

Title: God's Word Concerning Trials

Text: 1 Peter 1: 3-9

Date: January 20, 2011

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

1 Peter 1: 3: Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4: To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5: Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

We do not understand the details of what God is doing in providence. But the peace of God that passes all understanding, that keeps God's child looking to Christ alone is this: God, the Father of our Lord Jesus, has given us *abundant mercy* in Christ; he has *begotten us again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*.

In Christ, each of God's saints has an inheritance that is *incorruptible and undefiled*. For each elect child who arose in Christ, our sins cannot corrupt or defile our inheritance. Our inheritance will not fade away. It is reserved in heaven for you who are God's elect because it is in Christ.

The peace of God is that we are *kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed*. This is the joy of God's salvation for each one given faith to rest in Christ alone: God shall keep us by his power through faith unto salvation.

Psalm 121:7: The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. 8: The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

There is nothing for us to do in order to complete our salvation. It is salvation *ready to be revealed*. Christ cried, "It is finished." He accomplished the justification of every elect child for whom he died! Every sinner begotten again to this living hope is complete in Christ--seated there with him now!

1 Peter 1: 6: Wherein ye greatly rejoice,...though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations [various, multiple trials]:...

We greatly rejoice in our living hope in Christ. *But for a season, if need be, we are in heaviness through manifold temptations [various trials]*. Paul said, "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." (2 Cor 6: 10)

Subject: God's Word Concerning Trials

Proposition: All God-given faith will be tried. But through tribulation God is growing each of his saints in faith to trust Christ alone for All! Judging by appearance is not faith. Judging righteous judgment is trusting Christ the just Judge.

ONLY FOR A SEASON

Remember, our trials are only *now for a season*. When the trial begins it feels like it will last forever. Heaviness is a good word for that aching sorrow we are in. When in heaviness we think that ache will last forever. But God promises the trial is only *now for a season*. We can be sure that our faithful Father has set the time. The compassion of our heavenly Father is sure to follow our grief.

Lamentations 3: 31: For the Lord will not cast off for ever: 32: But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.

The Lord never casts off forever those he has everlastingly loved.

Romans 8: 35: ho shall separate us from the love of Christ? [shall] tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

No matter which side of the sword you are on.

Romans 8: 37: Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38: For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39: Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Psalms 103: 10: He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. 11: For as the heaven is high above the earth, [so] great is his mercy toward them that fear him. 12 As far as the east is from the west, [so] far hath he removed our transgressions from us. 13: Like as a father pitieth [his] children, [so] the LORD pitieth them that fear him. 14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we [are] dust.

Our heart may be heavy for a season. But Christ is our Consolation who consoles us as only he can.

ONLY TO MEET OUR NEED

Remember, God only gives the trial to meet our need--*if need be*. Our heavenly Father is all-knowing God. All-wise. All-powerful. All-providing. The Lord knows our need and works all things together to meet our need, including the trial, including the gospel he provides.

Let me give you an example of God meeting our need. The message I preached Sunday on "Peace which Passes Understanding", I had my notes prepared Wednesday, March 27th. Reading the text that week, "the book of life" grabbed me so I preached on that. Six services went by then last Sunday, I preached that message--(March 27 to April 21). Monday and Tuesday I received texts saying how timely the message was. My reply is it is an example of God providing his word to meet our need when we do not even know our need.

The same is true with the various trials--they are sent to meet our need that we do not even know. Our heavenly Father does all things for his children's profit!

The trial is not only for the ones nearest to it but for the whole body--by God's grace, God's people are one in Christ. Therefore when one suffers, each member suffers with them; when one is bound in prison we are all bound with him (Heb 13: 3). Manifold temptations is a good word. There is the major trial. But with it usually comes multiple, varying trials. But as God teaches one member, he teaches each member.

What does God teach us?

God is weaning us from things below, setting our hearts more on Christ above. God is teaching us that only the eternal is lasting

Colossian 3: 1: If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2: Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3: For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4: When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Try to imagine the joy of our brethren who now appear with Christ in glory!

God is growing us in patience, experience, hope and love--the fruit of the Spirit is not of our producing or growing--fruit is of God.

Romans 5: 3:...we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4: And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

"Patience" is a different word but it carries the same meaning as Philippians 4, "*let your moderation be known unto all men. [be patient, mild, forbearing, knowing] The Lord is at hand.*"

One trial caused by other trials is we are so prone to judge by appearance. We are speaking of the trial of our faith. But when the trial comes we tend to fall into total unbelief because we judge by appearance rather than trusting Christ.

Imagine you did not have the scripture to tell you which sinners were truly God's saints. Think of living in Egypt when Moses killed the Egyptian. Moses had *some* understanding that God would use him to deliver Israel. He thought the Israelites would understand. But he left Egypt wanted for murder. If we were there, judging by appearance, it would have been easy to err in judgment concerning Moses.

What if you did not know what scripture says about Lot and you were Lot's neighbor. One day you see his daughters with child. You hear Lot, in his drunken altered state of mind, committed incest with his daughters. Judging by appearance we would never know Lot was a justified, righteous man in Christ his Surety.

