

Trouble is Coming
Sunday, November 29, 2020
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Good morning, Lighthouse! Are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

When the Apostle John was writing to his beloved friend Gaius, he shared his heartfelt wish for him in

III John, verse 2. Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

There is no greater reaching of success than that of the inner man that has been redeemed from his sin, raised from the spiritual dead and granted life eternal.

I very well understand how John felt toward his friend. I feel the same way toward you. I have done all I know to ensure your spiritual prosperity by introducing you to Jesus, and clearly would wish for you nothing but perfect health and great prosperity in this life as well.

Yet, as much as John or I might wish it, your life here will not be exempt from trouble.

Your life here will consist of maybe 70, 80 or even 90-100 years with no guarantees on any of that.

Our lives beyond that will consist of at least 1,000 years of measured time and then eternity.

As wonderful as is love, peace, joy, good health and protection from all evil...that will not prepare us for the next thousand years and the eternity to follow.

I really cannot take you to a simple passage of Scripture that tells us plainly that our life here is primarily about preparing us for what is to come.

However, the more I study the Word, the more I am convinced that life here is not just about life here: I believe it is more about the Kingdom that is to come than we probably think.

I would wish for you love, peace, joy, prosperity, good health and protection from any and all evil.

Yet I know that all of us will suffer. Trouble, conflict, pain, heartache, pestilence, loss, sickness, disappointment...these are but a few of the maladies that will visit us throughout our lives.

Lost or saved, trouble is coming for everyone.

Some might ask, "Will I suffer less if I am a Christian"?

I cannot honestly say that you will. You might actually suffer more.

1 Peter 4:1-19

1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

2 That he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

3 For the time past of *our* life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*:

5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

6 For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

10 As every man hath received the gift, *even* so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

11 If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

16 Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

17 For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it* first *begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God?

18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

I know that some Christians believe that their suffering is punishment from God.

Some believers think that their suffering is a consequence of their past sins or poor decisions.

It is true that forgiveness does not remove consequences, yet again I would remind you that your awesome loving and merciful God is all about blessing your future, not punishing your past.

Life in general is filled with trouble.

Job 14:1-2

1 Man *that is* born of a woman *is* of few days, and full of trouble.

2 He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

The things we all fear will come.

Job 3:25-26

25 For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.

26 I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.

At some point in your life, likely at many points, you will experience exactly what Job is talking about here in these verses; **the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me.**

Sooner or later you are going to see and hear that which you have greatly feared.

You may hear the words, "You have cancer".

You will hear of someone you love, "He's not going to make it" or, "You've tested positive".

You will hear, "There's been an accident".

Some will hear, "I want a divorce".

Suffering in some form or another will come.

1 Peter 3:17 For *it is* better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

Whether for good or for evil, you will suffer.

Philippians 1:29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

You have heard many say that God will not allow more suffering to come than you are able to bear?

That promise of limitation in I Corinthians 10:13 is about temptation, not suffering!

Trouble is coming and it can come so big and so devastating and so dark that you could even wish you had never been born.

Job 3:2-4

2 And Job spake, and said,

3 Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night *in which* it was said, There is a man child conceived.

4 Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it.

Trouble can get so bad you could even wish to die.

Job 3:20-22

20 Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter *in* soul;

21 Which long for death, but it *cometh* not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures;

22 Which rejoice exceedingly, *and* are glad, when they can find the grave?

Any of this can happen to any of us...and some of it surely will.

For those of you who know Jesus, you must understand that God has a purpose and a plan; not if, but when trouble comes.

Lost or saved, trouble still comes. **To live and die without Christ is the saddest of all tragedies:**

to live this life from one crisis to another; thinking all is well and then having all hope yanked out from under you again and again...and then to die and spend eternity separated from God.

But for the saved, not only will we endure and survive the troubles of this life, our great God will use them to prepare us for the Kingdom to come!

For all believers in this place today, young or old, I want you to know that in spite of all the troubles, our awesome God, who can do anything, is on our side.

Romans 8:28-32

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

31 What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?

32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

There are many troubles that knowing and following the Lord will simply eliminate; yet not all.

God could eliminate all our suffering if He so chose; could He not?

God could just rescue us immediately if that was His will; could He not?

Today I want to share with you three of the most important things you need to remember when suffering comes.

I. Suffering has a purpose.

A. Suffering drives us to the Lord.

1. Job asked this question:

Job 27:9 Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?

