

Tuesday's Touch #46

...from Pastor Ed ...December 08, 2009

How Long, O Lord?

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?(Rev 6:10) O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? Shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?(Psalm 74:10) LORD, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph?(Psalm 94:3)

*The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is... not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. (2Peter 3:9) All that the Father gives Me will come to Me... (John 6:37) ...other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I **must** bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.*

Jesus, ...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Heb 12:2

Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. 2Tim 2:10

Throughout history the saints have often cried out, "How long, O Lord?" Others question even the very existence of God as they cannot reconcile a good God allowing so many bad things to happen. The Bible is not silent concerning this. The short answer is that before time God set His love upon a people. They are scattered across every continent and throughout all the centuries. He will not end history until every single one of them is saved. Christ will build his church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18). He died for a bride and he will not forsake the least part of her until she is perfected. She is loved with an everlasting love (Jer 31:3), and His love can never fail.

Knowing the reproach and indignation of the sin and rebellion that would come, yet He created - because He loved the bride. The wages of sin and the outpouring of eternal wrath which was due her, He himself has endured - because He loves her. His just and burning wrath against the *vessels of wrath prepared for destruction* He has withheld (Rom 9:22-23), enduring the contradiction of sinners against Himself (Heb 12:3) - because He loves the Bride and will not forsake her. The sun rose today for only one reason - there are yet lost sheep to be gathered into the fold. God will not endure sin in His universe one moment longer than necessary to secure the salvation of that last sheep.

How can we who have been called into His eternal love not also endure all things for the sake of His elect who are yet lost in darkness, and perhaps not yet born? Shall we desire them to be cut off for our own comfort? Have we each found our own position in the great harvest? As the Father has sent Him, so Christ has sent us (John 20:21). One plants, another waters, but God gives the increase (1Corinth 3:6). We all have been given unique gifts and resources that we may be laborers together with Him (1Corinth 3:9). We are not all evangelists, but we are all living letters whose hearts have been written upon by the Holy Spirit (2Corinth 3:3). We are all called to be salt and light (Matt 5:13-16). We have all been given the mighty weapon of prayer (Eph 6:18-20).

As we face a world growing in its reproach of the Living God, may we give thanks that He is so longsuffering, not willing to let even one of His sheep perish. May we count it a privilege to endure together with Him, for the sake of His bride.

How long, O Lord, shall evil victors stand
Upon the necks of these, thine own redeemed?
Shall heaven's Crown not rise to vindicate His name
And stem the surge of martyrs' bloody stream?

Death's forest grows as righteous willows fall,
And truth is trampled down with no restraints.
Why doth the One who crushed the serpent's head
Now fail to hear the cry of broken saints?

Fear not, my child, thy victory is sure,
And certain is the day of my revenge.
But some of my own sheep are still at large,
And 'til they're safe there cannot be an end.

'Tis for the joy of my eternal Bride,
I bore the cross and suffered her great shame.
And shall we now refuse to stay the course
And cut her short to ease the present pain?

Nay, not one of her head's golden strands
Shall perish in the flame of hell's dark fire!
Take heart! Fight on! The battle shall be done
When that last lamb my pardon doth desire.

*Eternal Lover of the Bride redeemed,
May all praise and glory be unto you for your patient enduring for the sake your bride, when we would have ended all things long ago having secured our own escape. Grant us strength and courage to fight on, counting it all joy to be engaged in the epic love saga of the Lamb and His Bride, for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (2Corinth 4:17).
Amen*

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