

Subject: *Trusting God in Our Trials*

Scripture: *James 1:1-8*

As I look over the names and needs on our Wednesday night prayer list, it is a constant reminder that all people have troubles and trials. As I talk to people week after week, it is clear that all people go through suffering from time to time. As I read the Bible, it is evident that this is a world of trials and troubles. There was a man named Job who suffered greatly and made this profound statement:

Job 14:1 *Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.*

One pastor preached a sermon on the troubles of life in which he gave three points and closed with a poem. He aimed at keeping it very simple: 1) You have troubles; 2) I have troubles; 3) We all have troubles. And his poem was: Adam had ‘em.

It has been said that God had only one Son without sin, but He has none without suffering.

Trials come in many forms (vs. 2, “divers temptations” = different kinds of trials): physical, financial, family, just to mention a few. Some trials come because we belong to Christ and follow Him (vs. 1, “twelve tribes which are scattered abroad” and vs. 2, “my brethren”). James is writing to a group of Jewish believers who have been scattered by persecution. God had a message for them in the midst of their trials. They needed the instruction and encouragement of this letter, and so do we.

One of these things is true: either you have come out of a trial; or you’re now going through a trial; or you will soon enter a trial. No believer is exempt. There is no exception clause and no fine print in the contract. This is what all believers sign up for.

John 16:33 *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

1 Thessalonians 3:4 *For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.*

A new Christian said: “When I was saved it was the end of my troubles—the front end!”

Trials come at different times. They are often unexpected (vs. 2, “fall”). Trials are usually out of our control, but they are never out of God’s control. In fact, they are part of His plan.

Philippians 1:29 *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.*

1. Three things to remember in our trials

A. God is with us in our trials

Psalms 31:7 *I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities.*

God was with Joseph in his trials. Over and over the Bible says, “The Lord was with Joseph.” God was with Job in his trials. He was with Moses and Israel in their trials.

God was with David in his trials (Psalm 23:4 “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” God was with the prophets in their trials. He was with the apostles and the early church in their trials, and He is with us in our trials and troubles.

B. God is testing us in our trials

He is testing our faith to show us whether it’s real or not. God knows if it’s real, but we need to know. We will never know our faith is real until it’s tested. In the Parable of the Sower and the Seed, Jesus told about seeds that were sown on four kinds of ground. Some fell on stony ground. The seed sprouted, but it didn’t have a root system that supported it, so the sun scorched it and it died. Jesus said it was a picture of people who have a superficial faith, but they lack real depth and when trouble comes they fall away.

When trials come your faith will be tested. Don’t doubt in the dark what God has shown you in the light.

C. God is refining us in our trials

Our faith is not only revealed by trials; it is refined by trials.

Job 23:10 *But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.*

1 Peter 1:6-7 ⁶ *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:* ⁷ *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*

We are like silver in the refiner’s fire. Someone asked a silversmith, “How do you know when the silver is pure enough?” He said, “It’s pure enough when I can see my reflection.”

“How Firm a Foundation”

*When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply.
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.*

2. Four ways to respond to our trials

A. We should rejoice in our trials

James says to “count it all joy” in trials come. “Count” is an act of the will, not an emotional reaction. It means to evaluate trials and consider them as gains rather than losses. Trials work to our benefit. Trials are the only way we can grow in our faith. We know that the trying of our faith works patience or endurance (vs. 3). There is no maturity without adversity. God promises to take bad things and make them work for our ultimate good.

Romans 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

B. We should trust God in our trials

Proverbs 3:5-6 ⁵ Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. ⁶ In all thy ways acknowledged him, and he shall direct thy paths.
Job 13:15 Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.

God knows how much we should suffer and for how long.
He has promised: “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

C. We should pray in our trials

Psalms 50:15 And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

1 Peter 5:7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Specifically we should pray for wisdom (vs. 5). When trials come we can pray “Lord, help me.” We can pray, “Comfort me.” We can pray, “Change me.” And we can also pray, “Lord, teach me. Give me wisdom.” Wisdom is the ability to see all of life from God’s point of view.

Joni Eareckson Tada was paralyzed from the neck down in a swimming accident. At first, she struggled to accept her condition and reconcile that with her faith in a loving God. The turning point was gradual, but eventually she came to see God’s hand in it all. Now she calls her accident a “glorious intruder” and claims it was the best thing that ever happened to her. She knows that God used it to get her attention and to refocus her priorities.

D. We should look beyond our trials

Colossians 3:2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

Nancy broke her leg and the doctor said she can’t put any weight on it for two months. Since he told us that I’ve been thinking a lot about the first week in November and how sweet that’s going to be. It helps make it through a trial when you know there’s a better time ahead.

Romans 8:18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

2 Corinthians 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Over the years we have seen many people suffer and die from cancer. One such man I remember well was Jim Moffatt. Jim was a precious brother in Christ who wrote these words in the front of his Bible before he died and went to heaven:

God has brought me here. It is by His will I am in this difficult place: in that I will rest. He will keep me here in His love and give me grace in this trial to behave as His child. He will make the testing a blessing, teaching me the lessons He intends for me to learn, and working in me the grace he intends to give. In His good time He can bring me out again—how and when He knows. I am here by God’s appointment, in His care, under His training, and for His time.

This was the testimony of a man who trusted God in his trial. God help us to do the same.