

Suffering Affliction: Testing God's Promises

DYG: Message Seventeen (030928AM)

Today we are looking at the 6th blessing that affliction can be in our lives.

Open with me to Psalm 119:107:

I am afflicted very much; Revive me, O Lord, according to Your word.

The 6th blessing of Affliction is: AFFLICTION FORCES US TO TEST HIS PROMISES: Psalm 119:107 I am afflicted (6031 physical) very much (same word as waters of flood and the plagues of Egypt); Revive me, O Lord, according to YOUR WORD (Hearing the Divine Voice walking us through life 1697).

1. **The word for “very much” is an adverb. It is the same Hebrew word used of the way the waters of the Flood covering the earth (Genesis 7.18-19) and of the way the plagues covered Egypt (Exodus 9.3 on cattle; Exodus 9.18 the hail; Exodus 10.14 the locusts).**
 - Genesis 7:18-19 The waters prevailed and **greatly** increased on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters. 19 And the waters prevailed **exceedingly** on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered.
 - **Do you feel like troubles are raining down like the Flood of Noah? Do you feel drowned by your pain and problems?**
 - **Then affliction can force you to test the promises of the Lord who wants to revive you by listening to the Lord’s Voice in His Word – guiding, leading, rescuing, and comforting!**
 - Exodus 9:3 behold, the hand of the Lord will be on your cattle in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the oxen, and on the sheep—a **very** severe pestilence.
 - Exodus 9:18 Behold, tomorrow about this time I will cause **very** heavy hail to rain down, such as has not been in Egypt since its founding until now.
 - Exodus 10:14 And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt. They were **very** severe; previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them.
 - **Are your life’s pains like the plagues sometimes? Another one coming and you haven’t even recovered from the last one?**
 - **Then affliction can force you to test the promises of the Lord who wants to revive you by listening to the Lord’s Voice in His Word – guiding, leading, rescuing, and comforting!**
2. **The word for “revive” is actually save my life and is the same Hebrew word as used for the rescue of Rahab from Jericho as the walls crumbled and everyone else was destroyed and she and her family alone were rescued (Joshua 2.13; 6.17, 25).**
 - Joshua 2:13 that you will **spare the lives** of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and that you will save us from death.” (NIV)

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- Joshua 6:17 Now the city shall be doomed by the Lord to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot **shall live**, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.
- Joshua 6:25 And Joshua **spared** Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.
 - **Do you ever feel like you are not going to survive what you are going through?**
 - **The pain, the hurt, the crumbling of everything you have held onto?**
 - **Then you feel like Rahab did when the city of Jericho was destroyed – and God rescued her, spared her, revived her as Psalm 119 says. And that is what He allows afflictions to do in our lives (tear things down) so He can allow us to test His promises (revive us, rescue us, spare us)!**
 - **Then affliction can force you to test the promises of the Lord who wants to revive you by listening to the Lord's Voice in His Word – guiding, leading, rescuing, and comforting!**
- 3. Afflictions allow us to experientially test God's promises.**
 - **Affliction usually increases, as we get older. But God's Word will always renew, refresh, and revive.**
 - ***Often we know so much more than we experience. Affliction is a reality check.***
 - ***Afflictions seem to grow through life to be more and more.***
 - ***After disasters people often listen better.***

Affliction is a blessing.

Trials refine us, pain opens our eyes to the realities of life, and sorrow tunes us in to what really matters. And on and on through life it goes. Traumatic and painful experiences actually help us be more aware and apart of the world around us.

This morning we find that when troubles come, and we experience affliction it forces us to test the Promises of God. Remember that this is the 6th point in our discovery in Psalm 119 -- of the Seven Blessings of Affliction.

AFFLICTION is used by God because it --

1. PUSHES US INTO GOD'S WORD: Psalm 119:50
2. PULLS US BACK ONTO THE PATH: Psalm 119:67
3. CHISELS GOD'S PLAN INTO OUR LIFE: Psalm 119:71
4. TEACHES US THAT GOD IS FAITHFUL: Psalm 119:75
5. KEEPS US FOCUSED ON OUR TEACHER: Psalm 119:92
6. FORCES US TO TEST HIS PROMISES: Psalm 119:107
7. BRINGS GOD TO OUR DOORSTEP: Psalm 119:153

Now to illustrate this point, turn with me to Hebrews 11.8-19.

