

The Golden Opportunity

P1

I said: My father, you see the situation is difficult and people are in panic, so what is the spiritual view of things from your point of view?

He said: The spiritual view of the situation is what we might call a "golden opportunity".

I said: But father, this horrific situation you see as a golden opportunity!!

He said: It is really a dangerous situation at the physical and psychological levels, and we cannot deny this. We share the pain with affected people and pray for them and help them with all our might and also be careful to take our precautions. However, it is necessary that we not only consider the physical and psychological levels, but also the spiritual dimension that we must pay attention to. Which is what I mean by the word "golden opportunity".

I said: How can the current situation be a golden opportunity on a spiritual level?

Firstly, for the individual

1 – A Golden Opportunity for Repentance

This time is a golden opportunity for each of us to remember the Scripture saying, " All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away," (1 Peter 1:24). We should also remember that our life on Earth "is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away" (James 4:14). We remember that we are not only a body and a soul, but inside us there is a spirit that yearns for God. Every person was busy away from his spiritual life, whether because of preoccupation or negligence with sin. Now is an opportunity to start to think about the joyful eternity that is waiting for him even when he ignores it.

I said: Does God forgive all our sins as soon as we repent, and we regain the hope of a joyful eternity, even if the motive of repentance is fear?

He said: God is very attentive and longs for the return of his son - everyone - to him. Whatever the motivation, he accepts and rejoices in him. The prodigal son, for example, returned because he was in need (Luke 15:17). When he returned, his father welcomed him and embraced him in spite of his miserable condition and the life of profligacy that he lived. He did not reprimand him or ask him to confess the details of his sin and impurity.

And the people of Nineveh returned to God because of their fear of punishment and destruction. When they returned to God and repented, he accepted them and rejoiced in their repentance, and nothing happened to them.

God yearns for our return no matter the motive and embraces us and forgives us and lets us into his heavenly home. Not because of our merit, but because of his mercy and love, for now is a golden opportunity for every distant to come back and enjoy forgiveness

(Acts 3:19). He will have the hope of joyful eternity (Timothy 3: 7).

I said: Even if a person is on his deathbed and his entire life was in sin or in atheism, if he repents, will he have the hope of joyful eternity?

He said: The one who accepted the thief - who lived all his life in murder, adultery and immorality - at the last moments of his life and promised him paradise, accepts everyone who asks him and takes refuge in him whatever his condition and gives him the promise of paradise.

I said: But if a person does not die, what is the guarantee that he will continue to repent and live with God. Perhaps after the crisis ends he returns to sin and turns away from God again?

He said: The guarantee is to savour love. He who savours the love of Christ cannot return to the bitterness of sin (Proverbs 27: 7).

I said: Does this mean that he will not sin again?

He said: As long as we are in the world, we will fight and strive

against the world and its desires, the devil and his soldiers. If we fall, we will rise again (Micah 7: 8). If a soldier is wounded in battle, this does not mean that the commander will abandon him but will treat and help him. The more well-nourished the soldier, the better he will fight. This is the second point in the golden opportunity for each of us.

I said: What is it, Father?

2 – A Golden Opportunity for Spiritual Nourishment

An individual might be busy because of preoccupation or laziness when it comes to prayer or reading the Bible. These days are also a golden opportunity to start and be well-nourished request that he have a loving relationship with Christ. Hw should not stop at recitation, imposition and rituals - as we explained in the stages of prayer - for true prayer is an expression of true feelings. So, let us express our fear these days, our need for protection, and the needs of our families and relatives.

I said: What if someone had nothing to do with prayer and started praying these days? Would God respond to him or would he say to him, "You are self-serving," and not respond?

He said (with a smile): Do not worry, my son, God is not like us. He is eager for you to speak any words even if for the sake of interest. He does not reproach us when we return to him at the time of need. Rather, he accepts and embraces each of us, like a beloved son who came back after a long absence. He meets our needs as it is written: "Call me in the day of trouble, save you and glorify me" (Psalm 50:15). The "hardship and need" season is the "repentance and prayer" season.

Let's start during these days. It is a golden opportunity for everyone who needs to learn to pray. There are many needs that can be prayed for. It is a golden opportunity for those who learned to persevere and use the time to pray even more.

It is also a golden opportunity to feed from the Gospel. Without feeding from the Gospel a person is not considered a human - as we explained in "How to read the Bible" - just as the body needs nourishment, the spirit needs nourishment. Let's start a little by little and remember that "the secret to the power of the Bible is to turn it into a prayer and the secret to power of Prayer is to use Bible verses."

These days are an opportunity for everyone who started feeding to grow more, and whoever did not start has an opportunity to begin gradually.

I said: And what is the third opportunity for individuals?

3-A Golden Opportunity to Evangelise

Everyone needs to see the peace of Christ in us these days, they need to see in us the hope of joyful eternity. When they find in us something different from the people in the world, this is the true testimony for Christ (1 John 5:11).

Then we will be ready to talk and tell about our hope and the reason for not being afraid or annoyed. Furthermore, many of our brothers and families whom we live with need to trust in acceptance and forgiveness, and to trust in the joyful eternity. The need to know that these days are the time for returning and repentance, the time to trust in eternity. We have a responsibility towards everyone around us.

I said: But if they do not accept, what should I do?

He said: We have a lot to do. WE should not stop at speech. We can pray for them so that they do not lose the hope of joyful eternity. As Saint Augustine says, "Do you not possess Christian tenderness, so you mourn a body that the soul has left but do not mourn a spirit that separated from God." It is important to pray for those around us to accept the knowledge of Christ and His love and to trust in eternity. "We throw our bread on the face of the waters." We can send a message of condolence or part of a sermon or

spiritual ritual, as the book says, "My word shall not return to Me void" (Isaiah 55:11).

He who accepts speech, speak to him about how to begin and take them through a few steps in the spiritual life. Talk especially about the confidence of forgiveness and value.

I said: I will start, Father. I will start. It is indeed a golden opportunity that we must seize.

He said: Start and may the grace of our Lord support you. Next time we will complete our talk about the golden opportunity for the family and the church.

