

“Faith on Trial”

(James 1:2-4)

Introduction

- There is a popular phrase in our culture that accurately sums up the message for us today. The phrase is, “No pain, no gain!” Although this expression cannot be found in a verse of the Bible, the concept it conveys is found within, and throughout, all the pages of sacred Scripture. It expresses a truth that many would prefer not to be true. Namely, that the most valuable things in life are often obtained at a price. Conversely, the things that cost nothing in this life are rarely, if ever, really important or significant.
- Most of us have a natural aversion to pain and sorrow. On the flipside, most of us have a natural attraction to pleasure and comfort. We tend to view suffering as something that is bad – something that has no redeemable or beneficial quality – something that is to be avoided at all cost. This perspective is not formed from a biblical worldview.

Unfortunately, this often spills into the Christian life. Christians often recoil or scoff at anything that may be uncomfortable, difficult or painful – and even doubt God’s sovereignty and/or His goodness in times of suffering. In addition, many Christians avoid spiritual growth and spiritual discipline like the plague. It would seem that in the world of Christianity the all too common, yet unspoken, belief is: “No gain, no pain.”

- Scripture teaches that there are many blessings associated with the sufferings of trials and sorrows. This is especially true for the Christian. These blessings are not always readily evident or easily understood, but they are nonetheless taught in God’s Word and ought to be embraced by every Christian. These biblical truths can guide us through, and protect us in the midst of, various trials and sufferings we face in this life. While we do not have perfect foresight, we do have God’s Word as “*a lamp to [our] feet and a light to [our] path[s]*” (see Ps.119:105). Like a lighthouse, these truths can guide us through the storms of life and keep us from being dashed against the rocks of suffering.

✓ **Illust:** Charles Spurgeon said: “They who dive in the sea of affliction bring up rare pearls” (sermon: “The Golden Key of Prayer”; March 12, 1865).

- The Bible is replete with verses/passages on suffering – e.g., the story of Job, the lament Psalms, the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels, and the New Testament letters. Perhaps the more concise as well as thorough teaching on trials comes from the book of James (most likely written by James, the oldest half-brother of Jesus, sometime during the middle of the first century).

As a leader in the Christian church in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Gal.2:12), faithfully professing and proclaiming Jesus as the Christ in the epicenter of Judaism, James who was no stranger to suffering (according to the first century Jewish Josephus, James was martyred around 62 A.D.). The book of James is written to Christians who were also no strangers to suffering. It is therefore not surprising that after an initial (one-verse) greeting, James immediately addresses the topic of suffering.

James 1:2-4 ~ “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

- In just three verses, James outlined several truths regarding the Biblical perspective on suffering.

1. The Reality of Trials (vs.2)

- First, we need to see and understand that Christians are not immune to sufferings and/or sorrows. This is blatantly contrary to what is taught by those who espouse the heretical “prosperity” and “health and wealth” false gospels (taught by the likes of Joel Osteen, T.D. Jakes, Kenneth Copeland, Joyce Meyer, Paula White, etc.). In the Bible, Christians are never promised an easy, painless, wealthy, or sorrow-free life. In fact, it is quite the opposite.

John 15:20 ~ “Remember the word that I said to you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted [*diōkō*] me, they will also persecute [*diōkō*] you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.”

John 16:1-2 ~ “I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. ²They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.”

John 16:33 ~ “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation [*thlipsis*]. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

Acts 14:21-22 ~ “When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, ²²strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations [*thlipsis*] we must enter the kingdom of God.”

2 Tim 3:12 ~ “Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted [*diōkō*]”

1 Peter 1:6 ~ “In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various [*peirasmos*] trials”

1 Peter 4:12 ~ “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial [*pyrōsis*] when it comes upon you to test [*peirasmos*] you, as though something strange were happening to you.”

➤ We see this in the passage we are studying this morning: “*when you meet trials of various kinds*” (vs.2). It is not *if* you meet trials, but *when* you meet trials. While the word “*when*” (*hotan*) does not always refer to an absolute certainty, it does indicate that trials are to be expected as a normative part of the Christian’s life.

