

Alone With God

by George C. Clark



“All the disciples forsook him and fled.”

Matthew 26:56

No one can go far into the word of God without finding himself alone. Everyone used of God is forced to stand alone and to bear persecution, for the truth has not been in fashion since man first acted upon Satan’s lie in the garden of Eden. All who are determined to obey God and to come to a complete understanding of His word are at times compelled to travel alone, finding their greatest help in the solitude of God’s presence. From this altitude of spirituality, they have drawn others up to their level. One must stand above the masses if he would win and influence others to walk with God.

Had Abraham gone to live with Lot in Sodom, his influence would have availed but little. It was as he stood alone with God on the highlands of faith that his intercessions secured Lot’s deliverance. Moses, in making this same kind of separation, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction and isolation in the valleys and on the mountains alone with God. In the midst of a wicked and sinful generation, Noah alone preached righteousness. Daniel prayed alone three times a day when all others were afraid of the king’s command. Elijah sacrificed alone and brought down fire from heaven after the false

prophets failed. Jeremiah prophesied and wept alone while his people were taking life easy and drifting away from God. The apostle John was alone on the Island of Patmos when he received revelations from God concerning the end of the world. The apostle Paul, in describing his appearance before Rome’s Emperor to answer with his life for believing and teaching contrary to the theories and doctrines of men, wrote, “*No man stood with me; on the contrary, all men forsook me.*” Jesus prayed alone in the garden while his disciples slept. Yes, he was there all alone bearing the agony of that sad hour with not a soul on earth to befriend him. Oh, the sorrow, grief, and loneliness our Lord endured! He suffered, bled, and died alone, alone!

From the beginning, our Lord has singled out men for the higher things of his kingdom, and these men have been the target of mass criticism, enmity, and hatred – not only from the world, but also from many unwise children of God. The religionists of Jesus’ time praised Moses and the prophets but persecuted Jesus and his apostles. During the early days of the Popes, many Christians praised Moses, the prophets, Jesus, and the apostles, but persecuted God’s living saints. And many Christians today praise the patriarchs, the prophets, Jesus, the apostles, and the martyrs, but persecute all who stand for like faith today.

When Jesus said, “*A man’s foes shall be they of his own household,*” he was not altogether referring to one’s natural family. For example, who were Jesus’ worst enemies? The household of Joseph and Mary or the household of Israel? The household of Israel, of course. Who were Paul’s fiercest opponents? Were they not believers from the household of Israel? It has always been true that those who determine to follow God fully have been most cruelly persecuted by God’s own people. The Jews forced Pilate and the Romans to kill Jesus. Paul was called into question by believers in Israel concerning the gospel which he preached.

It is only human to drift with the tide of public opinion, but it is divine to follow the Spirit of God and stem the tide. Dear reader, should you stand with the crowd, or should you stand alone with God, and thus prepare yourself to help the crowd? People

need leaders, men who will pay the price and dig deep into the hidden things of God, things that God wants His people to have and use, such as the signs that followed believers in the days of the apostles.

So that we might know to some degree the utter loneliness of our dear Lord, God often appoints His children to suffer pangs of loneliness, or the pain of a betrayed friendship, the loss of loved ones, or the heartache of being misunderstood. It is not in a crowd that the soul grows most vigorously.

However, merely being alone will not suffice. One can do wrong even when alone. In fact, it is easier to do evil when no human eye can see. “Character”, someone has said, “is what you are in the dark.” We must use our seclusion properly. Our flesh is sure to be present when we are alone, but God will be there, too. So, the benefit of drawing aside from men will always depend on what we do while we are alone.

One of the ways of growing in the knowledge of our Lord is by Bible reading and study. We can, I am sure, do this best when alone; for if we choose, we can combine prayer with the reading of God’s Book. Moreover, it is possible to see our faults best when alone, when there are no friends or foes there to interfere with our judgments.

Growth in grace requires much prayer, and solitude is often essential to prayer in its most effective form. Jesus recommended drawing aside into one’s “closet” to pray, knowing that God will openly reward all who come to Him in heartfelt, secret prayer. It is difficult, I know, to find time in these busy days to be alone. Nevertheless, it pays to be alone with God.

Alone with God! What a blessed spot! Sweet refuge, where the heart can unfold itself. Alone, alone with God!

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THE UNGODLY

George C. Clark, Sr.

In the Scriptures, “the ungodly” are frequently defined as “disobedient children of God”, as opposed to those who have never been converted. Of course, the unconverted are unlike God, but God also has children who are very unlike Him. In 1Peter 4:18, we find three categories of men: the righteous (obedient believers), the ungodly (disobedient believers), and the sinner (the unconverted). In that verse, Peter asks, “*And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*”

The ungodly are those children of God who teach wrong things concerning their heavenly Father. “*Blessed is the man*”, the Psalmist says, “*who walks not in the counsel [doctrine] of the ungodly*” (Ps. 1:1). This concern for the saints is echoed by Paul when he wrote (2Tim. 2:16-18), “*Shun profane and vain babblings [false teachings], for they will increase unto more ungodliness . . . among whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred.*” How sad it is when a child of God turns from righteousness and falls victim to false teaching – to be numbered among the ungodly, destined to be destroyed!

The Psalmist described the godly believer in these memorable words: “*His delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he does shall prosper.*” He goes on to say, “*The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.*”

Only the godly will be able to stand when “*the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.*” There is a sure reward of eternal life for the righteous, but the ungodly and the sinner shall be swallowed up together by the wrath of Almighty God.