In Hebrews 11 God briefly summarizes one of the greatest men of human history – Abraham.

- Abraham is the 2nd man that God chose to appear to after Adam.

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- God walks with Enoch, talks with Noah -- but APPEARS to Abraham. That makes Abraham very special.

But with every blessing comes responsibility. And with the appearance of God to Abraham at age 75, comes 100 years of lessons in the promises of God; and most of them would be called by us – afflictions.

Hebrews 11: 8-19 summarizes the entire life of Abraham as a life of faith. What made it a life that God says reflected enough faith to be called the ‘father of the faithful’? Simply this – Abraham did what the Lord asked him to do, and went on a journey even though he didn’t know where, he did not know how, he did not know when, and he did not know why!

Hebrews 11:8-19 Stand, read, pray!

So what are the promises that affliction forced Abraham to test? Look again at Hebrews 11:8-19. Here are four possible questions Abraham may have thought or at least felt:

1. **WHERE IS THIS PROMISED PLACE WE’RE GOING?** 8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, **not knowing where he was going.** 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.
 - **Sometimes we think that about Heaven right? Is it worth so much sacrifice here and now? Do I really need to be a pilgrim and stranger here?**
 - **When you face questions like this it is time to test the promises of God – and find that He is more than enough for whatever we need!**
2. **HOW WAS THIS PROMISED SON POSSIBLE?** 11 By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore from one man, **and him as good as dead,** were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.
 - **Sometimes we face obstacles that seem as impossible as a woman who never had children bearing a son at 90, with a hundred year old husband! What do you know God has called you to do that seems impossible to accomplish?**
 - **When you face questions like this it is time to test the promises of God – and find that He is more than enough for whatever we need!**
3. **WHEN WAS THIS PROMISED INHERITANCE HAPPENING?** 13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, **but having seen them afar off** were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.
 - **When you face questions like this it is time to test the promises of God – and find that He is more than enough for whatever we need!**
4. **WHY DOES GOD WANT THIS GREAT OF A SACRIFICE?** 17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, **offered up Isaac,** and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, “In Isaac your seed shall be called,” 19 concluding that

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God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

- **When you face questions like this it is time to test the promises of God – and find that He is more than enough for whatever we need!**

Lessons on Ending Well by Making the Right Choices Now from Psalm 71:1-24

1. **Test God's Promises by fleeing to the Lord instead of living in confusion.** Psalm 71:1 In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion.
2. **Test God's Promises by crying to the Lord before giving up to troubles.** Psalm 71:2 Deliver me in Your righteousness, and cause me to escape; Incline Your ear to me, and save me.
3. **Test God's Promises by running into God's Refuge – thus trusting God's Word more than his fears.** Psalm 71:3 Be my strong refuge, To which I may resort continually; You have given the commandment to save me, For You are my rock and my fortress.
4. **Test God's Promises by asking for God's help before becoming bitter.** Psalm 71:4 Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, Out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.
5. **Test God's Promises by remembering His faithfulness.** Psalm 71:5 For You are my hope, O Lord God; You are my trust from my youth.
6. **Test God's Promises by praising God for His plan for your life.** Psalm 71:6 By You I have been upheld from birth; You are He who took me out of my mother's womb. My praise shall be continually of You.
7. **Test God's Promises by allowing my life to testify for the Lord.** Psalm 71:7 I have become as a wonder to many, But You are my strong refuge.
8. **Test God's Promises by praising God so much -- no time was left for complaints.** Psalm 71:8 Let my mouth be filled with Your praise And with Your glory all the day.
9. **David had learned he could trust God to the end of life.** Psalm 71:9 Do not cast me off in the time of old age; Do not forsake me when my strength fails.
10. **Test God's Promises by taking your fears to God in prayer ("do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer. In His arms He'll tend and shield thee – thou shalt find a solace there!)** Psalm 71:10 For my enemies speak against me; And those who lie in wait for my life take counsel together, 11 Saying, "God has forsaken him; Pursue and take him, for there is none to deliver him." 12 O God, do not be far from me; O my God, make haste to help me!" In a modern sense David trusted God as much as in 911!

