

GOD IS NOT FAR AWAY

“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.” (Acts 17:24-27)

- Note that God has determined the exact place where you live.
- Note also that God wants you to seek Him, reach out for Him, and find Him.
- Since God is everywhere, it is obvious that He is not far from each one of us right now!

For the sake of emphasis, let us repeat that God is near right now, and wants you to reach out for Him and find Him. While God is patient and wants everyone to be saved (2 Pet. 3:9), unfortunately most will not reach out and find Him. The gate that leads to God is straight and narrow and only a few will find it (Matt. 7:14). Let’s reflect upon this. God is near, wants everyone to reach out and find Him, but only a few will do so. Obviously something is wrong, but not God. Obviously someone needs to change, but not God. God doesn’t change! (Mal. 3:6). He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). He is always near, but you won’t find Him if you keep doing the same thing. If you want to reach out and find God, you must change.

Sometimes the goodness of God leads to repentance (Rom. 2:4), but not always. Some do not change until they are chastened. Remember, those whom the Lord loves, He chastens (Heb. 12:6). Remember Jonah! God was near him at his home. God was also near him when he went down to Joppa and set sail for Tarshish. God was also near him in the bottom of the ship and in the storm. Jonah, however, did not reach out until he was suffocating in the stomach of a big fish with sea weeds wrapped around his head. Remember! God didn’t change, Jonah did! (Jonah 2:1 - 10).

The Prodigal Son had a similar experience. He did not come to his senses until he experienced personal pain and discomfort (Lk. 15:11 - 21). Paul too saw God more clearly because of weakness, insults, hardships, persecution, and difficulties (2 Cor. 12:10). Even Jesus was made perfect through suffering (Heb. 5:7 - 10). Sometimes we do not see the light until we feel the heat.

There is an old story about a wealthy prince imprisoned in a tower. He had a bag full of coins and threw them down at the people below in order to get their attention. In stead of looking up, however, the people kept looking down as this was where the money was. It was only when the prince began throwing rocks that the people looked up. Sadly, the same sun that melts the wax will harden the clay. No matter how many rocks God rains down upon us, some will still not look up. In the days of Amos, for example, God orchestrated a whole series of disasters to try and awaken ancient Israel from their slumber. He gave them empty stomachs, no rain, mildew, locusts, and plagues (Amos 4:6 - 12). God did all this to them but they never looked up. He was near them all the time, but they refused to open their eyes, look up, reach out, and find Him.

What about you? Do you attribute your pain and problems to “tough luck” or have you considered the possibility that God is trying to get your attention. Not all pain and problems result from our mistakes. Job was a perfect and an upright man, but God still allowed him to suffer. Jesus never sinned, but still suffered. Even though Job and Jesus both suffered, God was still near! Both of them did not sin nor charge God foolishly, but reached out and found Him a very present help in time of trouble (Ps. 46:1). Job and Jesus got it right. Even in death they never wavered in their trust of God (Job. 13:15). God is near to us too, let us also never waver in our trust!