

Title: Rejoicing in Tribulations

Text: Romans 4: 25—5: 1-11

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Romans 4: 25: [Christ] was delivered for our offences,...

Christ Jesus delivered himself bearing the sins of his people. By paying the wages of sin, which is death, Christ made full satisfaction for our sins.

Romans 4: 25: and [Christ] was raised again for our justification.

When Christ rose again, as the head and representative of his people, he was legally discharged, acquitted, and justified. So were all his people in him. Christ's resurrection testifies that the sin of his people has been fully atoned for and Christ is our everlasting righteousness.

Brethren, you who have been given faith to believe on our Lord Jesus Christ have been freely justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. What does that mean? It means God himself has justified us, "[God] just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." (Rom 3: 26) It means no charge can ever be laid against you! "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth. Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Rom 8: 33-34)

Romans 5: 5: Therefore [having been] justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Believer, God in Christ has reconciled you to himself. Abraham was called "the friend of God"—so are you who God has reconciled to himself. Our great Peacemaker has made us one with God, "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." (Eph 2: 14)

Romans 5: 2: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand,

Christ has given us free access into God's presence at all times, "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." (Eph 3: 12) When God gives us access through faith Christ, he makes us know that we stand where we have always stood before him—in a perpetual, eternal, never-changing state of grace. "Grace" means God chose his people and shed his free favor upon us with no regard to our person or our works. Therefore nothing we do can change the state we are in—it is "grace wherein we stand."

Romans 5: 2...and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Our hope—our confident expectation—is God himself, "Blessed *is* the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and *that* spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." (Jer 17:7-8) Our confident hope is that by God's grace, we shall behold the glory of God. We have this hope because Christ intercedes for us, praying, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." (Joh 17:24) We have hope this hope within us because Christ dwells in us—"Christ in you, the hope of glory:" (Col 1:27) Then immediately Paul says this:

Romans 5: 3: And not only *so*, but we glory [we rejoice] in tribulations also:...

Last Sunday, we saw that God shall bring all his children “through the fire.” We saw that by the fiery trial, God promises “they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.” Verses 3-5, teach us in detail how God brings us to cry, “The LORD is my God!” And when we are brought to that point, it makes us to know, tribulations are one of the greatest blessings God gives us. Paul ranks it among the blessings of free justification, peace with God, access to God, grace wherein we stand and hope of the glory of God. It is because

Tribulations are used of God to give us a more confident expectation—a more sure hope—of the glory of God.

TRIBULATIONS WORK PATIENCE

First, we glory in tribulations, knowing—this is what we know—“knowing that tribulation worketh patience.” (Rom 5: 3)

“Tribulation” means “pressure, to be pressed down.” It signifies the “threshing of corn.” We are talking about heavy trials. You’ve seen a combine in a corn field. They separate the corn from the stalk. You’ve seen a threshing machine. It separates the corn from the husk. The purpose of tribulation is to thresh us, to press us, to separate us. Our flesh, old nature, the cares of this world is the husk. But the new man within, where Christ abides in us and where we abide in Christ, that is the Seed, the child of God, the fruit. In tribulation the Lord threshes us to separate the corn from the husk, the seed from the chaff, the new man from the old, faith from flesh, spiritual understanding from fleshly wisdom.

“Patience” means “endurance.” Particularly, endurance by submission and reliance upon God—we glory in tribulations knowing that tribulation—being under pressure—works patience, endurance—reliance upon God. Here is tribulation. Paul said, For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life.” (2 Cor 1: 8) Tribulation works patience, endurance, “But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, [tribulation] that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.” (2 Cor 1: 9)

So the heavy trial comes. It presses us down, out of measure, above strength. But God works tribulation until he makes us cease trusting in ourselves and makes us patiently endure by submitting to God, relying upon God, waiting upon God.

PATIENCE WORKS EXPERIENCE

Then “patience [worketh] experience.” (Rom 5: 4) Experience means “proof.”

First, patience, endurance, in tribulation makes us experience proof about ourselves. It is proven to us what we are. In the furnace of affliction, as we try to endure, the dross and scum of old nature comes boiling up. We experience proof of our baseness and our vileness and our weakness Paul said, we were pressed “above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:” (2 Cor 1: 8) In another place, Paul said of the new man, “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair.” (2 Cor 4: 8) But his trouble was so great in Asia, he experienced proof of the utter weakness of his flesh, “we despaired even of life.”

But then as trouble brings us to patiently endure, we experience proof of God’s ability, Paul said, “Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver.” (2 Cor 1: 10) He learned that by experiencing it.

Also, we experience proof of God's wisdom in sending us just the right tribulation we need. For example, the apostle Peter was arguing with the others that he was greatest, he would not forsake the Lord. The Lord, used a little maid. Peter experienced what he was; Peter experienced the Lord's wisdom, power and grace. Later in life he wrote what he learned, "ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble...Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." (1 Pet 5: , 7)

Another thing, we experience our unbelief and we experience his faithfulness and power. For instance, the apostles were sailing, the sun was shining, they were away from the Savior, together, enjoying the day. Then he sent the storm. "Master, carest thou not that we perish!" They experienced proof they had very little faith. Then they experienced his power--"He rebuked the wind and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" (Mr 4: 39-40)

Furthermore, we experience his grace is sufficient in the face of our weakness Paul desired the thorn be removed, "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (2 Cor 12: 9)

Ultimately, we experience who our Savior really is. After his trial Job said, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee." (Job 42: 5)

Brethren, you have experienced this: after God brings you through a trial, you look back on your sinfulness or your weakness or unbelief or all of the above. But you see God's mercy, longsuffering, grace and goodness so magnified! It makes it so that you wouldn't change a thing about the trial; you rejoice that he put you through it. That is what Paul meant when he said, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." (2Co 12:9-10) That why he says, "we rejoice in tribulations, knowing..."

EXPERIENCE WORKS HOPE

Thirdly, "experience [worketh] hope." (Rom 5: 4) At Paul was given more hope by what he suffered, "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us." (2 Cor 1: 10) Paul's experience of God's past deliverance and present deliverance and it worked hope for future deliverance.

Remember, in our text, Paul began speaking of this work in tribulations right after speaking of our rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God. Through the trial God increases our hope.

2 Corinthians 4: 17:...though our outward man perishes, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. [how so] 17: For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; [tribulation works patience, patience experience, experience hope] 18: While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

Through trials, God puts down our old man, our worldly affections and renews our inward man, turning our eye of faith upon that which is eternal! He gives us great confidence in our hope of the glory of God!

HOPE MAKES US NOT ASHAMED

Here is how hope does not leave us ashamed or confounded, “And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” (Rom 5: 5)

In this process, God pours his love into our hearts by the Holy Ghost. He gives us a more confident hope that we have been reconciled to God by the death of his Son and shall now be saved by his life by making us to experience his love for us. When we are totally weak from the trial in our outward man, he fills our inward man, reminding us:

Romans 5: 6: For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7: For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8: But God commendeth HIS LOVE toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9: Much more then, [having NOW BEEN] justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. 10: For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his LIFE.

With all of this proven to us by his love and grace through tribulations, “And not only so...” (Rom 5: 11) Not only do we rejoice in free justification, in peace with God, in access, in grace, in the hope of glory, not only do we rejoice in the trials, “but we also JOY IN GOD through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have NOW received the atonement.” We do not call on justification or the doctrine of peace, we call on God himself and joy in the person of our Redeemer himself. This is the purpose of the trial. It is to bring us to rejoice in God in himself. He said, “They shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.” God makes our salvation, our hope, to be God himself! We cry Abba Father!

Amen!