



Empowering People to Change the World

## Triumph in Tribulation

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Road Declaration

## Triumph in Tribulation

- Many of you are going through difficult times right now.
  - Just two weeks ago, Jim Cooley, one of our beloved members fell over because of an issue with his heart and brain...
  - My daughter had to go through over eighty hours of labor before the birth of our seventh grandchild.
- We are born into troubles! It is our lot in life—trouble, tribulation, and testing.

“For affliction does not come from the dust,  
Nor does trouble spring from the ground;  
Yet man is born to trouble,  
As the sparks fly upward.” (Job 5:6-7)

It is the Jesus follower who can overcome any trouble. It is the testing of our faith that causes us to seek God. Usually, we won't seek God until we have difficulties, struggles, and tribulations.

The second half of Romans is about the development of our faith in our human condition.

### Romans 5:1-2

- There is a peace with God that only comes through salvation—being justified by faith. That is salvation grace.
- But there is also a peace of God that comes through the access we have by faith into God's grace in times of trouble. This is sanctification grace.
- We can rejoice in hope of God's glory! So, there is a future hope we are excited about.
- But there is a hope that comes in our present difficulties. Hope gives us strength during our times of hardship.

### Verses 3-5

- It is a lot easier to rejoice in hope of the glory of God than to rejoice when afflictions come.
- But this is real spiritual growth.

- This is the greatest sign of maturity—learning to practice patience during tribulations.
- 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 chaff.
  - Tribulation literally means “to press, to oppress, to afflict.”
  - Tribulation means pressure!
  - Everyone has troubles: believer, non-believer, wealthy, poor, prideful, and humble: everyone!
  - Tribulation separates the flesh and spirit in us. The believer is being made holy through unholy experiences.
- Tribulation is pressure pressing affliction! Life is malevolent. Life is difficult.
- In the Bible two words symbolize joy—oil and wine!
  - Oil was a cosmetic to make the face shine and wine to make the heart merry.
    - “And wine *that* makes glad the heart of man,  
Oil to make *his* face shine.” (Psalm 104:15)
    - “The Lord bless you and keep you;  
The Lord make His face shine upon you,  
And be gracious to you.” (Numbers 6:24-25)
    - “...Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You  
With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.” (Psalm 45:7)
  - Oil and wine bring joy, not olives and grapes, but olives and grapes must be crushed to bring forth oil and wine.
- Some of you are being crushed right now! But like childbirth, God is allowing you to go through labor pains for the birthing of something marvelous.
- You are wired for suffering!
  - You are created in the image of God and the image of God is a warrior.

- “The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is his name.” (Exodus 15:3 AMP)

- You can triumph in tribulation because...

Trials and Tribulation build into you Perseverance!

- Tribulation doesn't happen to you; it happens for you!
- God has a purpose for trials and tribulations—He is working something good out of it all.
  - “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” (Romans 8:28-29)
- TESTimony! God is building your resume, your TEST-I-mony! It comes through tests that God shows Himself through your life.

Three Kinds of Sufferings

#### 1. Corrective

- It is because of sin in our life that we have tolerated. Your sin is causing your tribulation.
- God is disciplining you.
  - “...’My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.’ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? (Hebrews 12:5-7)
- As parents of seven children, we have had to bring discipline from time to time to form them into effective leaders who will be happy and joyful with their lives.
- We are being used by God as earthly parents to remind our kids that there are consequences for sin.
- God is doing the same in our lives. If we continue in our sin, there will be tribulational consequences.

- You have two paths to take: one is the path of God, the road less traveled and the other is most traveled way—it is full of thorns and thistles.
  - So, you are scratched up and bleeding because you chose the path of least resistance and it turned out to be the path of greater misery.
  - But if we take the road less traveled...the believer endures suffering that is...

## 2. Constructive

- God is forming Himself in you. We have not chosen the way of thorns and thistles, but the Roadway of God, the road less traveled.
- It's the sculptors marble block. The great artist Benvenuto Cellini tells us in his autobiography how he felt when he stood before a block of marble that had been brought from Florence for him to form into a great statue. This statue still stands in his native city.
- God is forming you, chiseling away to form a beautiful work of God in your life.
- Like the sculptor, God is forming you into a sharp arrow for his purposes. Isaiah writes, "he made me a polished arrow, in his quiver he hid me away" (Isaiah 49:2).
  - You can't polish the shaft or sharpen the tip of an arrow without chiseling away, cutting away.
  - It is a process filled with pain.
  - But when it's done, Isaiah says he has become a "polished arrow in God's quiver", wow!
  - This is constructive suffering! This is our whole life.
  - We must keep a constant learning attitude so that we continue to grow throughout our lives.
- In ancient times you could walk up to the silversmith as he refined the silver. He would sit with molten metal before him while the flame does its purifying work. As the metal was subjected to the ever-increasing heat, the dross, the impurities would float to the top and the silversmith would scoop off the dross until he could see his own image, as in a mirror, reflected in the cleansed silver. So, God is allowing us to go through the heat to form Himself in us...