God’s Word never instructs Christians to pray for financial riches (in fact, it warns against the desire to be rich; see 1Tim.6:9-10); it never tells us to cast out the spirit of poverty, it never commands Christians to renounce or rebuke disease or disability [or to literally attempt to blow Covid-19 away with “the wind of God”, as Kenneth Copeland tried to do (to no success whatsoever)].

Such false teachers (heretics) not only malign the Word of God and blaspheme the character of God, they also gives naïve Christians a false expectation of the Christian life. Which, when their lives are not free from sorrows and trials, naturally leads them to question their salvation as well as the truth and goodness of God.

➤ As Christians, we need to know that God has not promised us a life free from sorrows and trials (see Lk.9:23-25). While free from much of the sufferings that result from sin, the Christian is not free from the normal sufferings of this human life. In addition, the Christian has the added sufferings of opposition and persecution they will endure for simply being a faithful Christian in a non-Christian world.

This naturally raises the question, “Why become a Christian if my life is more prone to suffering?” The mature Christian gives the following declaration: We would rather go through any suffering with God than experience no suffering without Him! That is, we would rather go through the fire of persecution and trials with God – in us, around us, leading us, and working through us – than we would ever desire to go through the greatest things this world has to offer without God. We know that this world is not our home – that this is not “our best life” – and that these worldly sufferings simply cannot compare to the glories that await us in heaven (Rom.8:18; 2Cor.4:17; Heb.11:26).

➤ With this said, we as Christians must realize that we cannot look at suffering the same way the world does. The world typically sees suffering as only a negative. From the world’s perspective, suffering has no redeemable value; as only bad, and nothing good. For the Christian, however, we must view suffering similar to how God does. And the plain truth is that God does not view all suffering as bad. Sometimes, God’s greatest gifts and blessings comes through trials and sorrows.

2. The Response to Trials (vs.2)

- The only imperative verb (command), in this three-verse passage of Scripture, is the very first word: **“Count”** (vs.2). The Greek word (*hēgeomai*) means to “think about”, “consider”, or “calculate.” However, this is much more than merely a cursory or temporary thought. The word is translated **“leader”** (Lk.22:26; Heb.13:7, 17, 24), **“ruler”** (Matt.2:6; Acts 7:10), and **“chief”** (Acts 14:12). The idea here is that such thoughts rule (influence) our attitudes and actions. We are not to be led by our feelings but by the truth of God’s Word. This may be especially pertinent in times of sufferings and sorrows, as trials can arouse in us many strong feelings. While feelings are always real, they are not always right!
- We are commanded to **“Count”** our trials with **“joy”** (vs.2). In fact, we are commanded to count our trials with **“all joy”** (vs.2). To be sure, this does not mean that cannot grieve in times of sorrow (Jn.11:35; Rom.12:12; 1Thess.4:13), or that we respond to every trial with a giddy happiness (Jn.11:33; 12:27; 13:21).

The word **“joy”** (*chara*) does not refer to a temporal or superficial happiness, but a “calm delight” or a “rejoicing contentment.” We are not to find enjoyment in trials, but joy in trials. This joy is not predominantly emotional; it is spiritual. It is a deep and settled trust in God which results in being thankful/grateful to God in all circumstances. Joy is not only how we are to respond to trials (see Eph.5:20; 1Thess.5:18), it is that which leads us through our trials.

Heb 12:2 ~ “looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy [*chara*] that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”

- In fact, we are commanded to respond to trials with **“all joy”** (vs.2; *pas chara*). This refers to a joy that is uncontaminated or undiminished [“*nothing but joy*” (NET); “*great joy*” (HCSB); “*exceeding joy*” (TYNDALE); “*pure joy*” (NIV)].

When we **“meet”** (*peripipto*; lit. fall into) various kinds of trials, we are to respond in a way that is consistent with the character and nature of what it means to believe in and know Christ. The Apostle Paul – who wrote about two-thirds of our New Testament and was no stranger to suffering and persecution (cf. 2Cor.11:23-33) – often wrote about the joy Christians should have when facing and enduring various kinds of trials.

Phil 4:4-7 ~ [the apostle Paul, writing from a prison cell – imprisoned for believing in and preaching Jesus Christ]: “Rejoice [*chairō*] in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice [*chairō*]. ⁵Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Luke 6:22-23 ~ “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! ²³Rejoice [*chairō*] in that day, and leap for joy [*skirtaō*], for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.”

