

Verse: Isaiah 38.17: Surely it was for my benefit I suffered such anguish. In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back.

In 2009, I prayed to God that I would be a **TRUE** Christ follower. One who is no longer distracted by the ways of the world, but someone who is focused on the Savior and lives accordingly.

I didn't have to wait long for the LORD to answer my prayer!

Some of you may know my story, others don't. But my focus today is not on the details of what happened to me, nor the long-drawn-out years of anguish that came with it. Today, my attention is drawn to the "Why?" Don't we all ask God "Why" at one time or another? Our Scripture today answers this very question of "Why?"

"Surely it was for my benefit I suffered such anguish." There it is folks – for my benefit.

In **HIS** love, we may have to enter a wilderness or spend time in a desert. Nowhere in the Bible does it say seek me first and everything in your life will be nothing but ease and comfort. In fact, **HOW** God called me into a new and improved relationship with Him happened in the hardest, darkest times of my life.

I will be forever grateful to my LORD for leading me into and through the hardships that called me into a deeper walk with Him - but I did **NOT** like it! It was painful and uncomfortable. There was much loss of health, home, and finances. In the world's eyes I lost it all! But what I gained in God's eyes – Kingdom eyes - is priceless!

I'd like to share these words regarding four of the greats of the Bible:

When God wanted to make a King out of David, He didn't give him a crown, He gave him Goliath.

When God wanted to make a leader out of Moses, He didn't give him a stage – He gave him the wilderness.

When God wanted to raise Joseph in the palace, He didn't give him a shortcut – He gave him a pit and a prison.

When God wanted to make a Queen out of Esther, He didn't give her comfort – He gave her crisis.

When you are called into trials of many kinds or hardships you truly believe you cannot handle, remember these four Biblical heroes. In His love, God called them into their circumstances for their benefit! God doesn't always give you what you expect, but in His wisdom, you can expect Him to give you what you need.