

Finding GOD's CHESED - חַסֵד - Divine Mercy in Times of Trial

I. Hymn, "Let All Things Now Living!"¹

Let all things now living a song of thanksgiving
To GOD our Creator triumphantly raise;
Who fashioned and made us, protected and stayed us,
By guiding us on to the end of our days.
GOD's banners are over us, pure light goes before us,
A pillar of fire shining forth in the night;
Till shadows have vanished and darkness is banished,
As forward we travel from light into light!

His Laws He enforces, the stars in their courses,
The sun in its orbit obediently shine,
The hills and the mountains, the rivers and the fountains
The depths of the ocean proclaim GOD Divine.
We too, should be voicing our love and rejoicing
With glad adoration a song let us raise;
Till all things now living unite in thanksgiving,
to GOD in the highest, HOSANNA and praise!

II. PSALM 117:1-6²

¹ Give praise to The Lord, for He is good:
for His Mercy endureth for ever.

² Let Israel now say that He is good:
that His Mercy endureth for ever.

³ Let the house of Aaron now say,
that His Mercy endureth for ever.

⁴ Let them that fear The Lord now say,
that His Mercy endureth for ever.

⁵ In my trouble I called upon The Lord:
and The Lord heard me, and enlarged me.

⁶ The Lord is my Helper,
I will not fear what man can do unto me.

¹ 1, Remembering Our Fathers, "Let All Things Now Living!"
<http://www.cbmidwest.org/prayers/0607REMEMBERINGOURFATHERS-2007.pdf>

² 2, DRA, PSALM 117:1-6.

III. What is Divine Mercy?

What is This Divine Mercy that we are called to give praise to The Lord for in times of both blessing and trouble? In The Hebrew, The Word is CHESED - חֶסֶד - meaning GOD's Goodness, Kindness, Faithfulness. It means GOD that GOD is filled with lovingkindness, favor, goodliness and pity towards mankind generally, and to His people in particular, for we are His most precious creation! ³

In my times of trouble, I call upon The LORD. He never fails to hear me and deliver me in some way. Not always as I pray, but always according to His perfect Goodness and great Mercy! There have been times in my life when I wrestled with GOD. Like The Patriarch Jacob, whose son I am in Faith, I found that The Name -יִשְׂרָאֵל - YISRA'EL means that "GOD prevails!" ⁴ GOD's perfect Goodness delivers because of His great Mercy – in times of blessing and in times of trouble.

³ 3, Strong's Data, 2617 - חֶסֶד - CHESED [Hebrew] – GOD's Mercy. Divine "goodness, kindness, faithfulness;" The Divine Attribute of "mercy, kindness, lovingkindness, goodness, kindl[iness], merciful[ness], favour, goodliness, pity..."

⁴ 3, Strong's Data, 3478 - יִשְׂרָאֵל - YISRA'EL [Hebrew] – GOD prevails. "1) the second name for Jacob given to him by GOD after his wrestling with the angel at PENI'EL [The Face of GOD] GENESIS 32:24-30 [KJV]; 2) the name of the descendants and the nation of the descendants of Jacob; 2a) the name of the nation until the death of Solomon and the split; 2b) the name used and given to The Northern Kingdom consisting of the 10 tribes under Jeroboam; The Southern Kingdom was known as JUDAH; 2c) the name of the nation after the return from The Exile."

IV. Finding Divine Mercy in Midst of a Tragic Death

TK is a 17 year old man who was a driver of a head-on car versus car crash. The patient was reportedly ejected from the vehicle on impact. I briefly entered the trauma bay and stood at a distance. I could see a young white male body with lots of activity at the bedside and blood in various places. I didn't need to see any more than that. I received report there from the on call Chaplain.

Going to ICU, I received an update from a felly Chaplain. I then met the parents, who were sitting in the family room and surrounded with about 10 other family members. I shook each one's hand for a moment in a quiet and respectful way. I told them who I am and that I would report to the Doctor and Nurse, then come back as soon as I could.

