

“What Trials Produce,” Part 2 - 2 Corinthians 1:5-6 – June 26th, 2016

- Today's teaching will be part two of a series I've titled, "What Trials Produce."
- One of the life changing truths of our Christian faith is God allows fiery trials in our life, to accomplish His purpose for our life.
- This can create a problem for us when we in the trial misinterpret, and misunderstand, the goodness and nature of Who God is.

- Sadly many a believer in Christ can unnecessarily have a crisis of faith when they see their trial through the lens of a cruel God.
- Actually, it's for this very reason that often times, God in His love will allow us to go through difficult times of trials and testing.
- This because, in and through the trial God reveals Himself in new ways that we could not have otherwise seen, absent the trial.

1 Peter 4:12-16 (NIV) — 12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15 If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. 16 However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.

- Here, Peter is echoing Paul in the sense that fiery trials are to be seen as a "badge of honor," if they are Christ's sufferings.
- In other words, this presupposes we're not suffering the consequences of our own sin, such as murder, stealing or gossiping.
- The point being is suffering for Jesus Christ, or being persecuted because of Jesus Christ is for His glory and our betterment.

- Truth be made known many of the trials we experience are an answer to a very dangerous prayer we prayed for God to use us.
- Like Jacob, God's response is that He can't bless us and use us until He first breaks us so that we can in fact be used of Him.
- It has been my own personal experience in my walk with the Lord, that God was unable to use me, until He had first broken me.

It was A.W. Tozer who famously said, 'It is doubtful whether God can bless a man greatly until He has hurt him deeply.'

- It's for this reason we have passages such as the one before us today, and the many other's like them that deal with suffering.
- It's important to understand that our suffering isn't for the sake of being a martyr for the cause rather; it's for what it will cause.
- By that I mean suffering causes me to seek the Lord as to the reason He has allowed me to experience the suffering and trial.

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV) — 11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

- One of the things I'm learning as a Christian first and pastor second is that God will first prepare us for what He prepares for us.
- I think of Joseph who went through such unspeakable pain and suffering for some seventeen years, as God was preparing him.
- Had God not allowed him to go through everything he went through I doubt very much that God could have used him as He did.

- Enter our text today, where we find another one of the reasons that trials produce those needed preparations for God to use us.
- Namely, that of patient endurance in the Lord, which is in concert with both the peace with the Lord, and comfort from the Lord.

3. Endurance in the Lord (Verses 5-6)

- v5 Paul says that just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ as well.
- v6 He says if we're distressed it's for your comfort and salvation, which produces a patient endurance of their same sufferings.
- This happens to be one of those places in God's Word where knowing the original language is germane to our understanding.

- The Greek word for endurance is "hupomone," which carries with it the idea of getting through it, and being victorious over it.
- The reason I mention this is because we're prone to see endurance as merely hanging in there, as it were, until the trial is over.
- To see endurance only that way is to miss the entire purpose of the trial I'm enduring, such that, it strips it of the victory from it.

As one commentator so aptly said it, [Endurance] isn't the idea of passive, bleak acceptance, but of the kind of spirit that can triumph over pain and suffering to achieve the goal. It is the spirit of the marathon runner, not of the victim in the dentist's chair.

James 1:2-4, 12 — 2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. ...12 Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

James 5:7-11 (NIV) — 7 Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. 8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. 9 Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! 10 Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

John 16:33 (NIV) — 33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

- In closing, I would like to offer a word of encouragement to those who today find themselves suffering in the midst of a fiery trial.
- The Lord may not get you out of it but He absolutely will see you through it; you will not be overcome by it, you will overcome it.