

# Clarity Trumpet

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*For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for battle? So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.*

I Corinthians 14:8, 9

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## Have We No Rights?

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The proposition is often in our thoughts, if not verbally flowing from our lips, that we, as God's children, have certain inalienable rights. Those of us who have been involved in ministry for some time are especially prone to feel that we've "paid our dues," we've done our share of suffering and sacrificing. Now it's time for others to carry the load, to pay the price for effective service. "Let the younger men and women develop a few battle scars of their own. We've been there and done that" becomes our attitude.

Popular preaching of the day gives added comfort and encouragement to those of us who tend to think this way. The airwaves are filled with the health and wealth prophets (or is it "profits") who boldly proclaim that we have a right to claim (even demand) perfect health and prosperity from the Lord God of the universe. We are told these dual blessings are birthrights of the child of God. Health and prosperity are part of the salvation package, supposedly purchased for us by Christ when He died on Calvary.

As such unbiblical nonsense (I use the word on purpose, for *nonsense* it is) filters down to the sincere Christian servant who is rather lacking in this world's goods, or who is severely suffering from some physical malady, he begins to entertain the unthinkable. Though it may be worded differently, the subtle and devilish thought process slowly develops until it fully blossoms into the very warped and self-centered view that *God owes me!*

The more we've gone without or suffered personally because of our service to the Lord, the more vulnerable we may be to such intellectually weak and spiritually damaging propaganda.

**God owes me???** Do I dare think that because of a few short years in which I may be inconvenienced in this life that God is indebted to me; that I have somehow earned the right to claim special privileges from Him?

I once heard a Christian leader pray, "Lord if I have earned any favors from You over the years, I now ask You to . . . ." Such thinking is replete with prideful arrogance, and is totally lacking in a proper understanding of both God's

grace or the believer's duty, or both. Jesus, who certainly knows the truth about this matter, said, ". . . when you have done all those things which are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do'" (Luke 17:10).

Do we who believe in Christ have any rights at all? Yes, indeed we do, but those "rights" may not be what we normally would want to embrace. The biblical rights of true believers in Christ can be categorized as both *Spiritual* and *Physical* and, depending on how you view them, may be seen as either *positive* or *negative*.

### Spiritual "Rights"

**The Right to be Children of God:** *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name* (John 1:12; also compare I John 3:2).

**The Right to Call God our Father:** *For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out Abba, Father* (Romans 8:15; also II Timothy 1:7).

**The Right of Possessing Every Spiritual Blessing:** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ* (Ephesians 1:3).

**The Right of Acceptance with God:** *To the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved* (Ephesians 1:6).

**The Right to Redemption and the Forgiveness of Sins:** *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace* (Ephesians 1:7).

**The Right to be Given Salvation as a Present Possession:** *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast* (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

**The Right to a God-Planned Life:** *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them* (Ephesians 2:10).

**The Right to be Bold in our Approach to God:** *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need* (Hebrews 4:16).

The list could go on and on, but there is more.

### Physical "Rights"

**The Right to Suffer for the Lord's Sake:** *For to you it has been granted [given] on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake* (Philippians 1:29).

**The Right to Severe Trials:** *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you,*

as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you. . . . if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter (I Peter 4:12-16).

#### **The Right to be Persecuted for Godly**

**Living:** *Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution* (II Timothy 3:12).

#### **The Right to the Way Out of Every**

**Testing and Trial:** *No temptation [trial, testing] has overtaken you except such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it* (I Corinthians 10:13).

#### **The Right to God's Strength in Every**

**Trial:** *And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. . . . for when I am weak, then I am strong* (II Corinthians 12:9, 10).

#### **The Right of Knowing that Everything**

**Endured for Him will be Amply Repaid:** *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us* (Romans 8:18). *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord* (II Corinthians 15:58).

### **Why We Question God**

I don't know how it is with you, but I sometimes find myself feeling left out, overlooked, or lacking. It always happens *when I compare myself to others*. When I look around me it seems almost everyone has more than I do. Pride and self-pity can easily gain the upper hand in my thinking. Covetousness begins to rule the roost and dissatisfaction with what God has prepared for me quickly develops. *When I look within the pages of Scripture* I also notice how many of God's choicest servants were abundantly blessed in material ways: Abraham, Moses, Job, Joseph, David, Solomon. It's logical to think, "Why not me? I like nice clothes, new cars, comfortable-to-luxurious houses." Such self-centered thinking is just one little step away from: "Look how faithful I've been Lord; more so than Brother Live-for-Self down the street. Surely I deserve more or better. You owe me, Lord!"

### **The Only Proper Attitude**

God led Paul to write, *For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves,*

*and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise* (II Corinthians 10:12). And Jesus said, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses" (Luke 12:15). Then God led the writer of Hebrews to record, *Let your conduct be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you"* (Hebrews 13:5).

One of my favorite passages concerns the time after His resurrection when Jesus met with the disciples on the shore, cooked fish for them, and reassured Peter that all was well. After asking Peter three times if he loved Him, Jesus then gave the simple reassuring command, "Follow me." And what was Peter's reaction? *Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper (that was John). . . . Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what about this man?" Jesus said to him, "If I will (choose or desire) that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me"* (John 21:20-22).

If I want to enjoy the ultimate blessings of God upon my life in serving Him, it doesn't really matter what God's plan is for someone else. It only matters that I fulfill His purpose for me. If in doing His will I have abundance or if I suffer great loss, that is secondary to fulfilling His eternal plan for my existence. Invariably we stray from God's perfect plan for us as we lose our focus upon Him and the Great Commission to carry the Gospel to all the world, making disciples of those we win. Even while being involved in "ministry" we may easily get side tracked by maneuvering people and situations so as to guarantee our own security or well being.

What will it take, dear child of God, for us to fully and completely cut loose of our earthly ties -- our fleshly security blankets -- to be that man or woman who is *totally* given over to His will? ∞

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