

## Romans 5 :3-4 - Glory In Tribulations – 24 July 2011

We have been journeying, through the book of Romans and today is no different. We will continue our study in quite this remarkable book, the book of Romans and if you have your Bibles, I think it's great if you could open your Bibles with me to Romans and 5, Romans and chapter 5, we will take a look at just two verses of Scriptures this morning. Opening your Bibles to Romans 5. Let me read to you, versus 1-4, Romans chapter 5:1-4.

Rom 5:1-4

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

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We are going to consider Romans 5:3-4 this morning.

Maybe some of you would be familiar with this man, Pastor Lee, Pastor Lee Strobel. He is an American pastor and I raised him up because I hear that he has just commissioned a survey, a national survey amongst people in the survey question is simply this, "If there is one question you can ask God, what would it be?"

"If there is one question you want to ask God, what would it be?, so, he took a poll and a survey of people in America and the answer is this, the number one question, people would like to ask God if they could :

Why is there suffering in the world? And, why does God allow the righteous, the Christian, the believers to suffer?

Maybe, that's the question you have this morning, why does God allow me to suffer, why does God put me through difficulties? And other pastor, his name is Pastor Max Lucado, he may be more familiar to many of you, he recently wrote a book called Max on life. It is a collection of a series of questions and answers, covering different themes. There was an interview that was conducted and he was asked this question, "Of all the questions that you had to deal with, what is the most difficult question and Pastor Max Lucado said this "I think, the hardest ones had to do with suffering, it

had to do with all of our church members and friends, passing through difficult times. Sometimes, it is the global climate, tsunamis, earthquakes, radiation. I think, these kinds of questions are absolutely the most difficult. Why do Christians suffer."

Last week, we look at Romans 5:2 and we say, we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Virtually every Christian could say amen to that, yes, I rejoice in the hope of being with Jesus, of being like Jesus, of being an heir, a co-heir with Jesus Christ, I rejoice, it's easy, I say amen to that.

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But today, Paul tells us in verse 3, "Not only so, but we glory in tribulations also."

Now, that becomes hard. I can rejoice, I can be excited about being with Jesus and being like Jesus, but, Paul, you are telling us, to rejoice, to glory also in tribulations? Yes. That becomes difficult for many of us, especially if you today are going through tough times, especially if right now in your mind, in your life, you're going through tribulations, things are getting difficult, you feel crushed, you feel pressured him these words may sound impossible to you.

But today, let's look at what it means to glory in tribulations. The title of the message is taken from Scriptures. It is simply "Glory in tribulations."

Why should we glory in tribulations and how can we glory in tribulations. I hope to encourage your hearts this morning. I know this morning, gathered in this place, some of you going through personal struggles. Families are breaking up, children are diagnosed with diseases that you do not know what to do about. You might have even lost your job, but this morning, let's look at Scriptures, let's look at what God has to say into your life.

A few things that would help our thinking this morning and that is, number one, let's be clear that tribulations are real. Let's see the reality of tribulations.

### 1. The Reality of Tribulations

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Sometimes, Christians can go into a state of denial. This cannot be happening to me. But I think, in order for us to glory in tribulations, we must come to terms with the reality of tribulations. The word tribulations, in English, is taken from the Greek

word that is called "Thlipsis". It is a word in the original Greek, meaning to be pressed, to be crushed. You can imagine what it feels like to be going through difficulties, you feel crushed, you feel pressured that you can't really breathe. That's the word that is used. In the Bible, it is used to describe times of extreme difficulties, like famine, like persecution, like being an orphan or a widow or even describing the end times, extreme sufferings called the great tribulations. That's the word that is used, pressing, crushing, suffering or great difficulties. The Latin word, from which the English word is derived from its also interesting. It is the word "tribulum". The Latin word is the word "tribulum". You say pastor, what is the word tribulum is. Let me show you a tribulum.

