

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED ON PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN ROME

NEVER ALONE

Romans 5:2-5 "Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."

Affliction, difficulties, trials, and tribulations are part of the Christian life. There are those who say that when these enter into one's Christian life God is punishing them for something they have done. Not so! Jesus has paid for that which you for the sins you have committed, your rebellion against God and even your willful disobedience. Although tribulation is a penalty for the wicked, it is used by God as a means for drawing the believer nearer to Him.

In your life, think when it is you are more fervent in your prayers, more diligent in attending church, desire to read and learn the Holy Scriptures and thirst to receive the Lord's Supper. The time of tribulation in your life is the time when you spend more time on your knees, talk more fervently with Your heavenly Father, plead with Jesus to be present in your life. It is during these times your awareness of your complete dependence upon Him is sharpened.

"Glory in suffering?" Paul's words sound like they are not right. Think however of times when you have suffered. Reflect upon how God has been there for you. He has kept His promise to never leave you nor forsake you and be with you at all times. (Hebrews 13:5 and Matthew 28:20) There is an old saying to keep in mind as Satan strives to use these occasions to draw you away from God, "If God seems far away, who moved?" God is faithful! He keeps His word. He honors His promises. Nothing can separate you from God's love which you receive through Jesus Christ your Lord and Savior. (Romans 8:31-39)

You can do all things through Him who strengthens you. (Philippians 4:13) By faith Noah entered the Ark! By faith Abraham waited for God to give him a son. By faith Joseph endured much suffering and many worldly set-backs. By faith the Apostles went into the world to proclaim the Gospel, each one giving their earthly life trusting Christ had a better one waiting for them. Your faith leads you to persevere. Your faith gives you a sure and certain hope even in the times where things appear to be hopeless.

Prayer: Lord, send Your Spirit to strengthen my faith that I persevere, trusting in Your promises even to life everlasting. In Your Holy name. Amen.

Jesus, lead Thou on Till our rest is won; And although the way be cheerless,
We will follow calm and fearless. Guide us by Thy hand To our fatherland.

If the way be drear, If the foe be near, Let not faithless fears o'ertake us;
Let not faith and hope forsake us; For through many-a woe To our home we
go.

When we seek relief From a long-felt grief, When temptations come alluring,
Make us patient and enduring, Show us that bright shore where we weep no
more.

Jesus, lead Thou on Till our rest is won. Heavenly leader still direct us,
Still support, console, protect us. Till we safely stand In our fatherland.
(LSB 718)