I asked them their Faith, "Christian." I asked what I could do for them now before going to the bedside. They asked me to pray. I did so fervently and with caution, knowing the outcome for their beloved son was in GOD's hands and not mine. I made it short and to the point, giving voice to the cry of their hearts.

Going between the bedside and family room several times, I could taste the franticness of the staff and the pain of the family. At the bedside, the staff were having difficulty ventilating the patient. They were desperately trying various different techniques. An ICU Nurse came into the family room, the look of horror on her face. She knew the young man was going to die soon. With determination, she escorted the parents and I to the bedside, so that they could see how hard the staff were working to save their child, and to be near him before his passing on.

She placed us at the Nurse's station, just outside the room. We could see the intense efforts of 20 plus staff giving all that they had for this child. It was my task to steady the parents and prevent them from rushing into the midst of all this until the signal. I stood between them as they sat, a firm hand on the Dad's shoulder and the other on the Mom's arm. After a few minutes, a Doctor motioned me to bring the parents to the bedside.

The "go between" Nurse – as she described herself – parted the way like a boat's bow plowing through waves of the sea. I brought up the rear. Dad and Mom had a precious minute there to touch their son's arm, speak to him and cry.

Four hours later, I revisited the parents and other loved ones at TK's side. They had been told by the Physician that their son would not survive. There was mercifully some time of relative calm around the bedside. The Dad turned to me, "I thought we'd lost him before. There's our life laying there. We've had him for a little while longer." He thanked me for whatever efforts I was able to offer. He was a big man. He had been crying. He bear hugged me and I returned the embrace. I quietly shared in their tearfulness and love as they told me about their son.

Reporting to the "go between" Nurse, she shared she was taking heat for bringing the parents and I to the bedside for a few minutes early on in the treatment. I praised her for giving the parents that gift of being near and with their child as he hovered on the edge of death. I voiced that I fully agreed with her effort, validating that GOD Himself had placed her there today to do that very thing as His instrument of Mercy. My words brought her peace. Several hours later, the young man had passed on to The Lord.

In looking for GOD's CHESED - רַחֲמִים – His Divine Mercy in this tragedy, I discerned that The LORD took pity in His lovingkindness by giving this family time to be with their dying beloved son. Though their hearts would have had it otherwise, their tears of love shed at The Cross of their dying child said good bye to him. Their faith in The Resurrection of The Son of GOD gave them the knowledge that Divine Mercy would keep their son safe Above until they meet again in Heaven. We accompanied them as they were reminded that The LORD is our Helper and His Mercy endures for ever.

V. A Prayer

The LORD be with you!
And also with you!

Lift up your hearts!
We lift them up unto The LORD!
It is right to give Him thanks and praise!

“Almighty GOD, Father of all Mercies, we, Thine unworthy servants, do give Thee most humble and hearty thanks for all Thy goodness and loving-kindness to us, and to all men. We bless Thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all, for Thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world..., for the means of Grace, and for the hope of Glory.

And, we beseech Thee, give us that due sense of all Thy Mercies, that our hearts may be... deeply thankful; and that we may show forth Thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to Thy service, and by walking before Thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; ...[Through Thee] our LORD, to Whom... be all honour and glory, world without end. AMEN.”⁵

Let us go forth to love and serve The LORD!
Thanks be to GOD!

⁵ 4, Reformed Episcopal Church, Anglican Book of Common Prayer Revised, p 19-20.
Taken from “A General Thanksgiving” prayer.

VI. References

1. “Remembering Our Fathers” Hymnal. De La Salle Christian Brothers, Midwest District. Burr Ridge, Illinois. <http://www.cbmidwest.org/>.
2. “Douay-Rheims American Edition (1899)” Bible. Bible Works 7. Bible Works, LLC. Norfolk, Virginia. 2006.
3. “Strong’s Data.” Bible Works 7. Bible Works, LLC. Norfolk, Virginia. 2006.
4. “The Revised Offices of The Book of Common Prayer.” The 48th General Council of The Reformed Episcopal Church. The Special Commission on Prayer Book Revision of The Reformed Episcopal Church. 1997. 2nd Edition.