

THIS IS GOING TO STING A LITTLE

Nurses always say it. And they always *underestimate*. The needle looks a lot longer and feels a lot bigger on the receiving end. Why do we have to go through the “stings” of life? Why did they ever invent needles? Can’t they come up with a better way? After all, these are modern times. Men have walked on the moon. We can be on the other side of the world overnight. Yet they still haven’t figured out a way to take the “sting” out of medical practice. Needles are necessary.

Life has internal stings as well – broken hearts, crushed ambitions, unfulfilled dreams. These usually smart for much longer than the kind nurses inflict. Do you ever wonder, “Why me, Lord? I’m a Christian. I walk the strait and narrow way. I try to avoid trouble and sin. But now I’ve been ‘stung’, why me?” There are things we may not fully understand until we get to heaven, but we do get some insights into this question from God’s Word. Do the “stings” of life have a positive purpose?

LIFE’S STINGS CAN CAUSE US TO “SOBER UP.”

Our world runs from troubles like Superman from kryptonite. The third biggest business in the world is entertainment (behind the U.S. Government and the Catholic church). America’s philosophy is “eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die” (Ecc. 8:15; Lk. 12:19, 20). “Get away from it all. Escape!” Those who don’t try to escape try to hide. Millions try to escape life’s stings by “drowning them in a bottle” only to be “stung” by a different kind of bee (Prov. 23:32).

The world wants to laugh. It hates to mourn. Jesus said, “Woe to you that laugh now! For ye shall mourn and weep” (Lk. 6:25) and “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted” (Matt. 5:4). Jesus wept. He was “a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief” (Isa. 53:2-5, 7). We have no record that Jesus ever laughed (once He “rejoiced in spirit,” Lk. 10:21). He was angry (Jn. 2:13-17; Mk. 3:5), hungry (Lk. 4:2), and thirsty (Jn. 4:7; 19:28), but we never read of Him laughing. We do, though, have a record of His tears (Jn. 11:35; Lk. 19:41-44; Heb. 5:5-7).

It is altogether too easy for us to imbibe the world’s spirit if everything goes our way all the time. Our roots tend to run horizontally as long as there is plenty of water. But we need the

stability of a vertical root system. That’s why God sends dry spells. He wants serious-minded people in His family. Aged men are to be “sober, grave, temperate” (Tit. 2:2). Aged women are to teach the young women to be “sober” (2:3). “The young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded” (2:6). The word *sobrer* (*sophronizo*) means “circumspect; sensible; mature.” Sorrows help us to be sober-minded.

I walked a mile with Pleasure, she chattered all the way,
But left me none the wiser for all she had to say.

I walked a mile with Sorrow, and ne’er a word said she, but,
Oh, the things I learned from her when Sorrow walked with me.

– Robert Browning Hamilton

LIFE’S STINGS CAN CAUSE US TO “LOOK UP.”

“Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth” (Ecc. 7:3, 4). The word translated *is made better* (*yatab*) means “make well, sound, beautiful, happy, successful, or right” (Strong’s, 3190, 49). Sorrow can turn us to God. The person who is incapable of genuine tears is also incapable of real joy.

- “The soul would have no rainbow had the eye no tears” (John Vance Cheney).
- “All sunshine makes a desert” (Arab proverb).
- “Into each life some rain must fall” (Longfellow).

The prodigal did not look up until his money ran out (Lk. 15). It was only after he knew the pangs of hunger and the stench of the pig pen that he decided that there was more to life than riotous living. Abe Lincoln is credited with saying, “I have often been driven to my knees by the sincere conviction that there was nowhere else to go.” So it is with many people. Bee stings make us look for the medicine cabinet. Life’s stings make us look for the Great Physician.

LIFE’S STINGS CAN CAUSE US TO “CHANGE UP.”

