

# Good News for Anxious Christians

## **WEEK 5      VINDICATION** (CH. 4-*WHY YOU DON'T ALWAYS HAVE TO EXPERIENCE JOY*)

"...many Christians now feel there must be something wrong with them if they're suffering. Instead of being comforted in their afflictions, they are made to feel guilty because their lives are not going well." (p. 137) There are also Christians on the opposite side of this misconception; those who think they must suffer or be afflicted in order to fulfill their Christian duties.

**Have we lost the healthy sense of suffering? Why or why not?**

**Does our church's mission/vision statement reflect the true nature of what it means to be a Christian?**

**How does our worship embrace or conflict with a healthy sense of suffering?**

**Do you regularly offer prayers of lament?**

Cary tells the story of Job and describes, "The Lord's vindication [justification] of Job faces a serious challenge from Satan, the accuser, who wants to probe Job's heart, asking whether Job fears God *for nothing*. (Job 1:9)" (p. 145) In other words, God allows Job to be tested by Satan in order to determine Job's motivation for fearing God; rewards and prosperity or love and vindication, but God, in the first place, vindicates Job by declaring him as righteous and worthy to be tested.

**Do you think of your relationship with God in this way?**

**God vindicates Job (Job 1, although Job is not aware) before Job is tested as-well-as through the work of Christ. How then does Job vindicate God?**

Cary writes, "When the kingdom of our Lord comes, every human being who dies in affliction, every tortured child, every person whose life is swallowed up by oppression, will be in a position to praise God with a whole heart and say "God gave me a good life." (p. 152)

**Is Cary contradicting his earlier claim that Christians need not be always joyful through suffering (and thus anxious)?**

Job looked forward to the encountering God as a man as he expresses in 19:25, "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth." His desire was to die yet his hope was in the opportunity to question God face to face and obtain wisdom concerning his suffering.

**How would an Old Testament Jew understand this differently from a 21<sup>st</sup> century Christian?**

**The book of Job ends with Job's fortune and position being restored, plus. Does that challenge or support Cary's view of suffering and hope?**

**What reminds you of the hope of the resurrection and the promise of all things being made new?**

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| <b>Something I want to remember...</b> |
| <b>Something I learned...</b>          |
| <b>Something that was clarified...</b> |
| <b>Something I don't understand...</b> |
| <b>Something I don't agree with...</b> |