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Does anyone know where the tribulum is in this picture? The English word, tribulation is derived from the Latin word that means tribulum. Where is the tribulum? The yoke? Not the yoke, this is the yoke here, this links the two oxen together, but that's not the tribulum. That's right, the tribulum, this piece of wood that the farmer is standing on. That's the tribulum. Now, why in the world, is he sleighing, you almost think that he is a Rudolph, no, no, Santa Claus sleighing in his slide, sleigh. No, the tribulum here is interesting. The underside of the tribulum look something like this. It is packed with sharp stones and edges and when you placed it upon the wheat and when the oxen is going to pull this tribulum and the farmer stands on it to add weight to it, what it does, is that it goes across the wheat and crushes it to separate the husks from the grains.

And when we say, someone is going through tribulations, it is the picture of someone going through crushing, pressing difficulties and pains, that's the picture here. Maybe you are going through a crushing, pressing time and you might feel like you are like that grain of wheat that is being crushed and split asunder. But my friends, the beginning of victory in trials, in tribulations is to realize this is not a surprise, is to realize that being a Christian, a follower of Jesus, doesn't an exemption from difficulties. In fact, we must expect it. Jesus our Lord Himself said , These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me, you might have peace. Why, why do you need this peace from Me, because, in the world, you shall have tribulations.

If you belong to Jesus today, He tells you, you will have tribulations. We live in a day, when there is that prosperity Gospel, that people seem to buy in. They cannot accept, that being a child of God, means that I will go to sufferings. So they sort of say that all kinds of illnesses are from the devil, and because of sin in your life, that's why you

suffer. But no, you may be a righteous man, you may be walking with God, and you will likewise go through tribulations. Expect it, there is no excuse, or exemptions from it.

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In Acts 14:22, the Bible tells us, we must through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God. I am not sure about you, but it does sent a kind of a shiver down up my spine; I will go through much tribulation. God does not say, I am plucking you out of difficulties and sufferings, you will go through difficulties and sufferings.

Paul tells us in Philippians 1:29,

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him (Added by Pastor: you are privileged, not only with the capacity to believe in Jesus), but also to suffer for his sake;

Phi 1:29

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

It is given to you, it is your privilege. You are thus, suffering.

Therefore, apostle Peter says:

1Pet 4:12

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

Isn't it true, that when trials come, we are surprised. How, why, can this even happen to me. But the Scripture informs us, teaches us that this is our lot in life, it is a privilege given to us. So, first of all, there is that reality of tribulations.

Let's move on quickly, and I want to share with you the response to tribulations, what is the response to tribulations.

Can I ask you, what is the most common response we have, when trials come into our lives, what's the commonest response? We, we complain. I think that is absolutely right, because, that's what happens in my life. When difficulties come, my immediate

response from the flesh, is to ask, why me, how come, can this even be possible. That's the flesh, that is the natural response of men, we tend to complain. I've been reading the book of numbers, in my devotional reading and I realize, that the Jews in the wilderness, what's their commonest sin? I think, it is the sin of murmuring. Huh!, look at this Moses, how could he lead us, they complained about their leader, they complained about food, they complained about water, they complained just about everything around them. And that is the response of man, because we tend to be discontented with life and we murmur against God. But that's not the response that is called for in Scriptures.

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Now, besides complaining and murmuring, how else can we respond, how else can we respond. Well, we can respond, in the sense of being stoic about things; I am a man, I can tough it out, I will grit my teeth, I will put up a brave front, I may put on even a plastic smile, but I am dying on the inside, I am bleeding on the inside, I can look great, I know that in church I cannot be depressed, I cannot look dejected, so I put up a brave front, but I am really dying on the inside. But that's the best way I know how to respond in trials. Or maybe, for some of us, we resign, we totally give up. You say, I cannot believe I am in this difficulty, I feel discouraged, I feel disillusioned, I am despairing, I am defeated, I give it all up.

Maybe, these are the kind of responses we all too familiar with. But what is God's answer, what is God's requirement, what is God's intended response for His people. The Bible tells us

Rom 5:2,3

And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also:

You say, pastor, what is the meaning of glory? Very simple, look at verse 2.

.....rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Verse 3

Glory in tribulations

Rom 5:2,3

.....rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also:

The word rejoice and the word glory, are exactly the same word in the Greek, kauchaomai, which is the word that means to be in jubilation, to celebrate, to exalt, to rejoice, to boast, to glory about. Be excited, to rejoice. Do you know what it means, I know what it means?