- No doubt, the chief human suffering we have recorded in the pages of Scripture (not counting the torture and execution of Christ; see Heb.12:2) is found in the person and book of Job. The devastation that we read about in the book of Job is, in a word: devastating. Job’s oxen were stolen and some servants were killed (1:13-15), his sheep and some more servants were killed (1:16), his camels were stolen and more servants killed (1:17), and then all seven of his sons and all three of his daughters were killed under a house that collapsed because of a strong wind (1:18-29). Remember, all this done by the hand of Satan but under the watchful eye of the sovereign almighty God. To be sure, this horrific suffering is both unthinkable and incredible. As we read the words of this opening chapter, one question almost assuredly comes to our mind: “How did Job respond to all of this? How was his faith affected by all this calamity?”

Job 1:20-22 ~ “Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. ²¹And he said, ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.’ ²²In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.”

Job 13:15 ~ “Though he [i.e., God] slay me, I will hope in him ...”

- How could Job respond in this way? This is truly amazing. All this destruction and devastation happens to Job and he did not doubt God, let alone forsake Him. But that is the point. Job resolutely and passionately believed in God! God is not Job’s “lucky rabbit’s foot” or “get out of hell free card”, but his holy, loving, sovereign, good, just, and Heavenly Father. His faith in God was not shaken, because he truly and fervently believed in God as God. This is not his parent’s God, or the “god-of-the-moment” for Job. Rather, he faithfully believed in God and no hardship, suffering, persecution, or loss would separate him from his God! His love of God had superseded his family, his possessions, his wealth, and even his own life. While Job was not impervious to sadness and despair (see Job 3), his faith in God was not tied to his earthly circumstances or his personal wellbeing!
- This, I propose, is not unusual or radical or extreme Christianity. This is real and genuine and true Christianity! I contend that God does not just want us to endure our suffering. He wants us to embrace our suffering; He does not simply want us to go through suffering but to grow through suffering; He does not ask us to worship Him in spite of our suffering but in and because of our suffering.

Acts 5:40-42 ~ “... when [the Sanhedrin] had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. ⁴²And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.”

Acts 16:22-25 ~ “The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. ²³And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. ²⁴Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. ²⁵About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them”

- Without question, the pinnacle example of joy in the face of suffering is Jesus Christ. The sinless Son of God left the right hand of the throne of God in heaven to die on the cross at the hands of sinful men for sins He did not commit (Acts 2:22-24). The saying is true, “God’s Son was without sin, but not without suffering.” What possible good could come from this? For the Christian we celebrate Christ’s death as “Good Friday.” Why? Because it was through Jesus’ death that we have life, and life eternal. Jesus’ suffering and death brought us salvation and life. But how did Jesus respond to this unimaginably intense, humiliating, and torturous suffering? The writer of Hebrews instructs us to be like Christ:

Heb 12:2-3 ~ “looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. ³Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.”

- Look again at James 1:2. Notice that James encompasses our suffering as “*trials of various kinds*” (vs.2). The Greek word translated “*trials*” (*peirasmos*) can refer to either a temptation to sin (cf. Matt.4:1; Heb.4:15) or a testing of one’s faith (cf. 2Cor.13:5; 1Pet.4:12). In many ways, these two definitions are synonymous with one major exception – God will certainly test our faith, but He will never tempt us to sin.

James 1:13-15 ~ “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God,’ for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

- To be sure, we can suffer through “*various kinds*” (vs.2; *poikilos*) of trials. We all are tempted, tested, and tried in various ways. What can be a severe trial for one Christian, may not be for another (and vice versa). Whatever the trial, we are to consider (think of, not necessarily feel) that trial with a joy in God – not with the trial itself per se, or with a feigned apathy to pain, but a joy in knowing that God seeks to use the trial for our good and His glory (to be sure, easier said than done).