What if we lived in David's day and heard about David committing adultery and committing premeditated murder of his friend? Judging by appearance we would not have known God said that David is a man after mine own heart.

Through tribulation, God grows us in the understanding that in our flesh dwells no good thing. There is no righteous judgment in our sin-nature, only Pharisaical. But the most heinous sin we see in others is in our own sin-nature. We may not have committed adultery outwardly but we have inwardly. We may not have committed idolatry outwardly but we have inwardly. We may not have committed murder outwardly but we have inwardly.

God gave the law to teach his people that Adam's one transgression in the garden was as heinous to God as the worst sin we know of. Adam's sin left the entire human race dead in sin. Yet our Savior saved Adam.

We come into this world ungodly in our nature and guilty of breaking the entire law of God in Adam. Yet, for those our Father chose in Christ, God loved us and sent his Son and justified us and called us. What about when a Moses or Lot or David or Abraham or Peter commits some heinous sin? What will God do?

Romans 5: 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10: For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Christ is the Shepherd of his sheep. He always recovers his straying sheep. Let your moderation be known to all men. The Lord is at hand! Wait on him! Our Master said, "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (Jn 7: 24). The safest, surest way to judge righteous judgment is to trust Christ the righteous Judge!

1 Corinthians 4:5:...judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man [all for whom Christ died] have praise of God.

James 2: 12: So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. 13: For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

When the trial comes and we err in judgment and sin in many other ways, it is God forgiving us of our unrighteous judgment and all our sins for the sake of Christ, by which God increases our faith to trust the just Judge and wait on him. Beholding how we judged by appearance and yet God forgave us, God sheds his unchangeable love abroad in our hearts. We see God's love really know no shadow of turning. He grows us to be patient and forbearing. He makes us air on the side of mercy. He makes us hope against hope.

We may not see how good could come out of the trial but God our Savior "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." (Eph 3: 20). Here is an example. Lot's sin produced the Moabites who produced Ruth who is the Lord's great grandmother according to the flesh.

We may find ourselves in uncharted waters. But nothing is new to our sovereign God. He charted the course before the foundation of the world. We are running the race that *he set before us*. So look to Christ and wait on him.

THE END PURPOSE OF EVERY TRIAL

1 Peter 1: 7: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

When pure gold is put in the fire, the fire consumes the dross surrounding the gold. It comes out of the fire only gold.

By the fiery trial, God consumes our dross--everything we trust, except Christ. So that when Christ appears, our faith will be found praising, honoring and glorying in Christ alone. And because Christ worked it God shall praise, honor and glorify us in Christ. That is what God is doing through these fiery trials.

The end of our faith will be the salvation of our souls. But he gives us a foretaste through each trial.

1 Peter 1: 8: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 9: Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls.

We get a foretaste of the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls, when God brings through each trial. That is when we behold Christ by faith most.

For God's saints, every trial is God our Father growing us in faith to know Christ is truly All. We start thinking we are righteous by our works and God sends a trial to show us all our Righteousness--our only Righteousness is Christ.

We begin thinking we are keeping ourselves, we are holy by our works, then God sends a trial and teaches us all our Sanctification is Christ. He alone keeps us separated unto him by his power.

We start finding comfort in things on earth and God sends a trial and we cannot find comfort anywhere or in anyone in this earth. Then Christ consoles us and we learn Christ is all our Consolation. We have no comfort but Christ.

We start finding temporary peace in this earth and God sends a trial and demolishes our vain peace. Then Christ speaks peace into our hearts and we find Christ is all our Peace. We have peace with God because Christ is our Peace. He reconciled us to God.

Through the trial, God shows us our flesh is only grass.

Yet, he is teaching us his grace is sufficient. He taught Paul this, not by removing the thorn, but by sustaining Paul through his suffering. That is what Christ is doing for each of his disciples through every trial.

Nobody but a child of God understands how suffering increases our faith, love, and hope and rejoicing in Christ. But true faith grows from the ground God has broken. True faith grows being watered by many tears.

At the end of our life you shall *receive the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls*. But right now God gives us a foretaste as he delivers us through the trial. Even now this is the end to which Christ brings us in each trial.

1 Peter 5:10: But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect [mature], stablish, strengthen, settle *you*.

It is so hard to think that this will be the outcome when we are in heaviness in the trial. But he will do so by making us behold our God who knows no variableness neither shadow of turning. His grace is immutable. His love is everlasting. Christ alone is truly our Salvation every moment, of every day, and for all eternity. In the fire of trial, Christ makes us know it more and more!

The apostle Peter suffered a great trial and Christ restored him and consoled him. So Peter comforts his brethren, saying to us,

1 Peter 5: Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: 7: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you

Each of God's saints shall be brought to glorify God for meeting our need in every trial. David said,

Psalm 119:75: I know, O LORD, that thy judgments [are] right, and [that] thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.

This is the sure promise from our God:

Psalm 34:19: Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.

When we are fresh out of the fire, our rejoicing after each trial is this. Kept by the power of God in the face of our unjust judgment and all our sins, when brought out of the fire we know for certain,

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Amen!