Last night, Singapore, beat Malaysia, 5-3. (Laughter in the congregation) and when I saw some of the goals, I said Goal!, Not when Malaysia scored, but when Singapore scored. I was in some kind of jubilation, rejoicing, celebrating. I rejoice, in the hope of the glory of God, I rejoice that I will be with and like Jesus one day. But you know, the Bible tells me, likewise, you should rejoice and glory in tribulations. What! Paul, are you nuts. Rejoice in pain and suffering? Yes! Glory in tribulations. But, but, but how can I do that, Paul? Ah! You say this, because you are someone who is never gone through trials, you are apostle Paul, you are the great man, you can perform miracles, you can escape out of trials, ah! Now I know, you wrote these words, because you are an ivory tower theologian, you have never gone through sufferings, you don't know what we go through, therefore you can easily write these words, glory in tribulations.

Paul, stands up and says, no, I am no ivory tower theologian. I know, what it means to go through tribulations, I know, because, the Bible, is what I have written, the Epistles to the Corinthians, this is what I wrote, that in all things of approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses.

2Cor 6:4

But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

I have been through that, I am not talking dry theory, it is experiential in my life, I have gone through tribulations. But, Paul, come on, your trials cannot be compared with mine, mine is very jia lat, mine is of the extreme kind. Maybe, for you, you can rejoice because it is sesame seeds and green beans but mine is the real stuff. Oh!, Is it, let me share with you my trials, let me share with you what I have gone through.

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I have been in labors more abundant, in stripes, above measure, not the Sgt. stripes, nowadays, it is here I think, not the Sgt. stripes, but whipped, in prisons more frequent, anyone of you have been to prison, once?, Oh, he has been there several times, more often, in death oft, near the brink, or at the brink of death. Of the Jews, five times received, I 40 stripes save one. The Jews would not whip more than 39 times, 39, that's it and he has received that five times. Anyone of you tried that?

He goes on to say Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, of robbers, own countrymen, heathen, city, wilderness, sea, false brethren; I have been through all that. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. and beside those things that are without, which is on the outside, that which cometh upon me daily, on the inside, the care of all the churches.

2Cor 11:23-28

Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

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So, my friends, Paul is no ivory tower theologian, he has been through it, but equally, he says to us, we glory in tribulations, we rejoice in tribulations. Ah!, Paul I know your problem, the problem is that you are a masochist, you are weird, you are pathological, you are odd, you like pain. No, Paul is not saying, I like pain. He did pray, isn't it, God, is it in your will, remove the thorn in my flesh. He does not rejoice in the pain, but why is Paul rejoicing in tribulations?

The secret is found in the next few words. I glory in tribulations, why, because knowing, there is something I know. My friends, let's not deny the pain of trials, it's there. There are some Christian people, or churches and preachers say, deny the pain, it's not there, deny the suffering. No, it's there, it's real, you can see the scars, but the secret to rejoicing in trials, is that you know something, that maybe this will doesn't know? You know what? tribulation worketh patience; patience, experience; experience, hope.

Rom 5:3,4

And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

You know that God is working something in your life, it worketh, it produces, this tribulation is productive, it is bringing about something that is valuable. So, Paul is not saying that he is rejoicing in the process of pain, but Paul is rejoicing in the purpose of pain.

He's not a masochist, he's not weird, he is not sick his mind, but he is scriptural in his thinking. He knows, that this tribulation, this crushing, this pressing is not for without good reason. God is working something beautiful in his life. I think, for ladies here, you know what it means. If you go to the labor ward, you see the ladies in pain, they are delivering a baby, delivery suites, you see them sweaty, you see them miserable in their faces, you hear them screaming, you can hear them in the corridors, (screaming sounds) and they scream and they are in absolute pain. But, you ask them, which you go through it, they say, yes I will, I am happy, I am going through this. You says, you are weird, you are sick, you are pathological. No, I am not weird, I am not sick, I am not pathological, but I am delivering a, my baby. You ask a woman, which you go to that pain again. You not only said yes I will, I am willing to.

