New Apostolic Church International

October 7, 2020: Thoughts on the Bible text

Foto: P. Johanning

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when the heat comes; but its leaf will be green and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit” (Jeremiah 17:7-8). The biblical text speaks of a pious man who directs his life towards God.

He can be sure that God will stand by him. He is compared to a tree standing near water. In regions of the world such as Palestine, where there is little rainfall, only the tree or plant that is near a stream or river can survive so that even if it is hot and dry, they will not be damaged.

We trust

When we put our trust in God, we can be likened to a tree which is planted near water. Most of us have been in hopeless or impossible situations where there seems to be no way out. It is then that we need to trust in God, who opens doors for us which we are not able to see ourselves.

Trust is also necessary to believe in the eternal validity of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The doctrine of Christ’s sacrificial death is largely beyond human imagination. It is rooted in the will of God and is not something that should be merely recited at a superficial level but should be continually reflected on and achieved with faith. It is no different with the hope in the return of Christ, which cannot be believed without trusting in the words of the Bible and in the proclamation of the Church.

We are blessed

Those who are blessed by God are not spared trials, but the tribulations they experience do not have the power to damage their relationship with God. Just as a tree planted near a river always has access to water, so too they can experience the presence of God at their side. They also do not have an exaggerated fear of tribulations, although they certainly fear suffering and death just as Jesus did when He brought His sacrifice. Like Him, however, they continue to see that in times of “drought”, when for example their petitions are not answered, they are ableto remember the good deeds of God and remain thankful. They serve God faithfully—whether the conditions are favourable or not—by practising the commandment to love their neighbour even if their love is not reciprocated.

We bring forth fruit

The tree that is planted by the water will not cease from yielding fruit. Having trust in God can have the direct effect of wanting to help our neighbour by showing them that we are not indifferent to their situation. We want to provide help for both their

earthly and spiritual well-being. Bringing the gospel of the love and closeness of God to our neighbour is one of the fruits that our trust in God can produce.

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