

## Forged In Faith - August 28, 2022

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God shapes us, molds us, and forges us to be more like Jesus through what we experience in life. Our faith is precious to the Lord.

### Psalm 66:8-12 NIV

Praise our God, all peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard;  
<sup>9</sup> he has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping.<sup>10</sup> For you, God, tested us; you refined us like silver.<sup>11</sup> You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs.  
<sup>12</sup> You let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance.

### Definition of 'Forged'

1. Formed by pressing or hammering with or without heat.
2. Made into a desired shape by heating and hammering
3. Made falsely, especially with intent to deceive

Faith is not the denial of facts or difficult circumstances. Faith simply believes God is greater than what we face. You cannot truly be the man or woman of faith you want to be if you do not mature in faith. And you cannot become a man or woman of mature faith without difficulty, trial, and testing.

"Faith is not the denial of facts or difficult circumstances. Faith simply believes *God is greater* than what we face."

We are developing the character of perseverance in the asking, seeking, and knocking. Learning to put our trust in the goodness of our God daily. **The purpose of this life is not to be kept from everything but to discover we will be kept in everything.** God will not settle for you pretending. He does not want you to fake it 'til you make it. He is determined that you make it.

Psalms: Two-thirds of the Psalms are laments

- The writers are looking back through the history of Israel. The good, the bad. The seasons of blessing and the seasons of disobedience and sin.
- Seasons filled with questions, difficulties, and challenge. But also, the faithfulness of God to preserve them through it all.
- They lament the situation they are in, yet always turn back to praise and confidence in the faithfulness of God.

Psalm 66:8 "Praise our God, all peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard;"

### One of the keys to faith is to praise *in the midst of...*

God is faithful. He is consistent. He is unchanging. We must put praise in our mouth and declare it.

The faithfulness of God is our anchor. When life throws us off balance, we set our eyes, our hearts, and hopes on God's unfailing love and His goodness and faithfulness.

9 "he has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping."

### **If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail.**

- If you believe God is angry at you, you will see everything in life as a His correction
- Have you ever thought: 'God must be mad at me'?
- Remember the vine and the Vinedresser? God is intimately involved with us, even when pruning.
- Prune: Lift up, cut back and cut away

<sup>10</sup>For you, God, tested us; you refined us like silver. ( Fire and refining)

God refines our faith by fire

- How refining happens: the main tool is heat
- In metallurgy, refining consists of purifying an impure metal.
- The temperature you need to melt gold is 1,948 degrees Fahrenheit
- Gold is a precious metal, and it is a malleable metal
- 1 gram of gold (the size of a grain of rice) can be beaten and spread large enough to cover 1 sq. meter
- The purer the gold, the more pliable
- The purer our faith, the more pliable to His will we become
- Refined: Holy Spirit conviction, correction, and redirecting - God begins to deal with our sin through conviction, the things you once did now you cannot because of your conscience
- We become aware that our sin or unaddressed issues are a real problem
- Some of those difficulties are our own decisions and we have reaped what we have sown

### **Refined: Ownership vs. stewardship of the life God has given: Ambitions, dreams, control, even control of our own life**

- When Pastor Jason first met his father-in-law, he told Jason "Your dreams have to die. But God will resurrect them in His time, in His way."
- Hebrews 12:7-11 NIV "Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? <sup>8</sup>If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. <sup>9</sup>Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live!<sup>10</sup>They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness.<sup>11</sup>No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."
- We are being forged in faith. He tests our hearts, our motives, our character.

When we get squeezed, stuff comes out.

- When life happens and it happens in a way we don't like, how do we respond? What comes out of our mouth about God? Others?

- Sometimes God allows us to become aware of our heart through situations and testing we find ourselves in. Difficulties, trials, frustrations and even loss or tragedies bring things to the surface, like gold being purified.

Deuteronomy 8:2 NKJV <sup>2</sup> "And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not."

- What has God need revealing about your heart through situations? What has God been refining? Have you engaged God with this question?

"<sup>11</sup>You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs."

Israel had a repeating pattern. God would bless them. They would eventually lose connection and choose to disobey. God would give them over and enemies of Israel would conquer them. They would cry out and God would hear and respond.

Burdens: Affliction and difficulty:

- **Every situation we encounter in life is not necessarily that we have done something bad.**
- **And everything that happens in life is not caused by God's hand**
- We live in an imperfect, fallen world
- Within God's sovereignty He allows humans to make decisions. And some of those decisions affect us
- God will use life's difficulties to deepen faith, deepen trust, deepen endurance, and call us deeper into relationship with Him.
- Life can cause affliction and difficulty
- Living the Gospel, following Jesus can cause affliction
- To turn the other cheek, walk a second mile, if they ask for your shirt give them your coat as well, to pray for those who viciously use you, to forgive 70 times 7 times every day...this does not fit in our culture. This is the "upside-down kingdom".

"In life we often hold hands with *blessing* and sorrow at the same time."  
-Rick Warren

God forges depth of faith through difficulty, and it can feel like a burden.

Learning to walk in obedience to the word of God

- Hebrews 5:7-9 NIV <sup>7</sup> During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.<sup>8</sup> Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered<sup>9</sup> and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him
- Jesus even cried out for deliverance. God heard His but He still had to go through.

Learning to honor authority can be a burden:

- Sometimes we are being "hemmed in" by God.

- God may not give us an 'out'. We may hear 'yes, no, wait', or nothing.
- God tests our attitudes and appetites through authority.
- Would you still follow God if God changed your dream?
- King David was told "no" to his dream, but that his son would accomplish it.
- Are we willing to do for God what we may not see happen in our lifetime?
- What about the burden of trusting the Lord with what you don't understand?

Romans 12:12 NIV <sup>12</sup> Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

<sup>12</sup> You let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and water,

*"In life we often hold hands with blessing and sorrow at the same time."* -Rick Warren

God secures our faith through His faithfulness

- 1 Peter 1:7 NLT <sup>7</sup> These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.

Psalm 66:8-12 <sup>12</sup> You let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance.

**Don't miss this: "but you brought us to a place of abundance."**

1 Corinthians 15:48-49 NKJV

- The fall of man and the redemption of man
- <sup>48</sup> As was the <sup>[a]</sup> man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. <sup>49</sup> And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we <sup>[b]</sup> shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.
- This is a promise: God is at work in all things to *make us like Jesus*

"The purpose of this life is not to be kept *from* everything but to discover we will be *kept in everything*."

When trouble comes:

- Ask, seek, knock
- Use Luke 11 as a framework to navigate daily life
- Seek out your Father
- Pray for His kingdom and His will to be done in what you are facing
- Know that, in all things, God wants to bring us into abundance
- Know that God will meet you and *see you through*

**Reflection questions:**

- When life happens and it happens in a way you don't like, how do you respond? What comes out of our mouth about God? Others?
- What has God need revealing about your heart through situations?
- What has God been refining?
- Have you engaged God with these questions?
- Are you willing to do for God what you might not see happen in your lifetime?
- Are you able to trust the Lord with what you don't understand?