“being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;”. (Philippians 1:6)

Suffering is Corrective  
Suffering is Constructive

### 3. Chosen

- What I mean is that some people are chosen by God for His miracle working power!
- In Chapter 9 of John’s Gospel, Jesus passes by a man born blind and the disciples ask the question “Master, who did sin, this man or his parents?” because it was the notion of the day that all suffering was because of sin. Now all suffering is because of sin, but not necessarily the sin of the person who is suffering.
- Jesus said, “Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be manifest in him. Then the Lord said, ‘I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day.’”
- God received all the glory for the healing of this man born blind.
- Some people are chosen by God to be His instruments for greater glory—it’s no sin of their own but God has specifically chosen them for His greater purposes.
- Helen Keller, born blind and mute, once said, “Character cannot be formed in ease in quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved.” Study Helen Keller’s life.
- Nick Vujicic, born without arms or legs, mightily being used all over the world to tell his story of triumph in tribulations. His first book was Life without Limits and Unstoppable.
  - “If you can’t get a miracle, become one.”
  - “I have the choice to be angry at God for what I don't have or be thankful for what I do have.”
- This is what Paul is saying to us today...

### Verses 3-5

- We often hear people say, “he/she is a character” and we mean they are a cut-up, they are unpredictable, they are always breaking the rules in fun.

- Our passage is reading that tribulations and trials build endurance in us and endurance builds our character.
- Jim Cooley had to have brain surgery. Nancy Cooley texted me this about Jim's condition: "It's been most devastating but our God is a Big God. He never wastes something so bad to not use it for His good."
- We are moving into a different aspect of Romans—from what God has done for us into how we live out what God had done for us.
- This is faith in action! Faith in action is through the development of character and character is developed through perseverance and perseverance is developed through trials.
- Nick Vujicic said "Putting faith in action is about believing and achieving. It's about having faith in yourself, your talents, your purpose, and most of all, in God's love and His divine plan in your life."
- Character matters! God is chiseling away at your flimsy whimsical selfishness and forming a spiritually granite model of selflessness.
- A man who was prone to angry outbursts and was told many times that he had a problem with anger commented. "Look, I'm never angry when things go the way I planned."
- Mountain climbers often measure their progress in inches as they scale the side of a mountain but when they look back, they can see the progress. Yet each inch was tribulation.
- Life is often like that with our character. We need hope that God is working this out. The first hope in the second verse is the hope of eternal life but this is a hope of the love of God being poured into our hearts.
- Character is tethered to hope, and hope is tethered to God's love.
  - The love of God is alive in our heart. We are passionate for God's love and His love gives us hope.
  - In this life we fight on because God is working out something good through the bad. It is bad! It is hard. But for the Christian we believe in God's love. That a loving God is going to eventually show up with something good.
  - God is good and His goodness is never more evident than the hope we have during hardships.

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We *are* hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh” (2 Corinthians 4:7-11).

- Paul had a bring it on mentality. He saw his life as the reservoir of God’s treasure —Christ being formed within him—the life of Christ being manifested in him through the new power flowing through his life.
- Bring on tribulations so that I can experience more of God’s power!
- That’s the meaning of verse 3, “we also glory in tribulation.”

But I can’t do that Pastor Steve! I don’t have what it takes to have that perspective.

Yes, you do. You have Christ and you have what it takes. You are wired and uniquely created for battle.

Verses 6-12

- You are without strength and Christ died for you and reconciled you to Himself.
- Now, you are without strength and Christ is reconciling you to Him in your struggles.
- You are reconciled! You can have intimacy with Jesus every day because of what He has done for you.
- Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice! You are saved by His life. He lives in you.
- If you have never given your life to Christ, then do it today.

Ministry Time

- You are going through it and you need a fresh touch of God over your life.
- You are experiencing tribulations and you need more faith to handle what you’re going through.