3. The Reason for Trials (vs.3)

- The various trials we endure are a “*testing*” (*dokimion*; a proving or trying experience) of our faith in God. Trials do not reveal anything new about us to God (who knows all things perfectly), they reveal the truth about ourselves – the depth, veracity and capacity of our faith – to ourselves. They expose us and display, right before our very eyes, our true faith in God. Trials serve as the crucible which proves or disproves the genuineness and depth of our faith. Through trials our faith is laid open and bare before us, in the midst of the poverty of our pain more than it is ever revealed to us in the prosperity of our pleasures. Trials are like a mirror that reflect the (sometimes unflattering) truth regarding our faith in God. This “*testing*” puts our faith on trial.
- The truth is, “trials” (*peirasmos*) and “testing” (*dokimion*) go hand-in-hand:

James 1:2-3 ~ “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials [*peirasmos*] of various kinds, ³for you know that the testing [*dokimion*] of your faith produces steadfastness.”

James 1:12 ~ “Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial [*peirasmos*], for when he has stood the test [*dokimos*] he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.”

1 Peter 1:6-7 ~ “In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials [*peirasmos*], ⁷so that the tested [*dokimion*] genuineness of your faith – more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested [*dokimazo*] by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

- Suffering and pain, perhaps like nothing else, arrests our attention and awakens our minds to the realization that we are dependent on and desperate for God. Conversely, prosperity and comfort can sometimes deaden the awareness that we are dependent and desperate for God and lull us into the false notion that we can live independent and aloof without Him.
- ✓ Illust: C.S. Lewis stated, “God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to us in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: It is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world” (*The Problem of Pain*; ch.6).
- Like a splash of ice-cold water, suffering will jolt us into the recognition that we desperately need God. It has been said, “In times of crisis God hears many strange voices.” These voices are not “strange” because God does not know who they are, but because these voices only cry out in times of suffering. Would a loving God cause or allow suffering in the life of one of His children in order to get his/her attention and bring them back to Himself? Absolutely. Would we not rather go through momentary (in light of eternity) suffering and pain in this life and spend eternity in heaven with God, or go through this life problem-free and spend eternity in hell with no personal or loving relationship with God? In this, suffering can be seen as a blessing as it creates a dependent and desperate relationship with God.

Rom 5:3-5 ~ “Not only that, but we rejoice [*kauchaomai*] in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance [*hypomonē*], ⁴and endurance [*hypomonē*] produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”

➤ James wrote that these trials, which test our faith, produce “*steadfastness*” (vs.3; *hupomone*; to remain/abide under). Literally that phrase can be translated in this way: “the testing of your faith is perfecting patience (or perseverance).” One thing is for sure, the trials that you and I endure (especially for and because of Christ) do not come to us without purpose or reason. Through them, God is perfecting us and our faith in Him. Every trial has a divine purpose and goal. Every testing has gone through the sovereign hands of God. Every hardship or difficulty we face in this life can have a God-centered and God-glorifying result. Even if – in one sense – these trials are not directly sent from God, He desires to use each and every one of them to perfect the endurance of our faith in Him.

✓ Illust: Charles Spurgeon, the famous and brilliant theologian and preacher of the 19th century (who suffered from gout, rheumatism and Bright's disease (inflammation of the kidneys) which eventually combined to take his life at the age of 57) said:

“... so far as personal sorrows are concerned, it would be a very sharp and trying experience to me to think that I have an affliction which God never sent me – that the bitter cup was never filled by His hand, that my trials were never measured out by Him, nor sent to me by His arrangement of their weight and quantity. Oh, that were bitterness indeed!” (sermon: “Woe and Weal”; published March 2, 1911).

➤ The apostle Paul, no stranger to suffering (2Cor.11:23-28), echoed these words:

2 Cor 4:16-18 ~ “So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For this light momentary affliction is preparing [*katergazomai*] for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”

➤ We must learn to see our trials from an eternal perspective, and not just as a fleeting and purposeless event in life. As Christians, we are to rejoice in our sufferings because in them God is purifying and perfecting us to be like Christ. Therefore, it is most certainly true to say that trials – especially those resulting from persecution – are from God and for Him. From this perspective we see our trials as a priceless treasure – a rare jewel given to us by God Himself.

Ps 119:50 ~ “This is my comfort in my affliction, that your promise gives me life.”

Ps 119:67 ~ “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word.”

Ps 119:71 ~ “It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.”

Ps 119:75 ~ “I know, O Lord, that your rules are righteous, and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me.”

Ps 119:92 ~ “If your law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction.”