2. **If you are saved, the answer is yes!**

3. **Psalm 9:9-10**

9 The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

10 And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

4. Trouble can do amazing things for your prayer life!

B. When we suffer, it causes us to cry out to the Lord.

1. **Psalm 107:4-8**

4 They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.

5 Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

6 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, *and* he delivered them out of their distresses.

7 And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

8 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!

2. **Psalm 86:7** In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me.

C. Suffering and trouble turns us from our sins.

1. **Psalm 107:10-13**

10 Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, *being* bound in affliction and iron;

11 Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High:

12 Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and *there was* none to help.

13 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, *and* he saved them out of their distresses.

2. When we suffer, it will definitely cause us to review our walk with the Lord.

1 Peter 4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

3. Sometimes when you come to the place you simply cannot keep going down the road you are on; maybe drugs or alcohol or tobacco some other harmful addiction, yet you seem to have no strength to change it...sometimes only trouble will move us.

4. Blessing does not always move us; suffering does!

II. Suffering is a test.

(One thing to always remember about a test; God already knows what you will do; you are the one who does not yet know for sure.)

A. Suffering teaches you to trust the Lord.

1. You trusted Jesus to save you from your sins; and He did.

2. Will you now trust Him to lead your life?

3. You say yes? **You will be tested to find out.**

B. Suffering will show you where you really stand.

1. Hebrews 10:24-25

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

2. You decided you are going to be in Church every Sunday.

3. Get ready for trouble; company will show up, you will be asked to work, you will be tired and worn out, you won't feel good; your resolve will be tested!

4. Some of you just made a commitment to tithe and to give to the Lord.

5. Your resolve will be tested.

6. **Proverbs 3:9-10**

9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

10 So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

7. Get ready for trouble; expensive repairs you didn't count on, a mistake in your checkbook, hours are cut back at work; maybe new medical expenses...your commitment will be tested; will you cave or will you trust God?

B. Suffering will reveal your love.

1. God loves us in all circumstances; even when we sin and disobey Him.

2. Even enough to chasten us when necessary; sometimes with suffering.

3. **Hebrews 12:6** For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

4. But do you love Him the same?

5. We know that God tested Job with great trouble; God let Satan take everything he had but his life.

6. Look at Job's response compared to that of his wife, who was suffering much less than him:

a. **Job 1:21** And [Job] said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.

b. **Job 2:9** Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.

7. You say you love God; suffering will show you how much.

III. Suffering is also an opportunity.

A. All the truly great spiritual advancements and achievements we experience come out of suffering or trouble of some kind.

1. Joseph was sold into slavery; and because he was still faithful to the Lord; out of that he became the Prime Minister of all Egypt and saved his entire family and nation.

2. Daniel and his three Hebrew companions faced captivity and imprisonment, cast into a den of lions, thrown into a fiery furnace and because they were still faithful to the Lord, they too became the saviors of their nation.
3. Job was enriched beyond imagination because he stayed faithful in his trouble.
4. Maybe you are facing really big trouble! All that means is that God has something big He wants to do in your life.
5. You know what I've always taught you...Don't tell God how big your problem is, tell your problem how big your God is!

B. Suffering and trouble make you recognize the things that really matter.

1. You know, I've been teaching people how to be saved for over 43 years now.
2. What did it take to establish in me a commitment to stay faithful to winning the lost for 43 years?
3. It took suffering! Being put on my back with cancer taught me what really matters.

C. Having gone through suffering is what enables you to minister to others.

1. There are a lot of people you care about who are going to need your encouragement when they get hit.

2. **2 Corinthians 1:3-4**

3 Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

Conclusion:

Trouble is coming. Suffering is coming. There will be more.

There will soon be a level of trouble unleashed on mankind like the world has never before seen.

We will not avoid all the trouble leading up to that just because we are saved.

God will save us from some of it; of the rest, He will take us through!

Then comes the day for which we yearn:

2 Thessalonians 1:6-10

6 Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

Which group are you in this morning?

Will you be delivered from all your troubles?

Or will you be delivered to everlasting suffering in a devil's hell?

Yes, I know you are troubled; many suffer even now. Let that trouble lead you to Jesus.

If you are already saved, let the suffering draw you close and teach you what really matters.

Suffering could turn out to be the best thing that ever happened to you.

There will be a day come when the blessings and joy and good health and prosperity will pale in comparison to the suffering we endured according to the will of God.

Romans 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are not worthy to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.