

FIVE SMOOTH STONES

“Stones, Struggles and a Surge of Trouble”

(II Corinthians 1:8; 4:8-10)

Introduction:

“For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself.” (II Corinthians 1:8)

Now look at chapter 4, verse 8-10.

“We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.” (II Corinthians 4:8-10)

Today message is entitled, *“Stones, Struggles and a Surge of Trouble”*

“Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivered him out of them all.” (Psalm 34:19)

“No temptation (trouble) has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation (trouble) He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.” (I Corinthians 10:13)

There are several ways God will use a “surge of trouble” in our lives. First of all,

❖ To Direct Us

*"Stripes that wound cleanses away evil: and strokes reach the inward parts of the belly."
(Proverbs 20:30)*

- Trouble Directs Us to Truth
- Trouble Directs Us to Testify

God also uses trouble in our lives ...

❖ To Inspect Us

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations (different troubles); Knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience." (James 1:2-3)

"Lord, I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison and to death." (Luke 22:33)

Jesus responded,

"I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day, before you have denied three times that you know Me." (Luke 22:34)

Trouble also comes into our lives in order ...

❖ To Correct Us

- Some lessons we learn only through pain and failure.
- Sometimes we only learn the value of something by losing it.

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes." (Psalm 119:71)

Trouble and pain also come in order ...

❖ To Protect Us

- A Blessing in Disguise

Joseph said to his brothers in Genesis 50:20:

"But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive."

God is the only True "Surge Protector!"

- A Buffer from Deception

Real Measurements of Spirituality

- Christ Centered Life
- Word Based Life
- Humility
- Faithfulness
- Service

In addition to protecting us, trouble is also purposed to ...

❖ To Perfect Us

- Problems (when responded to correctly) are Character Revealers

Romans 5:3-4 says, *"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation works patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope."*

David said in Psalms 71:19-21,

"Your righteousness, O God, reaches the high heavens. You who have done great things, O God, who is like you? 20 You who have made me see many troubles and calamities will revive me again; from the depths of the earth you will bring me up again. 21 You will increase my greatness and comfort me again."

- Problems can Help Clarify Our Purpose in Life

Paul emphasized that in Romans 8:28: *"All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."*

But all of this intended ...

❖ To Project Us

"But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;" (Philippians 1:12)

- It is not the burdens of life that weigh us down; it is how we handle them.

"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." (Isaiah 40:31)

"Blessed is the man that endures temptation (trouble): for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life." (James 1:12)

- Trouble is simply the factory God is using to manufacture the right type of product in our lives – Faith and Durability!
 - When Adam and Eve were in trouble, God stepped in and met their need.
 - Noah's problems were solved by a God who cared for him.
 - Joseph was released from prison;
 - the children of Israel were delivered as they crossed the Red Sea;
 - Elijah got God's help in getting some rain;
 - Paul and Silas were set free from the Philippian jail.
 - And God's saving hand is at work longing to touch and heal broken lives!