

# *Pastors Thoughts of the Week*

## **Discouragement**

*And the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against God. Numbers 21:4-5*

Life in an imperfect world is fraught with challenges. Maintaining one's sanguinity amid multiplied trials can prove to be difficult, if not altogether impossible. Satan has intentionally crafted impediments that he has deceptively placed in "the way" to provoke believers into forsaking the Living God. Before believers were first called Christians at Antioch, they were called the "people of this way" (Acts 9:2, 24:14) It was meant to be a pejorative epithet, but it held an ironic significance since Jesus said, "I am the Way".

It is an incalculable error to suppose that our earthly journey would be without some difficulty. The Master warned us when we embarked on "the way" that "In the world, ye shall have tribulation". This place, where believers are denominated as "strangers and pilgrims", is infested with snares, nettles, and bogs, obstructing the path and causing distress to those who travel through it.

In John Bunyan's seminal allegory *Pilgrim's Progress*, he places Christian in the miry bog. "It is the descent whither the scum and filth that attends conviction for sin doth continually run; and therefore it is called the Slough of Despond. For still, as the sinner is awakened about his lost condition, there arises in his soul many fears and doubts, and discouraging apprehensions, which all of them get together, and settle in this place: and this is the reason of the badness of this ground". At that PLIABLE began to be offended, and angrily said to his fellow, "Is this the happiness you have told me of all this while? If we have such ill speed at our first setting out, what may we expect 'twixt this and our journey's end? If I get out again with my life, you shall possess the brave country alone." And with that he gave a desperate struggle or two, and got out of the mire on that side of the slough which was next to his own house: so away he went, and CHRISTIAN saw him no more.

As we journey on this narrow way, expect some trials and troubles but never give in to discouragement. The devil is hoping that discouragement will lead to infidelity and then to "speaking against God". The Master will lead us out into "pleasant places" Ps 16:6 if we chafe not at these disturbances." We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;" II Corinthians 4:8-9.

*Pastor*

*Faith cometh by hearing: and hearing by the word of God Romans 10:17*