

Discussion Guide: Adversity and the Blanket of God

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42 (NIV)

November 10, 2002: "Adversity and the Blanket of God" by Jim Nossett - Elder CPC. Jim walked us through Isaiah 30:1-21 while describing the contrast of what it was like for the children of Israel to be blanketed by the world (Egypt), rather than be blanketed by God.

As Jim began his sermon he asked, "What is our response to difficult things?" Do we worry, throw a fit, scramble for quick fixes, flee/escape/run away, or seek refuge? If so, then we are blanketed by (hooked up to) the ways of this world, and are not in tune with God's ways.

During the time of Isaiah, the children of Israel were going through the motions of being spiritual (connected to God), but their hearts were not in it. They had gradually allowed the ways of the world (idols) to slip into their lives. As a result, when adversity struck they took actions that were not in tune with God's way:

- They became obstinate to God's ways (v1).
- They formed alliances and carried out plans, not in tune with God's way (v1).
- They sought refuge, without consulting God (v2).
- They were rebellious and deceitful...unwilling to listen to God's instruction (v9).
- They sought people who would look the other way...not confront them (v10-11).
- They fled on swift horses...but so did those in pursuit (v16-17).

The Lord longed to be gracious to them and he arose to show compassion (v18). All he asked was that they repent and rest in his salvation in quietness, and trust in God's strength to bring them out of their adversity (v15). God assured them that even though they go through adversity that their ears would hear a voice behind them saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

No, they said. We will not change. We find comfort in being blanketed by the world. Your ways are too hard. So God brought adversity upon them, like nothing they had ever seen before...as they were taken into captivity...broken like pottery and scattered mercilessly.

Discussion Questions:

- How is your walk with the Lord?
- Are you simply going through the motions...or are you for real?
- How do you respond when adversity strikes?
- In what ways has the world slipped into your life/lifestyle, that effects your response?
- What would you like to do differently?
- How can we (SFG) encourage and support you in your efforts?

Remember, God longs to be gracious...if you will just turn around and change, and blanket in Me. Repent, rest quietly, and trust in God. "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV)