

GOD'S LOVE IN JUDGMENT

“O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done marvellous things, things planned long ago.” —ISAIAH 25:1

In the book of Isaiah, there are 12 chapters of prophecy against several nations, including Israel. It's like walking through a long, dark tunnel of judgment and destruction, but in the following chapters (25 to 27), we walk into sunlight with a promise of hope. The relationship of despair and hope in these prophecies portray an eternal truth that has a great bearing on our lives.

How do we find hope in situations of despair? Noted Pastor and Author, A.W. Tozer said, “Our view of God is the most important thing about us, because how we see God will determine how we see many things.” When we see difficult situations from God's perspective, we take refuge in that, knowing He's in control, but from our own perspective, it's troubling and disturbing.

We sometimes define God, first and foremost, in terms of His sovereignty. He is the fixed point, and in His sovereignty, He wants His will to be done. If it isn't, we are in trouble and may see the judgment of God as punishment. But how is God's sovereignty to be defined? Isaiah writes, “In love a throne will be established; in faithfulness a man will sit on it – one from the house of David....” (Isaiah 16:5). “In love a throne will be established” means that God's sovereignty is conditioned by His love and expresses love.

The big story of the Bible is that God is wooing us, bringing us into an active relationship whereby He loves us, and the Holy Spirit sheds abroad His love in our hearts and we love Him back. To love is always to be vulnerable because our love may be rejected, but the one thing we cannot do is force love. The driving force behind God's judgment is always love, but love leaves us open to all kinds of pain. As God is sovereign, He could rectify that, but He doesn't always, because in His love, again and again, His judgment is carried out by stripping away the things which have replaced Him in order to bring us to Himself.

The hope we have in despair is in God's divine security and safety; the fact that God loves us and has a much bigger agenda than simply making our lives comfortable. It is in bringing people to that place where bereft of their own resources, they discover what their lives were created for – a love relationship with Him, and He gets us back on track. Having gone through that tunnel and turned to God, we can say with Isaiah, "I will exalt you and praise your name for in perfect faithfulness you have done marvellous things, things planned long ago."

PRAYER: Dear Lord, You are a loving and forgiving God. Anything that brings us back to You is a priceless gift and I thank You for it.

TO REFLECT UPON: Have I experienced God's judgment in a way that has deepened my relationship with Him?