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You are weird, no, you're not weird. You rejoice in the pain, no, I don't rejoice in the pain, but I rejoice in the product, I rejoice at what comes out at the end of it, my precious baby. Paul is saying, I know it is difficult, I know it is painful, but I do know, he would bring about something beautiful. He knows that God is still at work. I am in a tribulation, not because God has abandoned me or neglected me, but God brought me there, intentionally. God is going to preserve me there and God is going to grow me there and when it is time, God would free me from there, but all this while, like

that good husbandman, like that vine dresser, he is purging and pruning this branch so that I may be more fruitful and beautiful and I rejoice in it.

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So, the proper response to trials, is not resentment or resistance, nor resignation, but one of rejoicing, because, I know something that the world doesn't know. Do you know?, Do you rejoice today? Pastor, I want to rejoice, tell me more. Yes, Paul is going to tell us more.

Paul is not only going to tell us the proper response, he is going to tell us the results from tribulations. Now, this is exciting, this is exciting because when you go through trials, these are the gems with that will be brought out in your lives, these are the diamonds that will come out of your lives as you go through the pressures, and the tribulations, the tribulum. You say, what gems? Let me name them one by one.

First of all, God is going to work something in your life, in tribulation and that something, is the word patience. Tribulation, works patience, don't write down the word patience as yet, because, I don't think the King James English, has quite accurately translated the meaning of this word. The word here, in the Greek is the word Hupomone. I have said the word Hupo several times in this church already. Anyone's, like to help me, what is the meaning of the word "Hupo" ? Hupo is .... I hear something, Hupo is, who said that word, it is correct, did someone say something, okay, I am mistaken (Laughter in the congregation). This is the power of delusion (Laughter in the congregation). You believe your people too much. All right, the word Hupo means under. Mone is the word abide, or to stay.

Tribulation, worketh Hupomone, Hupo, under, Mone, stay or, abide. So, what does tribulation work out, it works out the ability to stay under, it works out the ability to remain under pressure. It gives you the ability to be steady, zai (colloquial for steady). Right, be steady, be calm in tribulation. Why, because the natural response of man, when he is saddled with pressure and tribulum and tribulation, is that he will want to bail out. He goes into a state of fear and panic, but when he goes through tribulations and when you response properly, God gives you and grows you in your ability to Hupomone, stay under.

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In a picture of breaking a horse, you know a horse, you don't break it literally but when you have a wild horse and when you want to harness the horse for your use,

you can't just write on the horse the next day, because the horse is going to flip, is going to be throwing his tantrums, he's going to go into a state of panic, he's going to throw you off his back, his nostril is going to flare, his eyes are going to roll, and he is going to shout, neigh! Okay, that sounds like a sheep. (Loud laughter in the congregation). But it was intended to be a horse, what ever you call that. He is going to be panicky, so what you do to break the horse is that, first, I saw a video of it, you have got to get a piece of towel and rub him all over, get used to the feeling of the towel, then, use heavier materials, progressively and then, jump and pat on the horse so that it gets used to you climbing on top of it. And in this progressive way, you allow him, to be accustomed to the pressures that come upon him, so that he will not panic or bail out.

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You see, that's what Christians do when trials and difficulties are saddled upon our backs, we panic and we bail out. Very much like the disciples, when they were with Jesus at the sea of Galilee. There was a huge storm, a storm that was so extraordinary that experienced fishermen like Peter, Andrew, James and John were in a panic state. They were flustered, and they came to Jesus and said, "Master, save us, we perish." Jesus said, to the winds and waves, "Peace, be still" and quietness came. The disciples, went through that trial and learn, I think what it means to Hupomone, to be steady in trials.

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The next time, a storm comes, they can stay under, better. That's what the Bible says to us, when you go through trials, when you go through tribulations, it works for you Hupomone, perseverance, endurance, steadiness in trials. That's what Paul says, he said he 2Corinthians 1:8-10

For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life (Added by Pastor: this time, we are gone, we are going to go, give up hope):But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead (Added by Pastor: we have learned to trust God and now) He delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;

2Cor 1:8-10

For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;

We have been through storm number 1 and we saw God worked, we stayed under, we saw God worked and I am confident, that the next storm that we would be saddled with, He will still deliver us and I am growing in my ability to be steady, to stay under, Hupomone.