Many have not considered the need to change and get right with God until stung with painful circumstances. The Philippian jailor went to work one night totally oblivious to the fact that in a few hours his world would be in such a shape that he would attempt to take his own life (Acts 16). But an earthquake came, and he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. He knew that the

Romans would require his life for theirs and thought he would save them the trouble. But out of the darkness Paul’s voice came: “We are all here.” Thus, he had a change of heart and was receptive to the Gospel. Just minutes before, he was totally disinterested. Now he’s asking what he needs to do and quickly obeys it (16:31-34). What happened? He was “stung” with the unfavorable circumstances of life and it made him “change up.”

We may not fully understand the reason for the stings of life as they happen. But as the old song says, “Farther along we’ll know all about it. Farther along we’ll understand why. So cheer up, my brother, we’ll understand it all bye and bye.” “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17).

Not until each loom is silent and the shuttles cease to fly,
Will God unroll the pattern and explain the reason why
The dark threads are as needful in the Weaver’s skillful hand
As the threads of gold and silver for the pattern which He planned.
My life is but the weaving between God and me.
I only choose the colors He weaveth steadily.
Sometimes He weaveth sorrow and I in foolish pride,
Forget He sees the upper and I the under side.

Remember, “The crown of all crowns was made of thorns” (cf. Jas. 1:2-4).

Interestingly, the New Testament speaks of “stings” (*kentron*, used five times). By examining these, we find how to remove many of life’s “stings.” It is twice translated “prick” (Acts 9:5; 26:14). As one is pricked with a needle to be cured of many illnesses, one’s conscience must be pricked with the Gospel so he can be cured of the “soul’s diseases.” The other times it is translated “sting” (1 Cor. 15:55, 56; Rev. 9:10). Paul explains that Christians should avoid the sting of death, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (15:55-57).

Yes, this world is going to sting a little, but there’ll be no needles in Heaven.

Allen Webster from *Glad Tidings Good Things*

BIRTHDAYS

Mary Huffman, 3-21

ILL

Rachel's Aunt Sally continues to battle cancer. Debra's Sister, Vicki Harrelson, is in rehab being treated for a heart infection in Wichita, Kansas. Leta Thrasher suffered a stroke and is currently under Hospice care at the Aurora nursing home. Please keep these individuals in your thoughts and prayers.

PRAYER LIST

Kema's son, Jacob, is suffering with seizures.

OUT OF TOWN

Rachel Peterson is in Arkansas vacationing with family.

AREA EVENTS

The 39th Street congregation in Independence, Missouri will host a Spring Gospel meeting from April 8-11. The theme is "*Bible Truth or Fake News*" with a different speaker for each lesson. There is a flier posted on the bulletin board in the foyer with more information.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Our Spring Gospel meeting will be held April 29 to May 2. The theme is "*Think on These Things*" with a different speaker each day. Fliers will be made available closer to the start of the meeting. Let's clear our schedules so that we can be here for all six lessons!

ATTENDANCE

Sunday AM 29; Sunday PM 27; Wednesday 20.

This bulletin available online weekly @ olathecoc.org

Those To Serve

March 18, 2018

BUILDING AND COMMUNION..... Trent Thrasher

MORNING WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS..... George Thomas
SONG LEADER..... Trent Thrasher
OPENING PRAYER John Carter
PRESIDE..... George Thomas
ASSIST..... Trent Thrasher
CLOSING PRAYER..... Dave Parish

EVENING WORSHIP

OPENING PRAYER George Thomas
CLOSING PRAYER..... John Carter
LORD'S SUPPER..... Trent Thrasher

WEDNESDAY 21st

SONG LEADER..... Trent Thrasher
INVITATION George Thomas

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday

Bible Study 9:30 AM
Morning Worship 10:30 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Study 7:00 PM

Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher
Phone: (913) 764-2325
E-mail: thrasher@oabs.org

CHURCH OF CHRIST

515 WEST PARK

P.O. BOX 482

OLATHE, KANSAS 66051

VISIT US ONLINE @ OLATHECOC.ORG