

Serve With Zeal: Love Like Christ

Amir Tsarfati knows what love is and what love isn't. His dad's Jewish ancestors were driven from Portugal and Tunisia while his mom was born in Cyprus after her parents survived the Holocaust only to be denied entry into Palestine. Abandoned by his troubled parents, Amir planned to commit suicide at 17. But he couldn't go through with it.

After confiding in a Messianic Jewish friend, Amir asked God to show him who Jesus is. The next morning he saw an ad for the *Jesus* movie, which he attended that night. After committing his life to Christ, Amir shared his faith with his foster family and they gave him the boot. He joined the army and was sent to officer's training. Today Amir is a major in the Israeli army reserves, CEO of Sar El, a tour guide company, and speaks at churches around the world.

Three Reminders for Those Going Thru Hard Times:

1. **God Has a _____(Purpose) in _____(Pain).**
 - a. *"I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope. Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail."* Lamentations 3:19-22.
 - b. The book of Lamentations (which means 'loud cries') marks the funeral of the once beautiful city of Jerusalem when King Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city and burned the temple. How could God allow such a travesty?
 - c. C.S. Lewis, in *The Problem of Pain*, says "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains. It is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world." Amir's pain opened his heart to Jesus who was also rejected by his own people (John 1:11). The cross is an unforgettable reminder that God has a purpose in pain.

2. **God Is _____(Sovereign) Over _____(Suffering).**
 - a. *"They [his compassions] are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, 'The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.'"* Lamentations 3:23-24. The nation of Israel is an ongoing object lesson reminding us that God is sovereign over suffering.
 - b. The Bible assures us that everything in the entire universe is under God's authority (Revelation 21:6; Colossians 1:16; Romans 11:33; Daniel 2:20). Even Satan must ask permission before he can act (Job 1:6; 2:1).
 - c. God allows suffering for one reason – to bring about a greater good. *"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."* Genesis 50:20. Our suffering does not go unnoticed by God (Lamentations 1:2).

- d. When the Israelites were unfaithful coming out of Egypt, God raised up a new generation. Daniel and his friends mark a new generation that God raises up after the destruction of Jerusalem. But the people of God drifted from him again. After the prophet Malachi, God turned out the lights.

3. God Will _____(Turn) the _____(Tables).

- a. *“The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him. It is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.” Lamentations 3:25-26.* After four centuries of silence, the heavens begin to stir as an alignment of stars and planets beckon Magi in Persia to visit a newborn king.
- b. Jesus, God in the flesh, described his mission in Luke 4:18, *“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”*
- c. Jesus calls us as his followers to serve those around us (Matthew 25:31-46; Romans 12:9-21). Most importantly, we must lead others to Christ, who offers eternal life through his sacrifice on the cross (Acts 1:8; Mark 16:15).

In 1970, God used Hal Lindsey to draw the world to our unusual age when he wrote *The Late Great Planet Earth* (35 million sold). Today God is using Amir Tsarfati who wrote *The Last Hour* and launched a new ministry (*Behold Israel*) to stir up a zeal for Jesus and a passion to serve others in His name. Are you ready to do that?