

# Tested Faith: Unshakable Hope

*James 1:1–18; 1 Peter 1 & 4; 2 Corinthians 1*

## Main Idea

Trials are not *\*if\** but *\*when\**. God uses them to produce steadfast faith in us, and because of Christ's cross and resurrection, we can have real joy *\*in\** the suffering—not because it doesn't hurt, but because He is with us and our hope is secure.

### 1. Trials Are Certain

- "Count it all joy... *\*when\** you meet trials of various kinds" (James 1:2).
- Trials = suffering, affliction, danger, temptation, sickness, pressure.
- We "fall into" them like a snare—often without warning.
- Don't be surprised (1 Peter 4:12); following Jesus includes suffering.

### 2. What God Produces Through Trials: Steadfastness

- "The testing of your faith produces steadfastness" (James 1:3).
- Trials strip away false supports and drive us back to Christ alone.
- Goal: maturity—"perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (James 1:4).
- Like Paul: "that we might not rely on ourselves but on God who raises the dead" (2 Cor. 1:9).

### 3. Joy and Suffering Go Together

- A. Joy is not pretending the pain isn't real.
- B. Scripture always holds them together:
  - James 1 – trials and joy
  - 1 Peter 1 – "grieved by various trials" yet "inexpressible joy"
  - 2 Corinthians 1 – share in Christ's sufferings and His comfort
- C. We have joy because:
  - Christ died and rose; death is not the end.
  - Our suffering is temporary; our inheritance is eternal.
  - Christ is with us in the trial by His Spirit.

### 4. Trials, Temptation, and Desire

- Trials expose and intensify our desires.
- We're tempted to escape instead of endure.
- God doesn't tempt us; sin grows when desire is embraced apart from Him (James 1:13–15).
- Jesus was tempted in every way, yet without sin:
- He answered Satan with Scripture.
- He succeeded where Adam and Eve failed.
- In Christ, sin and temptation no longer get the last word.

### 5. Christ's Own Sufferings: Big and Small

- He suffered "big" things: rejection, beatings, the cross.
- He also suffered "daily" things:
  - Misunderstanding by His family
  - Rejection by His hometown
  - Abandonment by His friends
- He took on hunger, thirst, fatigue—our full humanity—without sin.

- There is no part of your suffering He does not understand and intend to redeem.

## **6. Comforted to Comfort**

- God is “the Father of mercies and God of all comfort” (2 Cor. 1:3).
- He comforts us in *\*all\** our affliction so that we can comfort others.
- Your suffering is not wasted; God uses it to help you serve and encourage.
- Example: Barbara’s “All glory to God” from her deathbed—joy in the fire.

## **7. Your Identity and Hope in Trials**

### **You are:**

Chosen, guarded by God’s power (1 Peter 1:1–5).

Born again to a *\*living hope\** through Jesus’ resurrection.

### **Your inheritance is:**

Imperishable, undefiled, unfading—kept in heaven for you.

Now: “grieved by various trials.”

Future: “inexpressible joy” when Christ is revealed and the outcome—“the salvation of your souls”—is fully seen (1 Peter 1:6–9).

## **Reflection Question**

Where am I in a trial right now—whether “big” or “daily”—and what has it revealed about what I truly trust (myself, others, circumstances... or Christ)?

Take time this week to name that trial honestly before God and ask:

“Lord, what are You showing me about my heart, and how are You calling me to trust You more deeply here?”

## **Challenge for the Week**

### **Pray for Joy in the Trial, Not Just Escape**

1. Each day this week, bring your current trial(s) to God in prayer.
2. Read James 1:2–4 and 1 Peter 1:3–9 at least once.
3. Pray something like this:  
 Lord, don’t just take this away. Meet me here. Use this to make my faith steadfast. Give me joy in You *\*within\** this trial, because of who You are and what Christ has done.
4. Look for one person in your life who is also suffering, and share a brief word of comfort with them—out of the comfort you are receiving from God. Pray with them if you can.