

Enduring Affliction

“In your patience possess ye your souls.”
Luke 21:19

Introduction:

1. Every true saint in this assembly, the hearers I address, by the nature of their humanity, has afflictions.
2. Some need jobs; some have children problems; some have health problems; some financial problems; and there are other problems known and unknown among the members of this church.
3. David comforts us with a two-sided promise, “Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all (Psalm 34:19).
4. Let us back up to the fundamental axiom of the universe – God created man to magnify Himself. God absolutely governs all our afflictions, and our faith and patience in affliction display His glorious grace.
5. In our great ambition to have a heart like David’s, we must learn to bear great adversity like David.
6. Do you truly want a pure and perfect heart God will respect? Then prepare for a trying of your faith.
7. If you want to be like Job, then expect some troubling difficulties, for it is the only way to be like Job.

I. WHAT DOES THE VERSE MEAN?

- A. The larger context is Jesus prophesying Jerusalem’s coming destruction (Luke 21:5-36).
- B. The smaller context is Jesus describing trouble His disciples would endure (21:12-18).
- C. The disciples were to patiently endure the persecution and keep their souls from failing.
- D. God has chosen to build our faith by trials, so we will experience refining (I Pet 1:6-7).
- E. If God gave us exactly what we wanted when we wanted it, we would be spoiled brats without faith or other evidence of God’s grace. It would destroy our souls.

II. WHAT IS PATIENCE?

- A. Patience is that passive virtue of a true saint that powerfully proves his eternal life.
 1. Love is the active virtue of a saint proving eternal life (I John 3:18-19; Ga 5:22).
 2. Patience is the passive virtue of saints bearing trouble (Phil 1:28; Matt 5:10-12).
 3. It is suffering and enduring affliction or troubles for a long time (Jas 5:10-11).
 4. It is longsuffering under affliction or troubles with joyfulness (Col 1:9-11).
 5. Great men even pray for it, as did Paul in his great testimony (Phil 3:8-11).
 6. Patience is bearing up under suffering and enduring troubles to remain faithful.
 7. Wait on the Lord . . . means . . . wait on the Lord (Psalm 27:14; 31:24; 130:5).
 8. It is a good thing for a man to learn to wait on the Lord (Lamentations 3:24-26).
 9. Hope means patiently waiting (Rom 8:25), so read it as such in many psalms.
- B. When something bad happens in your life, you may determine one of four reasons.
 1. You are the object of God’s glory in a great deliverance (John 9:1-3; 11:1-4).
 2. You have sinned somewhere in your life, and God is chastening you for it.
 - a. Israel’s spiritual lethargy brought poverty (Haggai 1:1-11; 2:15-19).
 - b. Prayer, self-examination, and receiving reproof will help (Job 34:31-32).
 3. You are suffering the natural consequences of your own foolishness.
 - a. If you neglect godly child training, you will suffer for it (Prov 29:15).
 - b. God can forgive such sins, when we repent completely (Luke 15:11-19).
 4. You are being tried by the Lord, so that He can perfect you more and more.
 - a. Abraham had to offer Isaac in a great test of his faith (Genesis 22:1-3).
 - b. Paul was given a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble (II Cor 12:1-11).
 - c. Recognizing the purpose and rejoicing in our perfection is the response.
 5. The LORD will not leave you in the dark, though He may combine them.

- C. If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength and faith are small (Proverbs 24:10).
- D. What is not patience? Fretting against the Lord, backsliding from the Lord, blaming the Lord or others, complaining about your situation, quitting your spiritual duties, envying those not suffering, and resenting this preaching are all examples of not being patient.

III. HOW DOES ONE POSSESS HIS OWN SOUL?

- A. Active possession of a thing is to keep and control it for its appointed use and purpose, for the verb construction here is imperative (a command) and active (you are acting).
- B. Under affliction and tribulation, it can be easy to lose your steadfastness and backslide.
- C. Job reacted well to his troubles in the beginning, but then he slipped from his integrity.
 - 1. Job possessed his soul well in the beginning, but then he gave up his patience.
 - 2. If Job had learned his lesson sooner, God would have delivered (Job 36:16-23).
 - 3. For God's dealings with him turned from simple testing to angry judgment.
 - 4. When you determine God is teaching you something, learn the lesson quickly.
- D. While we need God's grace for anything, we can and must keep ourselves (Jude 1:21).
- E. Paul gloried in his tribulations, for He could illustrate God's grace (II Cor 12:7-10).
- F. Paul confidently purposed that afflictions would not move him (Acts 20:22-24; 21:13).
- G. What will you exchange your soul for? If there is a price, the LORD may send it.
- H. Are you prone to wander, as we sing in that popular song, "Come, Thou Fount"?
- I. We may get cast down like Paul, but like him we cannot be destroyed (II Cor 4:9).
- J. David had learned the whole lesson well, including the Lord's goodness (Psalm 40:1-5).

IV. HOW CAN I DO THIS?

- A. Do not let the temporary setbacks of this life steal your soul's vitality and trust in God.
- B. Since affliction and tribulation teach us patience, we should rejoice in our perfecting.
 - 1. Perfection requires patience, and patience requires troubles. Rejoice (Jas 1:2-4)!
 - 2. We glory in David's "perfect" conduct, but this is how we get it (I Samuel 18).
 - 3. We glory in this perfecting process, for the Holy Spirit is with us (Rom 5:3-5).
- C. Learn to wait. Our flesh and this world reject waiting. Yet we must wait (Ps 27:14).
 - 1. Look ahead with the eye of faith and see better times surely coming (Ps 27:13).
 - 2. Wait patiently for the LORD. He has His timetable, which is perfect (Ps 37:7).
- D. His promises sustain us by giving us the hope upon which our faith can safely trust.
 - 1. All things work together for good to the elect, who love God (Romans 8:28).
 - 2. In life's afflictions and troubles, we are more than conquerors (Rom 8:35-39).
 - 3. Both covetousness and fear are ruined by His promised Presence (Heb 13:5-6).
- E. Bible hope is patient waiting (Rom 8:25), which is learned by God's Word (Rom 15:4).
 - 1. Joseph spent many years in Egypt away from His family for the glory of God.
 - 2. Moses spent forty years on the backside of the desert before being used much.
 - 3. David was anointed king and spent many years running for his life from Saul.
 - 4. Our children should know these stories by memory better than anything else.
- F. Remember the unseen world and hope of eternal glory that is coming (Romans 8:18).
- G. Consider the company it puts us in – even that of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Pet 4:13-16).
- H. Remember that the LORD knows what will try and test you the most (Matt 19:20-22).
- I. Walk by faith, not by sight. Live by God's promises, not your feelings (II Cor 5:7).

Conclusion:

- 1. Learn the lesson the LORD is teaching . . . like waiting . . . and remember He sees your heart (He 4:12).
- 2. Faith, and especially great faith, can only be developed by trials that are particularly bothersome to you.
- 3. Let us cast our souls entirely upon the LORD both for the things in this life and in the world to come.