God puts us through trials that our strength or character may be borned, so that our faith would increase and our trust would increase. That's why, Paul says, tribulation worketh patience. This is the ABC of Christianity, you know what is ABC of Christianity? Adversity Brings Character or Adversity Builds Character. The ABCs of Christianity, Adversity Builds Character.

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God did not put us through suffering, so that we would be bitter and angry, but God builds up our character as we go through the adversity of life. A little poem that goes like this,

Little things that fret and try us,  
Causing murmur and complaint,  
If but borne as He intended,  
Are the makings of a saint.

My friends, trials are not misfortune, not suai, jin suai (colloquial for unlucky or very unlucky). This week very suai, tiam, tiam tiok ji quan (colloquial for always getting this problem) (Laughter in the congregation). No, it is not misfortune, it is the molding, shaping Hand of God, yet transforming your character.

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When you go through trials today, friends, you choose to be bitter, or you can believe God will make you better. Sufferings are inescapable, it's our lot in life, that's a reality. But misery is optional. You don't have to be miserable. You can rejoice, why? Because I know that tribulation works patience, endurance, steadfastness, steadiness, perseverance. The pressure that is used to crushed that charcoal is not

meant to crush it, it can be used to turn it into diamonds, and God is molding and shaping your life that diamonds may be borne out.

Isn't it true also in our experience that the greater saints, the greatest sermons, are not preached on the pulpit, are often times, in the death bed and in the hospital bed, because, these are those whose character have been built up through adversity. My friends, God is more interested in our character than our comfort and it takes sometimes, tribulums to build us up.

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I agree with what the Chinese say, (.....) it is true, even in the Christian realm, "Faith needs exercise to grow" and the best gym faith can go through, is the gym of suffering.

So, God has His intended purpose as we go through trials, it brings out, the strengthening of your faith, it enlarges your capacity to trust Him, it builds up your character.

But second gem, the Bible says, not only tribulation works patience, but patience would work experience. Before you write down the what experience, again, I would like to say that in the King James English, it may not accurately translate the full meaning of the word here. The word in the Greek, is the word dokime and it is a word that means, it is tested and tried, it is a word that means it is validated or proven to be the real, authentic, genuine stuff. How how do you know this is real, how do you know this is pure gold? Subject it to a test and when it goes through the fiery furnace of testing, it would now be dokime, it would now be tested and proven that it is real. The word here is proveness, to be seen as something that is authentic and genuine, after passing through a test. We go through fire, we go through flood, we go through the water and at the end of the day, that which has authenticity in their faith will come forth and say, I am dokime, I am proven and tested, that the faith that God has planted into my life is genuine, is real and that's what trials do for us. Trials, allow us to see the authenticity of our faith in Jesus Christ.

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That's what Peter says isn't it, That the trial of your faith, what is being tried, by the way, is it your flesh, is it your family, is it your finances, what is being tried?, That which God wants to try and prove and authenticate is your faith, the trial of your faith, is), being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried

with fire, (Added by Pastor: the word trial and the word try, in 1Peter 1:7 is exactly the same word as translated experience in Romans 5:4, dokime, God is testing, trying, testing, validating and proving the authenticity of your faith, why? Because your faith is precious, your faith is more precious than gold. I know gold is very expensive now; 1 ounce, more than \$1600, it's not cheap; precious. But your faith is more precious than gold in that gold would perish, but your faith doesn't.

Genuine faith, would stand up to the dokime, stand up to the tribulations.

1Pet 1:7

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

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I remember what my wife said after we visited couples who were in difficulties and she mentioned, we don't really know how much we trust God until when we are in difficulties. True, it's when we passed through the fiery furnace of afflictions, that we can really tell the genuineness of your faith. Again, another Chinese saying,..... fiery furnace, intense heat, everything that is not gold, would be burnt up as dross, but that, which remains, would be pure gold and if your faith is authentic, you would not be fearful of the fiery trials of life, instead, you would come forth as gold.

And my friends, this certainty is not forgotten to know, He already knows your faith, but this certainty is for you to appreciate, for you to have that confidence, that hope of glory, because you see that as you go through the trials of life, that faith which you have, which is given to you, is authentic and real.

