

GOD WORKS GOOD THROUGH TRIALS

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

James was writing to Christians (“my brothers”) scattered throughout much of the then known world. They were under persecution because of their faith in Jesus Christ. The intent of his letter was to encourage them to endure, remain steadfast, never give up their faith in Jesus. The persecution they were undergoing was not a punishment or curse. No matter what happened to them, their trials were to strengthen them in their faith and trust in Jesus.

Imagine facing persecution with joy. Actually, James says they should endure it with complete joy and no sorrow. After all, Jesus, who committed no sins, endured the cross in their place in payment for their sins. In the same way the unbelievers had persecuted Him, these brothers and sisters should be ready to endure the vast variety of trials they would experience throughout their earthly lives.

James then explains why Christians experience these trials. Doing so, as Peter wrote, is God’s process for purifying a believer’s faith. A Christian knows and believes they can “do all things through Him (Jesus) who strengthens them.” (Philippians 4:13) These persecutions, trials, tribulations are faced and overcome by their faith anchored securely in Jesus Christ. Peter exhorts those undergoing persecution, “. . .rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that 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.” (1 Peter 1:7) He is telling them these “trials” were for their benefit, even if they were not desirable or enjoyable. God was permitting them for their spiritual growth.

Spiritual trials are permitted to produce in you steadfastness. They produce “staying power.” This word pictures an athlete punishing their body to burn away all fat, build up muscle and endurance in order to win a race. The athlete celebrates crossing the finish line recognizing all of the pain and suffering that was required. So, Peter writes, “You also, after having endured these various trials will “rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” (1 Peter 1:8-9)

Prayer: Grant me, O Lord, faith to endure the various trials that come my way that I remain steadfast in it to life everlasting. Amen.

Lord, Thee I love with all my heart; I pray Thee, ne'er from me depart,
With tender mercy cheer me, Earth has not pleasure I would share.
Yea, heav'n itself were void and bare If Thou Lord, wert not near me.
And should my heart for sorrow break, My trust in Thee can nothing shake.
Thou art the portion I have sought; Thy precious blood my soul has bought.
Lord, Jesus Christ, my God and Lord, my God and Lord, Forsake me not!
I trust Thy Word.

Yea, Lord, 'twas Thy rich bounty gave My body, soul, and all I have
In this poor life of labor. Lord, grant that I in ev'ry place
May glorify Thy lavish grace And help and serve my neighbor.
Let no false doctrine me beguile; Let Satan not my soul defile.
Give strength and patience unto me To bear my cross and follow Thee.
Lord Jesus Christ, my God and Lord, my God and Lord,
In death Thy comfort still afford.

Lord, let at last Thine angels come, To Abr'ham's bosom bear me home,
That I may die unfearing; And in its narrow chamber keep
My body safe in peaceful sleep Until Thy reappearing.
And then from death awaken me, That these mine eyes with joy may see,
O Son of God, Thy glorious face, My Savior and my fount of grace.
Lord Jesus Christ, my prayer attend, my prayer attend,
And I will praise Thee without end.
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