

"O LORD, why hast Thou made us to err from Thy ways, and hardened our heart from Thy fear?" (Isa.63:17).

Three possible motivations for this question:

1. Confusion.
2. Petulance.
3. Desperation.

Confusion: "If You are indeed our Father, why have You given us the latitude to depart from obeying You? Why have You allowed us to have so little fear of You that we'd even consider disobedience? It would seem to us that You'd want to have had tighter control of us, Your children."

Petulance: "How can You hold us accountable when You, Who is sovereign over all things, ordained that we sin? Our disobedience is therefore ultimately Your fault."

Desperation: "Please help! We don't want to end up cast off from You like the others with hardened hearts who've forsaken Your ways."

Perhaps at one time or another most of us ask the question in verse 17 for each of these three reasons. But the Lord has comfort for us in each instance.

If we ask the question through confusion, we know we can go to Him in prayer, in meditation in the Word, and in godly counsel for clarification, "for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (I Cor.14:33). He doesn't intend for us to remain confused.

If we ask through petulance, the Lord will graciously bring us to the realization of our lack of standing to confront Him, as He did for Job, who responded, "I know that Thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from Thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of Thee, and declare Thou unto me. I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:2-6).

If we ask through desperation, we can rely on the fact that we serve "the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation" (II Cor.1:3-4). About this comforting God we read in Ps.103:13-14 that "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust."

As always, our God is more than sufficient for any thought or concern we could have. If He weren't, someone in the many centuries of church history would have identified His point of inadequacy. But there is none and there will be none.

Hymn: "Whate'er My God Ordains is Right"