



Empowering People to Change the World

Contending Through Tribulation

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Power To Rule

Romans 5:17

For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

Contending through Tribulation

- To grow in Christ, to reach our full potential as a Wholeheart Jesus disciple, will require greater power and dependence on God.
- Greater grace comes through experiencing greater hardships and difficulties.
- An Overcomer is one who has had to overcome. The Wholeheart disciple is discovering the kingdom paradigm shift of Paul. "I delight in hardships, difficulties...For when I am weak, He is strong." (2 Corinthians 12:10)

John Bevere writes, "Greater resistance requires greater power to overcome; consequently, producing greater victory."

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For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

- Through the abundance, overflow of God's grace, and the gift of righteousness—the Holy Spirit freely given to us when we put our faith in Christ.
- Through Christ, the only One who can give us such grace and righteousness.
- We can rule and reign in life!
- Not life ruling and reigning over us, but Christ reigning and ruling over life.
- We are fulfilling the original Genesis Mandate for men: rule over the earth.
- But this is not easy stuff...

- How does a Jesus disciple move from understanding to implementing rulership?

Under the direct orders of the Holy Spirit, Paul and Barnabas left their home church and took off on their first missionary journey. After that they visited the churches they had already planted...

Acts 14:19

Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. 20 However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, 22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."

- Paul didn't leave these cities with a Financial Seminar, church growth seminar, or Leadership Training.
- No, he left them with words that exhorted them to empower the disciples in being overcomers.
- We must pass through many tribulations to enter God's supreme powerful rulership.
- Jesus told the disciples that in this life we would have such tribulation, troubles, and difficulties, but to not worry or overly concern ourselves with this, because He had overcome the world.

John 16:33

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

- The word tribulation is defined as "hardship or a state of great trouble" The Greek word is *thlipsis*.

- The Encyclopedia of Bible Words defines *thlipsis*: “The idea of the great emotional and spiritual stress that can be caused by external or internal pressure.”
- Strong’s Concordance: pressure; affliction; anguish; burdens.
- Tribulation has been taken from the Latin, it comes from the word *tribulum*, a threshing sledge which separated grain from chaff. It consisted of a wooden platform studded underneath with sharp flints or iron teeth. As this instrument passed over the grain, the wheat was separated from the straw.
 - Tribulation literally means “to press, to oppress, to afflict.”
 - Tribulation means pressure!
 - Everyone has troubles: believer, non-believer, wealthy, poor, prideful and humble: everyone!
 - One of Job’s comforters said it well: “man is born to trouble.”

God brings Promotions through Persecution.

I have come to believe that God gives promotions and demotions:

- Promotions from God come as we pass tests that he puts before us.
- Demotions come as we continually thwart his leading and his will in our life.
- Promotions come through persecution—usually from people.
 - The choice is to retaliate.
 - The choice is to forgive.
 - It’s all about the “conversation of your heart.”
 - When you go through difficulties, remember that Jesus in the midst of it and He is training you for ruling and reigning.

Romans 8:16

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

- An Heir is “a person inheriting and continuing the legacy of a predecessor; a person legally entitled to the rank of another.”
- 1 Corinthians 3:21 says, “Everything belongs to you” Everything! All of the earth belongs to God and thus as co-heirs belongs to us.
- The Contemporary English Version phrases it, “Everything is yours, including the world, life, death, the present, and the future. Everything belongs to you.”
- But there is one caveat, one condition in Romans 8, “if we suffer with Him.”
- If we are willing to overcome opposition, we can rule with Christ. This is no cake walk, no walk in the park. You will have to battle for it!

John Bevere writes: No matter the pressure of the tribulation you encounter; the difficulty is nothing compared to the level of rulership you’ll walk in after the tribulation has passed.

- Tribulation and suffering is part of this life, but as a Jesus disciple we can “suffer with Him.” Suffering with Christ next to us.
- To rule with Him we will have to suffer with Him!
- Paul learned to walk in a new way of living when he discovered that God doesn’t always deliver us out of our troubles but gives us the power and grace we need to be overcomers in the trouble.

2 Corinthians 12:7

And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. 8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore, most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- No deliverance but more power! The empowering of grace!
- Grace is God's present empowerment.
- Remember I mentioned the conversations of your heart? When we view the reproaches and infirmities we are encountering as God's perfecting work, we can start rejoicing in difficulties and struggles!
- This may be one of the most important truths of the Christian life, the Disciples Life. The X Factor to victory. The X Factor to Success and Prosperity
- The X Factor for Overcoming...are you ready? Here it is! "When I am weak, when I am under pressure, when I am under stress...I activate Christ over my life! I realize I can't do it, and I give it all to Him and allow Him to work through me! Because He is using this to change me, transform me, and cause me to trust Him more.

James 1:2

2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

- God is perfecting you, completing His work in you, through trials.

The Message: Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don't try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.