



SHIELD OF FAITH

"Take Up the Shield of Faith" - Paul

Thursday August 22, 2019

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. — Philippians 4:19

Riches of His Glory

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We've all heard about the prosperity gospel. Most Christians I've known condemn it, as do I. It draws the attention of the Christian disciple off what matters most — the Cross of Jesus Christ.

The Cross is an instrument of torture. Jesus said that his disciples must take it up each day and follow him. If you aren't being tortured you need to ask yourself if you are earning a place in His kingdom. You must wonder whether you are on the narrow ... or the broad ... path discussed in the Gospel.

In the verses leading up to the one quoted above in Philippians Paul complains about not receiving support from churches. He mentions that the church in Philippi was generous with their gifts. Paul says he doesn't care about their gifts. He desires that "more be credited" to their account.

Paul was not about building his own reputation or kingdom. That's obvious from reading his letters in the New Testament. He was all about Jesus Christ — his death, burial and resurrection. The gospel hasn't changed in 2000 years. We need to be desiring the same things Paul desires.

He submitted himself to all sorts of deprivation for the sake of the gospel. Jail, beatings, poverty etc. Yet, he wrote to the Philippians, "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus."

He knew the difference between needs and wants. I'm sure Paul *wanted* comfort and peace like we all do. He knew, however, that his God would meet his *needs*, not his wants.

Paul *needed* to suffer the lack of gifts from the other churches. He obviously *wanted* to receive gifts. God's providence — the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus — provided the needs of the churches and Paul. His ways are not our ways. This is how the Christian understands the problem of evil.

I like the example of a tapestry. On this side of glory we are only able to see the backside of the tapestry. God sees the beautiful image on the other side.

Even our torture and death serves the riches of His glory. Somehow baby murder, sodomy, war mongering, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton serve the riches of His glory. God is going someplace good. He isn't evil. He is good.

Continued on the back

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Every Christian knows that God is good. There is no question about that. Jesus Christ is reason and love itself. In Christianity ideas/reason and the personhood of God are unified. This is what makes the faith so potent — what assisted it most in her trajectory up through Rome and Constantinople.

The gospel writer, John, wrote in verse one of his outreach to the Greeks 2000 years ago, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” The Hebrew scriptures begin in Genesis, “In the beginning God created ...”

Two hundred and fifty years or so after John connected Hebrew beginnings with Greek philosophy Emperor Constantine declared Christianity the official religion of Rome. Christianity hardened as the Roman empire decayed to form the cultural and religious spine of the developed world. The science and technology that the entire world now worships came forth as a child of this parentage.

America is now convinced that it is the butterfly to Christian Europe’s caterpillar. In our arrogance we imagine ourselves to be the beautiful winged creature that just shucked the cocoon. Our form of democracy, a constitutional republic, will save the world.

God is the diving eagle who enjoys the butterfly as an hors d’oeuvres on his way to a real meal.

It is His glory that matters, not ours. Our wants are immaterial. They don’t matter. What matters is God’s plan, his will ... His path. We all need to find His path for our lives. And we find that in fellowship with one another. That is made clear countless times in the Bible.

God works and moves through His people as they come together in His Church. And His Church isn’t always the same as the religious structures that end up being thought of as church. That’s clear from history. It is also clearly seen in what is happening to the Roman Catholic Church in America right now. At least half of her priests are homosexual.

The American Catholic Church is really a mob. It is on the verge of being prosecuted under RICO laws in the United States. One such lawsuit has already been filed in New York. RICO stands for Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations. Evidence that is emerging related to the silencing of victims of homosexual predation by priests and bishops using cash payouts clearly fits the definition of a mob.

The Catholic Church is coming face-to-face with the difference between the riches of His glory and worldly riches. Money can’t buy your way into heaven. The misuse of it may send you to hell.

You can’t serve both God and money.

On the other side of all this evil is goodness — God’s goodness. The Church and Christianity will emerge from all of this purified. It will be stronger than ever.

The gates of hell won’t prevail. They can’t.

Jesus Christ is continuously victorious, breaking down those gates in all our lives. You must accept his free gift of salvation and follow Him.

Amen.