➤ Don't waste your trials! They may be the very jewel that God has ordained for you to experience in order that you may display Him in your life and to the world. According to Scripture, God does not view suffering like most people do. While humans tend to see suffering as only bad, God – in His perfect and supreme wisdom – may be using it for our good and His glory.

4. The Result of Trials (vs.4)

➤ Perseverance (“*steadfastness*”; *hupomonē*; vs.3, 4) is not the supreme goal – perfection in Christ is. Perseverance is the means in which we can obtain our true goal of perfection in Christ (see Matt.5:48; Eph.4:13; Col.1:28). It is interesting to point out that, in verse four, James used the same one Greek word for our two English words “*full*” (*teleios*) and “*perfect*” (*teleios*) [similar to the word (*telelestai*) Jesus spoke from the cross when He said, “*It is finished*” (Jn.19:30)]. The word carries the sense of something that is completed, fully developed or (in that sense) perfected. “*And let endurance have its perfect effect, so that you will be perfect and complete*” (NET). James further established this point with the additional word “*complete*” (*holoklēroi*).

This expression can refer to perfection and/or maturity. To be sure, while we will not be perfectly sinless in this life (cf. James 3:2) that is indeed the goal of being steadfast through trials and temptations. This is progressive sanctification – continued spiritual growth and purity – ever pursuing the objective of Christlikeness.

Heb 12:1 ~ “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us”

Phil 3:12-14 ~ “Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

➤ James further describes this goal of perfection when he states the same point in the negative with the phrase *“lacking in nothing”* (vs.4). The combination of phrases (“mature and complete” and “not lacking anything”) makes James’ point abundantly clear. God permits and provides trials in our lives in order to that our perseverance may be perfected so we can endure more trials until we have become a complete and mature person in Christ.

Eph 4:11-13 ~ “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”

1 Peter 1:7 ~ “... the tested genuineness of your faith – more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Rom 8:28-30 ~ “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.”

➤ Trials are truly a gift from God. They are tools He uses to perfect us to be like Christ – to make us more like Himself. At this point, the Christian’s goal is the same as what God has for them: to be ever-growing and ever-increasing in faithfulness and Christlikeness. From a human perspective, pain and suffering is simply a negative and pointless experience. But from God’s perspective, trials are a very important and profitable lesson for our soul. The reason? Trials drive us to God; they deepen our faith in Him; they draw us to selflessly praise and glorify Him; and they cultivate a desire within us for more of Him.

✓ Illust: “God desires to take us deeper into Himself” (A.W. Tozer; *Whatever Happened to Worship?*, p.26).

Conclusion

➤ The Bible assures us that every painful experience we endure – every suffering, persecution, or affliction – is used by God in order to make us what He wants us to be. Every stroke of pain we endure is a brushstroke that God uses to paint, on the canvas of His divine purpose, our portrait as we are created (and being created) to be in His likeness. The blood that is shed in and for Christ He paints in the dark red color of persecution and martyrdom. The bruises that are endured through affliction and suffering, in and for the sake of Christ’s name and honor, He paints in deep blue. The painful trials and tribulation that He uses to refine and purify our lives He paints in the fiery colors of yellow and orange.

When God – the Master Artist – is done, the portrait that He has painted of our lives will look just like the life of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

➤ In the hands of our Sovereign and loving Lord, each painful trial and trying experience serve as the refining process in which God purifies and strengthens us to *“live a life worthy of the calling we have received”* (Eph.4:1). Trials purify us of impurities, mature our immaturities, and perfect our imperfections. In the end, the fire of God’s refinery transforms us to be more like Christ.

✓ Illust: Jon Mohr wrote a song called “Refiner’s Fire” which beautifully expresses the cost and value of Christian suffering:

“There burns a fire with sacred heat, white hot with holy flame. And all who dare pass through its blaze will not emerge the same. Some is bronze, and some is silver, some is gold then with great skill all are hammered by their sufferings on the anvil of His will. I’m learning now to trust His touch to crave the fire’s embrace. For though my past with sin was etched His mercies did erase. Each time His purging cleanses deeper, I’m not sure how I’ll survive. Yet the strength in growing weaker keeps my hungry soul alive. The Refiner’s fire has now become my soul’s desire. Purged, cleansed and purified, that the Lord may be glorified. He is consuming my soul, refining me, making me whole. No matter what I may lose, I chose the Refiner’s fire!”