That's as far as we got last time. Now the rest of the Psalm:

11. **Test God's Promises by learning to never give up – even when alone, neglected, sick, ignored, rejected, maligned, and forgotten by everyone in the world ----- EXCEPT GOD!** Psalm 71:13 Let them be confounded and consumed Who are adversaries of my life; Let them be covered with reproach and dishonor Who seek my hurt. 14 But I will hope continually, And will praise You yet more and more.

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12. **Test God's Promises by finding ways to bring God into the conversation.** Psalm 71:15 My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness And Your salvation all the day, For I do not know their limits. **(When is the last time you brought up the subject of the things of God – into a conversation?)**
13. **Test God's Promises by humbly depending on the Lord.** Psalm 71:16 I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of Your righteousness, of Yours only.
14. **Test God's Promises by making a life long commitment to the Lord!** Psalm 71:17 O God, You have taught me from my youth; And to this day I declare Your wondrous works.
15. **Test God's Promises by serving God even when you get out of season, past your prime, and old and gray – by finding young people to invest your life into.** Psalm 71:18 Now also when I am old and gray headed, O God, do not forsake me, Until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come. **(Just like Bill Eddy!)**
16. **Test God's Promises by seeking to never stop experiencing God daily.** Psalm 71:19 Also Your righteousness, O God, is very high, You who have done great things; O God, who is like You? **(Just like Howard Smith)**
17. **Test God's Promises by seeing affliction as a blessing.** Psalm 71:20 You, who have shown me great and severe troubles, Shall revive me again, And bring me up again from the depths of the earth. **(Just like Ezra, Job, Joni Erikson Tada, Phillip Yancey, and many sweet saints suffering this morning!)**
18. **Test God's Promises by allowing the Lord be in charge of your life.** Psalm 71:21 You shall increase my greatness, And comfort me on every side.
19. **Test God's Promises by breaking from the crowd and stay involved in personal worship.** Psalm 71:22 Also with the lute I will praise You— And Your faithfulness, O my God! To You I will sing with the harp, O Holy One of Israel.
20. **Test God's Promises by staying enthusiastic for the Lord.** Psalm 71:23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to You, And my soul, which You have redeemed.
21. **Test God's Promises by allowing God invade all of your life.** Psalm 71:24 My tongue also shall talk (hagah = meditate) of Your righteousness all the day long; For they are confounded, For they are brought to shame Who seek my hurt.

Overview Chart on Affliction in Psalm 119

AFFLICTION: is described in Psalm 119 by two words; the first *onee* (6040) seems to portray an emotional state of misery as an affliction; the second word *anah* (6031) seems to portray a physical affliction of being bowed down or squished beneath a physical load.

1. **PUSHES US INTO GOD'S WORD: Only God's Word can really help us in afflictions – cards, visits, gifts, activities all can only offer temporary relief through distraction or amusement.** Psalm 119:50 This is my comfort in my affliction (6040 emotional), for **YOUR WORD (Reading Divine Word to find and follow God's Will for my life 565)** has given me life.
 - *Life often dulls or deadens us to spiritual things, so when God sends afflictions our way God's Word quickens us or "has given life".*