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Friends, what do you base your salvation, assurance on? The fact that you walk the aisles, five years ago or the fact that life change is taking place in you and that you have been tested and proven to be true in your faith, because you have gone through trials of life. You see, that is what is in focus here. This is tremendous encouragement, you would never be as certain about your salvation as when you have gone through the trials of life.

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So, this is a precious gem that God gives us, when you go through tribulations, you first have perseverance, hupomone, the ability to stay under and God says, that would eventually work out to be dokime, to be tested, tried, proven, validated to be the real, genuine and authentic stuff and when you do that, thirdly, it brings you hope, experience hope. This hope, is the exact same word in Romans 5:2 Rejoice in the hope, it's the confidence expectation. Ah!, It makes sense, because when you have gone through the trials of life and you still say, I believe in Jesus Christ, I believe in my God. My friend, that encourages expectations, your confidence for future glory. It makes sense, strengthens your hope, enlarges your expectations, gives you confidence, but not only that. I believe, as you go through the trials of life, you can also have the hope of great reward. I think that is promised in the Scriptures.

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Peter tells us in 1Peter 1:7

This trial of your faith, when you go through it successfully, it would be found unto the praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Apocalyptic Of Jesus Christ.

1Pet 1:7

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

When Jesus comes again, those who have been people, those who have gone through the fiery furnace and there is gold at the end of it, there is authentic faith at the end of it, God says, there will be praise, glory and honor to that man. Praise, that verbal commendation from God, glory, that glory sharing of the manifested attributes of God, that honor, that glory, the rewards that will come to those, who's faith have been found to be true. Great hope, you need not despair in trials if God is saying, I am going to build up your life, I am going to show you, the authenticity of your faith and I'm going to give you, tremendous rewards in heaven.

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There was a man who has lost his job, his family, everything in his life, except for his faith in God. Despairing, and thinking of even suicide, he walked through the streets and he saw a group of men, constructing a building, it is a cathedral. The spire is up,

the ceiling is up, things are up, it looks beautiful and he saw a man, chipping away, a stonemason, chipping away at the triangular piece of rock and he asked this man, what are you doing with this piece of rock? The man says "Look up there", he points to man to a triangular space, at the spire to the cathedral. And the man says "I am shaping this stone, down here, so that it might fit right up there." This means, said to himself, I know why God is doing this, I know why God is chipping away my life, in a sense, I know why God is putting me through tribulations, because he shaping me down here, so that I might fit right up there.

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That's what God does. You don't recognize it, you don't see it, because, we are so enraptured by our comfort and our wants that we don't see the wise hands of God behind it all, He is shaping us for the future, giving us an increased capacity to glorify and honor and worship Him. Perspective, the world's perspective, the humanistic perspective versus God's divine perspective. He says, for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, workers for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

2Cor 4:17

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

You know how God describes his affliction? Whipped 39 times times five, been to prison, at the brink of death, fasting, hunger, perils every way, he says, my afflictions are light. Huh! What?, Light?. It means fluffy, like nothing. What, Paul, what you went through is light ? Yes, if you put it in juxtaposition, or next to the eternal weight of glory that is to come. It looks so light and my afflictions are only for a moment. But, Paul, for your entire life, it seems, it has been like this? No, it is for a moment, because, I am looking at it from an eternity point of view. Paul says, these affliction, work for us, not against us.

The trials of life are not against you, but for you, therefore, be in jubilation, be in rejoicing, glory in tribulations also.

My friends, the glory that is to follow, would help you one day realize, that the trials and the afflictions that you are going through today, might be just the best thing that would happen to you in this life. And that is, you would thank God endlessly in eternity to come, because, this light and momentary afflictions, work for us a far more, and exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

I had a song, recently, written by a lady called Laura Story, she wrote a song called blessings. And the background, to this song, is that, she was married for two years and she discovered something weird about her husband. She would tell him to do the dishes but, he would be forgetful, he would stay at the couch, what his sports and fall asleep and forget all about it. So she felt, something was wrong and brought him to the doctor and the doctor listen to a story and say well, ma'am, I think you just married a man. (Laughter in the congregation), that's what men do anyway, so, what's the problem? And so, he dismissed the problem and, but it got worse, this man got worse. She decided again, to seek advice, consult and it was then that they discovered, he had a brain tumor. He went for surgery, in fact, surgery after surgery and he was left with memory deficit and physical disability. Both of them are believers and so great that God would heal Max, her husband. But it did not get better. He still has physical disabilities, he still has memory deficits and she said that there were times in her life, when days were really down, chips were down, she would wonder why God would curse them with this illness. They know that God is powerful, they know that God is wise, they know that God is hundred percent loving, but they could not understand why is it that God did not answer their prayers.

