

THERE IS A RIVER



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Does God Say "I Told You So?"

There may be times in our lives where we become involved in matters where we think we know more than we do. Nevertheless, in those moments we may find ourselves foolishly and helplessly involved in some of the biggest mistakes of our lives! The easiest thing to do when confronted with such things is get out of the mess as quickly and quietly as we are able. We try to save face because we are embarrassed, try to apologize because we may have been wrong, we simply try to put the whole event behind us and move on with our lives. Just when we think we are on the road to recovery of dignity and self-confidence, along comes an acquaintance or, worst yet, a friend, who knows what we're going through, simply takes the moment to say: "You know, I hate to say 'I told you so;' BUT, I told you so." There you are feeling doubly bad and even more sorry for yourself.

So, does God ever say: "I told you so?" You bet; the Scriptures are full of admonitions and chastisements, recommendations, and warnings that God issues on His own or through the mouths of the Prophets, or, better still, from the mouth of our Lord and Savior, Himself. Is God trying to be mean and hurtful to us? When God says: "I told you so" to Adam and Eve after they deliberately disobeyed and lost Paradise, was that simply a rebuke and a final judgment on the matter? Of course not. Every admonition from God in the Scriptures—coming from the mouth of whomever—is meant to encourage and lift us up. We need to remember one of the first examples of the whole experience in the Garden of Eden: God is God; we are His creatures. Pride is what caused so much difficulty in the first place and pride is still the chart-topper of the Seven Deadly Sins!

Think about it: when someone says "I told you so," aren't our feelings hurt because our pride is wounded? Don't we hear "I told you so" with a bit more arrogance or sarcasm because it hurts our pride to know that we could make a mess of our lives? As Christians, we know that feeling as "sin." You're right, not every stupid human action is a sin—but a good number of our stupid, human actions do come from our own pride and the lack of thinking about how we can act better with the principles of our faith or the teachings of Jesus informing our actions.

We are currently celebrating a Jubilee Year of Mercy in the Catholic Church that is meant to help us understand, as Pope Francis has clearly proclaimed, "without God's mercy, we would not exist." Mercy is that incredible and gratuitous gift of God that restores our ability to live as His children with full faith and confidence that in His love we are held in His embrace.

Every Divine admonition or word of caution in the Scriptures is a *loving* reminder from our

Heavenly Father. Believe it or not, God does not want to punish us as much as He wants to love us; but love, as we know, typically involves receiving and giving. The Year of Mercy helps us to receive God's mercy through a change of heart and action. We call this conversion. Conversion is an ongoing process in our lives. The more active we are about examining our lives and adjusting our behavior the more we have the opportunity to experience being loved by God. Yes, we will still hear an occasional "I told you so" both from God and maybe even from our friends (and maybe even from our non-friends); but, relax, that is a sign of our humanity, which God loves so much that He took it on Himself in Jesus, and clearly that we're not in heaven yet.

Commit your life to Christ—and I'll see you at Sunday Mass!

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