

## Thinking Biblically in the Face of Trials

**Text: 1 Peter 1:6-7** Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 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:

**Purpose:** The purpose of this section is to help these suffering Christians understand the nature of the trials they are facing, so that they can be faithful and grow in the midst of these trials.

**Proposition:** God wants you to be faithful and grow when you are tested.

**Interrogative:** How can we do that?

**Last week: We talked about how Christians can have stability in the midst of the ups and downs of the Christian experience.**

- Their lives must be rooted in the authority of scripture.
- Their expectations for the nature of the Christian life must be realistic.
- Their thinking must be grounded in the gospel.
- This week we build on what Peter said in general, and now we are going to apply his exhortation to a specific set of circumstances.

**Illustration: Young man embraces the gospel and is baptized:**

- He was preparing to get married, and now the woman he was to marry rejects him because of the stigma associated with Christians.
- His family is fearful that he will reject the traditional customs of their community like worshipping the Emperor or participating in fetish sacrifices to appease the gods associated with military might, productive crops, and fertile women.
- His work associates withdraw from him and spread evil rumors about his new association with Christian community in his city.
- The city authorities begin watching him closely, because they believe he is a potential threat to the wellbeing and stability of the city.
- He is involved in a serious accident that nearly costs him his life and the rumors intensify. Now his family and once close friends are further convinced that he has enraged the gods and therefore should be isolated.
- How is this young man going to respond to the circumstances that he is facing?
- What Biblical counsel does he need to face the terrible difficulties he now experiences as a young Christian?

**Truth 1: Faith: He needs to understand the nature of faith in the Christian experience: 1:7** 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 honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ...

**Several facts about a Christian's faith:**

- **Faith is always rooted in something: Romans 10:17 Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God...1 Peter 1:18-21** Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition

from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot... **Who by him do believe in God... James 1:17-19** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. **Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth...**

- **Faith is always focused on something: “who by Him do believe in God...”**
  - You cannot have faith without some truth claim to rely upon:
    - Our faith has a **mental** aspect to it
    - It also has an **emotional** aspect
    - It involves a **choice** to depend on the object
- **Genuine faith is sometimes substituted with a superficial replacement: Matthew 7:21-23** Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven... Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord... And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity...
  - Some people want a job, spouse, better life, deliverance from some terrible addiction, or a place to fit in, but they never truly embrace the essentials of the gospel.
  - Their true spiritual condition will one day be revealed, when their “faith” is put to the test.
- **Faith by its nature must be tested, stretched, and matured: “if need be” Example of Abraham referred to in James 2. Romans 1:16-17** The gospel of Christ... is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth... therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith.
- **Faith that is genuine though severely tested will pass the test: “the trial of your faith... might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ...”**
- **Genuine faith pleases God and is used to accomplish His glorious purposes: “might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ...”**

## **Truth 2: Suffering: He needs to understand the nature of suffering in the**

**Christian experience: 1:6** Ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations...

### **Several facts about Christian suffering:**

- **Suffering is a normal part of living in a fallen world: Romans 8:22-23** We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also... groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body...
- **The kinds of potential suffering we may encounter is limitless: “manifold temptations” James 1:2-4** My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.
- **Suffering for the Christian does not have to be crippling: “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season...” Proverbs 24:16** A just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again...
  - Greatly rejoice
  - Now for a season

- **Suffering will always come to an end** “Now for a season...”
- **Sometimes Christians have to suffer for God to accomplish His purposes in and through them:** “if need be” **Psalm 119:71** It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes... **Hebrews 12:11-13** Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet,
- **Suffering can knock us down and bring us to low places:** “Ye are in heaviness...” **Psalm 6:4-7** Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake. For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks? **I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears.** Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.
- **Christian suffering always serves redemptive purposes:**
  - Maturing their faith
  - Demonstrating its genuine nature
  - Opportunities to experience deeper levels of communion with God
  - Glory to God
  - Opportunities to demonstrate faithfulness for future reward
- **Christian suffering will not be forgotten:** “might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ...”

**Truth 3: Glory: He needs to understand God’s ultimate purpose: 1:7** might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ...

**Who is going to be praised?**

- Praise honor and glory for the Christian: when he is crowned for His faithfulness
- Praise, honor, and glory for God: **Revelation 4:10 -11** The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created...

**Two significant purposes:**

- **The believer’s transformation into Christlikeness: Romans 8:28-29** We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son...
- **The believer’s faithfulness rewarded: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27** Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. **2 Timothy 2:3-5** Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. **1 Timothy 4:16** Take heed unto thyself, and unto the

doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

**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.

**1 Corinthians 4:16-18** We faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

**Conclusion:** God wants you to be faithful and grow through testing. May we carefully apply these scriptures!