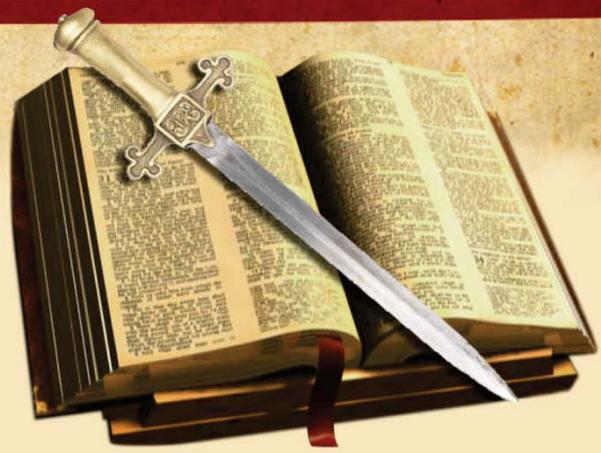


Setting Your Heart on the Kingdom



HEBREWS

Turning Misery Into Ministry

(The Principle of: Vicarious Suffering and Restoration)

Hebrews 2:17-18

There was only one thing that God had never experienced...personal sin! Though He had infinite knowledge, He never knew personal guilt, shame or the curse of separation from righteousness. Seeing His beloved creation degenerate into wickedness grieved His divine heart beyond imagination (*Gen. 6:5-7*). But God had never **become** wicked! Yet, if fallen humanity was to be saved, that's exactly what the Lord would have to do. Taking on the likeness of sinful flesh, though remaining sinless, God's Son suffered the ultimate punishment for sin...hell itself (*Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 4:9*)! Unbelievably, Jesus the Son of God bore the full weight of divine fury on behalf of sinful humankind (*Matt. 27:46*). Through inconceivable love, the sinless Christ identified with a sinful world and "is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted." **Thus, His misery was turned into an incredible ministry to a broken world trapped in sin.**

With an anointed mind, the writer of the letter to the Hebrews penned the amazing revelation of Christ's substitutionary atonement. Written to Hebrew Christians struggling to understand how a "man" could save them from sin, the message was profound. More than just a man who suffered, He was God, clothed in flesh, who bore the sin of the world! **Thus the principle is revealed...vicarious suffering brings restoration.**

While only the Savior's suffering produces eternal salvation, God can use your suffering to bring restoration to others. "But," you may say, "You don't know how much sin is in my life!" Who can minister to the addict better than one who has been set free from drugs by the power of Christ? Who is more effective at comforting a woman who has lost a child than one whom the Lord has healed from her own loss? And who can best come to the aid of a pastor tempted by sin than another pastor whom Christ has delivered? **If you repent and let the Savior-King take charge of your life, He can fold your temptations, sins and sufferings into a glorious ministry to others!** Only in God's Kingdom can people, who would have been discarded, be restored to heal others. **Only in God's Kingdom can your misery be turned into ministry for others (2 Cor. 1:3-4).**

Next: The Kingdom of God in James - Oh Lord, I Failed the Test...Again!

