

## Glorying in Deprivation, Part 2

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"The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." I'm sure you recognize those words to be the confession of Job, that archetypically assailed, knocked-down, kicked, beaten, broken, bruised and apparently forsaken paragon of human calamity. The horrible suddenness and extent with which the man's world collapsed calls forth from out of the darkest recesses of our minds those fears that break through the barrier separating the unconscious mind from the conscious gripping our hearts with their malicious suggestions of what very well might come to pass in our own lives.

This being so, we are very vulnerable to the various religious insurance plans concocted by those who would sell us protection. They all boil down to, "get it right and keep it right, and the devil won't be able to touch you." Uhhh, care to read Job again all you protection insurance hustlers and would-be buyers? Under the covenant of the law, it was simple, heed the voice of God as found in the law, and you'll have health, wealth and esteem up to your eyeballs. Well, friend, grace is a little more complicated, for it is rooted in the manifold (complicated, multi-faceted, variegated) wisdom of God.

There are intricacies involved when God sets out to make us privy to the depths of Himself, when "deep calleth unto deep." And you know, don't you, that's what grace is all about, the utterly unearned sovereign initiation into the communion of the Holy Spirit. The keeping of rules and regulations won't take you there, neither will it remove from your path the dark threatening tunnels on the Way.

Quite often, you'll have his comforting voice break in at intervals, but sometimes, even that, will be denied you, and then there will be only darkness, silence and foreboding. One saint who had experienced such God-ordered denial and affliction said to the Lord, "If this is the way you treat your friends, I know why you have so few of them." (By the way, such honest outbursts are treated with much more attention and respect by the Lord than dishonest prayer-posturing).

Need a faith-challenge? Ever notice in Jesus' sermon on the mount, that among the things co-existing with blessedness are, poverty,

mourning, persecution and vilification? But you might protest, saying, "there are harsh things that we must endure that are simply part of serving Him, but the damage in our lives that is the result of our own disobedience is another thing." Well, I confess that there is a distinction to be made, but pardon me for insisting that both are integral to what JanAntonsson calls, "The Glory Road."

The grace of God hides in the back seat of all our forays into failure. Don't buy that nonsense about, "it didn't have to be," or "it could have been otherwise if I....," or "if only I had/hadn't." Hey, hey, hey! Get this straight; it was all necessary, all a necessary part of plowing your earth to make it suitable for the Seed of glory. "For the creation (that includes you) was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, IN HOPE." (Emphasis mine)

In hope. That means that the failure you were set up for was orchestrated according to the hope, that is, the expectation of God, "that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God." Full participation in the freedom of the glory of the children of God demands that Adam and you, in your turn, foul up. Of course there will be the smart alecks out there who will say, "well I guess I'll just set out to foul up royally then for the sake of glory." That, I will not dignify with an answer, except the answer of Paul, "How shall we who died to sin still live in it ." Munch on that awhile.

Let's get it settled in our minds, the Lord does give, and the Lord does take away, and both His adding and subtracting serve the end that finally we shall prove and demonstrate in our earthiness, that "just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly," because "those who are earthy" and "those who are heavenly" are both of the same One.

Let the incontrovertible principle be fixed in our minds: The heavenly rules the earthy. The earthy always finally bows to, and is absorbed and reconstituted by the heavenly, because heavenly is what we really are, come hell or high water.