2. **PULLS US BACK ONTO THE PATH: A consistent life is built by afflictions.** God uses afflictions to pull us back and keep us on His path for our lives. Often we only call when we need something – so He gives us reason to call. **Psalm 119:67** Before I was afflicted (6031 physical) I went astray, But now I keep **YOUR WORD** (Reading Divine Word to find and follow God's Will for my life 565).
 - *Affliction can stop us from straying away from God, so “now I keep”.*
 - *Have you ever been driving late at night and slowly drifted to the side of the road? Remember when you hit those rumble strips and the way you jerked the wheel -- so that you got back on the road quickly? Afflictions are the rumble strips God uses to make us jerk our wheel of life to get us back on the road and to keep us from heading into the ditch!*
3. **CHISELS GOD’S PLAN INTO OUR LIFE:** There are truths and lessons we only can learn in the furnace of trouble. And remember in the fiery furnace of Daniel 3, only the things that kept them from walking properly were burned away! So affliction scrapes away what is not part of God’s plans for our lives – people, possessions, positions, and securities... **Psalm 119:71** It is good for me that I have been afflicted (6031 physical), That I may learn **YOUR STATUTES** (Following the Divine Plans to build Life the way God intends it to be).
 - *Afflictions can remind us in a life long way of God’s Hand, His plans for us. Some of our greatest moments we will always remember were forged in the furnaces of affliction.*
4. **TEACHES US THAT GOD IS FAITHFUL:** God’s unchanging faithfulness is learned best in affliction. Afflictions remind us that everything the Lord does is good, right, and the best thing there could be for us. **Psalm 119:75** I know, O Lord, that **Your judgments (Building Life upon God’s Unchanging Decisions)** are right, And that in faithfulness You have afflicted (6031 physical) me.
 - *Afflictions are very personal “me”.*
5. **KEEPS US FOCUSED ON OUR TEACHER:** The onset of troubles marks the beginning of a personal tutorial with our Divine Teacher. Affliction is an opportunity to “delight” () in Him or for us to “perish () in our troubles. **Psalm 119:92** Unless **YOUR LAW (Receiving Divine Instruction from the Divine Teacher that is perfect)**. had been my delight; I would then have perished in my affliction (6040 emotional).
 - *Affliction “perishes” us or squishes our lives under its weight.*
6. **FORCES US TO TEST HIS PROMISES:** Affliction usually increases, as we get older. But God's Word will always renew, refresh, and revive. **Psalm 119:107** I am afflicted (6031 physical) very much; Revive me, O Lord, according to **YOUR WORD (Hearing the Divine Voice walking us through life 1697)**.
 - *Often we know so much more than we experience. Affliction is a reality check.*
 - *Afflictions seem to grow through life to be more and more.*
 - *After disasters people often listen better.*
 - *Psalm 71 & 92*
 - *The word for “very much” is the same Hebrew word used of the waters of the Flood covering the earth (Genesis 7,18-19) and of the plagues covering*

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Egypt (Exodus 9.3 on cattle; Exodus 9.18 the hail; Exodus 10.14 the locusts).

- ***The word for “revive” is actually save my life and is the same Hebrew word as used for the rescue of Rahab from Jericho as the walls crumbled and everyone else was destroyed and she and her family alone were rescued (Joshua 2.13; 6.17, 25).***

- ***Afflictions allow us to experientially test God’s promises.***

7. BRINGS GOD TO OUR DOORSTEP: When Ezra said deliver me – he was asking the Lord to come to him with what he needed. Isn’t that what a deliveryman does? He brings exactly what we need? And that is the final blessing of affliction. Affliction comes with a promise from God for a special delivery. He comes right to us – with everything we need. **Psalm 119:153** Consider my affliction (6040 emotional), and deliver me, For I do not forget **YOUR LAW (Receiving Divine Instruction from the Divine Teacher that is perfect).**

- ***Afflictions continue, “consider” as You watch me.***

Pairs	Verse	Verse
1/7	Psalm 119:50 This is my comfort in my affliction; For Your word has given me life.	Psalm 119:153 Consider my affliction and deliver me, For I do not forget Your law.
2/6	Psalm 119:67 Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word.	Psalm 119:107 I am afflicted very much; Revive me, O Lord, according to Your word.
3/5	Psalm 119:71 It is good for me that I have been afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes.	Psalm 119:92 Unless Your law had been my delight; I would then have perished in my affliction.
4	Psalm 119:75 I know, O Lord, that Your judgments are right, And that in faithfulness You have afflicted me.	

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