
John 16:33: "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye SHALL HAVE tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world".

This is how life is in a fallen and sinful world, but that doesn't mean that we are to live in grief and sorrow in the midst of troubles, trials, and afflictions that God allows into our lives; if you are a believer in Christ, you should know that God is actively working IN YOU in your trials, which your Heavenly Father has lovingly designed for YOU to separate you from the world and conform you to the image of Christ!

Romans 5:1-5, Philippians 1:29

Paul experienced a myriad of troubles as an apostle of Christ, trials that TESTED His faith in Christ; but amid ALL of what he suffered, he ALSO experienced MANY comforts and consolations from HIS Father of mercies and God of all comfort! God comforted him in ALL his tribulations which he suffered! As his faith was tested, it was strengthened! As his faith was strengthened, it became more valuable and useful to the Kingdom of God!

In your trials that God has appointed for you, Christian, His DESIGN is to strengthen you, increase your faith in Him, and equip you to be a useful vessel for His Kingdom and for His glory. In this context:

That you may be able to comfort your brethren in their "any" and "every" trouble, by how you were comforted by God in your troubles!

Remember Christian that God is discovering HIS faith IN YOU, not that He would see it, but that you would see it and be strengthened and comforted by God WHO IS the OBJECT of your faith! And SO that YOU MIGHT discover it to other fellow believers, to help their faith, THAT YOU might be an encouragement and comfort for them in their times of trouble!

God INTENDS to USE YOU Christian as an instrument of comfort and encouragement to other Christians!

In the troubles and sufferings of your Christian life, GOD IS separating you from this world and from your besetting sins, and He is conforming you to the image of Christ! Don't ever forget, child of God, you are not of the world, you no longer serve the god of this world, but you are a servant of Christ and His Kingdom, YOU ARE of that otherworld, that upper world, that heavenly and eternal world!

2 Corinthians 1:8-10: Read: We touched on this a little last week; this is where I would like to pick up this morning.

What Paul wrote here is of great value to every one of us in our Christian lives. You might say, how so?

Paul described his troubles as a servant of Christ in the world to be of the worst kind: We were pressed out of measure, (weighed down) above "natural" strength, (it was more than we

could bear), to the point that we despaired of life, (we lost all hope of surviving), we were convinced that we were going to die.

None of us (as servants of Christ) have endured troubles as bad as Paul and the other apostles; but... have you been in the midst of troubles in your life, in which, you were pressed out of measure, weighed down to the point that you felt you were going to break?

There will be times (in your life, Christian) when God will remove all other helps and bring you to your breaking point, THAT PLACE... in which the only One to turn to is Him! All of this happened, saith Paul:

That we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead". In their powerlessness, they were forced to look away from themselves and to God alone!

God therefore brought them to the threshold of death, a place, in which, they could trust the only One capable of delivering them from death, God, who raises the dead. If it is God's will, said Paul, He can certainly deliver us from our present despair.

Bottom line, Christian, it should not take things like this to turn us to wholeheartedly trust God, but sometimes, we have to be brought to a place of despair, powerlessness (so (HERE, the design of our trials), so that we would trust in God alone! Jeremiah 17:5,7-8

God, saith Paul, delivered us from our hopeless despair and our fears when we were facing "so great a death":

Whatever this type of death was that Paul, and his companions were threatened with, it was a terrible and painful death.

But NOW, Paul praised God for being delivered from "so great a death", and he trusted God for "present deliverances", and that God would deliver him in the future. 2 Timothy 3:11, 4:16-18

This makes me think of my Lord, who was not delivered from "so great a death" but He was instead, delivered up by God TO "so great a death" THAT you and I MIGHT BE DELIVERED from "so great a death"; that YOU, if you're lost sinner, might be delivered from dying in your sins and suffering the worst of deaths, eternal death, and a death that does not end when your body dies! Acts 2:23, Romans 4:25, 8:32, Colossians 1:13

God will never leave you, nor forsake you Christian; as bad as things may become in your life, never forget that you have been delivered from "so great a death" because of the Lord Jesus, and now, in Christ, you may look forward to the "hope and promise of eternal life".

But there was more to Paul's deliverance, there were the "helping prayers of the saints at Corinth: 2 Corinthians 1:11:

Your prayers were instrumental in our deliverance! God heard your prayers for us! "Ye ALSO, helping together by prayer for us"

I hope you would see here how important YOUR PRAYERS are for your brothers/sisters in Christ in their trials and difficulties!

Remember Wednesday, we talked about the importance of having personal "prayer-communion" with God, entering His holy presence, and pouring out your heart to your Father, casting all your cares upon Him!

Here brethren are "helping prayers", which WE ALL NEED! I (for one), especially need your prayers, so that I would walk with God, commune with God, resist the devil, pray without ceasing unto God for you all, and that I would faithfully speak God's message to you every time we meet.

This is NOT a one man show; I am NOT strong, but weak, powerless, and in great need of God's strength to continue this life as a servant of Christ! I ask for your prayers, and I thank you for your prayers for me!

Exodus 17:8-13

Paul was thankful to God for their "helping prayers", which were instrumental in Paul's deliverance, THIS was "the gift" (referred to in V11) that was bestowed upon them by God, by "THE MEANS of MANY PERSONS PRAYING"!

God uses means to accomplish His work, HERE, "the means of many persons praying" for the deliverance of Paul!

The word "PERSONS" here in the Greek is in other places translated "FACES or PRESENCE"; therefore, understand that Paul and his companions were HELPED in their deliverance by the PRESENCE OF "MANY UPTURNED FACES", (Hodge) praying for them at the throne of grace!

Paul rejoiced in his ministry @ Corinth:

This was the testimony of his conscience, which he now tells them of! His ministry and service to the Lord and to the church at Corinth was sincere and honest; he did not handle the Word of God deceitfully or lie to the people of God, but faithfully preached the gospel of Christ to them.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5, 2 Corinthians 1:12-13, 2:17, 4:1-2

Our conduct and behavior among you was honest and sincere; we did not build the ministry of the church at Corinth by "fleshly, worldly, or natural wisdom", we didn't use the world's marketing methods to bring people into the church, we preached the gospel of Christ and DEPENDED upon God's grace and favor for the outcome!

2 Corinthians 1:13: READ: BLUF: Our writing to you was straight forward, (like our preaching), we didn't write one thing and mean something else, we wrote to you, what we meant to say to you!

2 Corinthians 1:14: READ: "IN PART"

Paul seems here to concede that there were still factions in the church, groups of believers who were not ready to completely trust him as an apostle of Christ.

(V13): "I trust ye shall acknowledge (us) to be sincere servants of Christ, even to the end; as YE HAVE acknowledged us IN PART, that WE ARE your rejoicing, (we are your joy) even as YE ALSO are (our joy) in the day of the Lord Jesus".

In the day of the return of Christ, we shall all rejoice together in Christ!

Closing: The Christian life is a life of "NOT trusting in ourselves, but in God:

To get us to the place of wholehearted trust in God, He will (at times) discipline and instruct us by bringing us to a place in which all other trusts, all other helps fail!

Proverbs 3:5-6

And then, remember the importance of "helping prayers", pray for your brothers and sisters in Christ; please pray for me. Christian, God will use you, and He will be moved by YOUR prayers to send His mercies and His comforts to those that are in trouble!

Last, the testimony of our conscience should be that we have served God sincerely and in all honesty!