, chosen...1 Peter 1:1

- ⁷The end of all things is near; therefore, be alert and sober-minded for prayer. ⁸Above all, maintain constant love for one another, since **love covers a multitude of sins.** ⁹Be hospitable to one another without complaining. ¹⁰Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve others, as good stewards of the varied grace of God. 1 Peter 4:7-10 (NIV)

II. Trouble Does Not Last Forever

- a. I'm so glad troubles don't last always.
May not come when you want Him, but He's on time
In times of trouble, I find Him to be a friend of mine
- b. ⁵For His anger lasts only a moment, but His favor, a lifetime. Weeping may stay overnight, but there is joy in the morning. Psalm 30:5
- c. ²²Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? So why has the healing of My dear people not come about? Jeremiah 8:22

III. Love will outlast trouble

- a. Agape(*Agapē*): expresses the unconditional love of God
 - ...⁴Love is patient, love is kind. Love does not envy, is not boastful, is not arrogant, ⁵is not rude, is not self-seeking, is not irritable, and does not keep a record of wrongs... ¹³Now these three remain: faith, hope, and love—but the greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians 13:1-13
- b. Philia(*Phileō*): expresses love between family, between friends, a desire or enjoyment of an activity.
 - **13** Let brotherly love continue. ²Don't neglect to show hospitality, for by doing this some have

welcomed angels as guests without knowing it
Hebrews 13:1-2

IV. During Trouble Focus on God's Love

- a. ⁷Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 1 John 4:7-8
- b. ⁸But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

V. During Trouble Practice Hospitality

1. ⁹Be hospitable to one another without complaining. 1 Peter 4:9
2. ²Don't neglect to show hospitality, for by doing this some have welcomed angels as guests without knowing it. Hebrews 13:2
3. ⁴⁴But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be children of your Father in heaven. For He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. Matthew 5:44-45

VI. During Trouble Process Hurt

1. Understand we are Pilgrims traveling through.
 - **1** Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ: To those chosen, living as **exiles dispersed** abroad in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, chosen ²**according to the foreknowledge of God** the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient and

to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:1-2

2. Accept that in this world we will have Trouble.

- ³³I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world." John 16:33

3. Appreciate the Power of Prayer

- ⁷The end of all things is near; therefore, be alert and sober-minded for prayer. 1 Peter 4:7 (NIV)

4. Resist the Urge to be vindictive

- ...¹⁹ Friends, do not avenge yourselves; instead, leave room for God's wrath, because it is written, **Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay**, says the Lord...Romans 12:9-21

5. Work on your own "closer walk with God."

- But He was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; punishment for our peace was on Him, and we are healed by His wounds. We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned to our own way; and the Lord has punished Him for the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:5-6

6. Remember what Jesus did for you.

- ³²And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you^[a] in Christ. Ephesians 4:32

Below is an Article I wrote for the Coastal Courier Newspaper a few years ago.

I am excited about the possibility of and the blessings of UNITY (Psalm 133.) I have had the opportunity to go into several countries around the world and without qualifiers I proudly proclaim these United States of America the best nation in the World! In spite of my jubilation over this great country I am troubled by the by the racial climate. I have watched with growing concern as our nation, and yes our county, grows more polarized each day.

While we can point a finger at the Confederate Flag, Black Lives Matter, or a host of other similar things, the real culprit is our nation's refusal to deal with underlying prejudices and intolerance. Until we seriously work on the real problem, we will continue to see each issue as a "White versus Black, Rich versus Poor, Straight versus Gay, Christian versus Islam, etc." issue. During the sixties Americans fought hard and were successful in overcoming legalized segregation. We celebrated as Jim Crow signs were taken down, poll taxes and literacy tests were abolished. Just recently we saw South Carolina remove the Confederate Flag from the statehouse grounds. But that was only part of the solution. The law can stop overt actions but the law cannot make people love or respect each other. We need something better than the law.

The Old Testament Prophet Ezekiel looked at the valley and saw the dry bones come together. The bones looked good, even had flesh on them but there was no life. Then the Lord told Ezekiel to preach to the four winds and have the winds blow on the lifeless corpses. The wind blew and the former dry bones rose up into a mighty Army. We have come a long way from the dry bones of

the fifties but we still lack life. We look good, integration and equal opportunity is the law of the land. But under the façade we are just corpses in need of a breath of fresh air. I cannot say that the problem is all on one side of race line. We have bigotry coming from both Black and White, Clergy and Laity.

I have a dream that one day the wind of love, respect, tolerance, and unity will blow so strong across America that Missionary Baptists and Southern Baptists, Church of God members and Church of God in Christ members, African Methodists and United Methodists will join together and sing "through many dangers toils and snares I have already come 'tis grace that brought me save thus far and grace will lead me home. I have a Dream that is deeply rooted in the American Dream...and when this happens, we can begin to deal with the real issue, which is, we simply do not love and respect one another.

Today we are engaged in political and ideological battles that really do try the soul of our great Country. Subsequently, I believe it is even more important that we take time to pray. So I pray, "God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, Thou Who hast brought us thus far on the way; Thou Who hast by Thy might, led us into the light, Keep us forever in the path, we pray. Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee. Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee. Shadowed beneath Thy hand, may we forever stand, True to our God, true to our native land."

Remember, "You will know they are Christians by their love."

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