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She went on to say, she discovered something, she discovered that God, often, does not give us what we want, but gives us what we need and He often times, breaks our lives, shatters our lives, so that His glory may be manifested through us. That was the inspiration, behind this song.

Blessings

We pray for blessings, We pray for peace.

Comfort for family, Protection while we sleep.

We pray for healing, For prosperity.

We pray for Your mighty hand, to ease our suffering.

(Added by Pastor: Isn't that the usual way we pray, make it easier, make it more comfortable, make me more prosperous, these are the ways, we define blessings)

And all the while, You hear each spoken need.

Yet love is way too much to give us lesser things.

(Added by Pastor: What are lesser things? Comfort, ease, God wants to give you the better things, why?)

Cuz what if Your blessings come through raindrops, (Added by Pastor: storms of life)  
What if Your healing comes through tears?  
What if a thousand sleepless nights, Are what it takes to know you're near?  
What if trials of this life, Are Your mercies in disguise?

We pray for wisdom, Your voice to hear.  
We cry in anger, when we cannot feel You near.  
We doubt Your goodness, We doubt Your love.  
As if every promise from Your Word is not enough.  
And all the while You hear each desperate plea, Lord, that we'd have faith to believe.

Cuz what if Your blessings come through raindrops, What if Your healing comes  
through tears? What if a thousand sleepless nights, Are what it takes to know you're  
near? What if trials of this life, Are Your mercies in disguise?

When friends betray us, When darkness seems to win.  
We know the pain reminds this heart, That this is not our home.

Cuz what if Your blessings come through raindrops, What if Your healing comes  
through tears? What if a thousand sleepless nights, Are what it takes to know you're  
near?

What if my greatest disappointments,  
Or the aching of this life is the revealing of a greater thirst  
This world can't satisfy? And what if trials of this life, The rain, The storms,  
The hardest nights are your mercies in disguise?

I wish you could hear the song. That's her story, that's her perspective that God gave  
her, where she went through the trials

And it is true, often times, the blessings of God are found in bitter cups. When the  
tears of this life may one day become the pearls of the crown, for eternity that is to  
come.

Friends, this is the world that wants to tell you that suffering is not the lot for  
Christians. This is the world, that tells you, seek for health and wealth, pray away the  
trials, pray against the devil, You must have done something wrong in your life for  
this difficulty is to happen to you. But, no, it is not always the case. I do know from  
Scriptures, I do know from Scriptures that it is our lot, it is God's will that  
sometimes, often times, we would go through tribulations. But as I go through

tribulations, I can rejoice, because I know that God is working in my life, producing the ability to stay under, giving me the authenticity I need to know about my faith, and enlarging me or great the glory that is to come. The trials of life, are often, blessing in disguise.

The're trials in your life today? Come to God, and think, as you sing and yield to His Word. Let's bow for a word of prayer.

My dear friends, I'm a man who has gone through trials, not great ones, nothing to boast, but I do know the pain of suffering, the pain of going through the unknown. I won't know the circumstances that are around you, I won't know the feelings that you have in your heart, but this I know, that God has not made a mistake. God is not abandoning you to yourself, God is not neglecting, God is at work, His desire, His purposes are reviewed in the Word today. His ways are not your ways, His thoughts are not your thoughts. You can choose to be bitter, or you can choose to let Him make you better. Friends, would you this morning, reflect upon the trials of your life, and like Job, still choose to say, blessed is the name of the Lord. I still believe, I will rejoice, knowing that tribulation worketh, patience, perseverance and that works out authenticity, proveness and ultimately, God is enlarging my life, that I will glorify Him, and I will be glorified and I will be honored and so, if I look at this, in eternity view, afflictions of life but for a moment, for a season and it works for us a far more exceeding weight of glory. Our God makes no mistakes, He guides you in every path you take. So, dear friends, would you surrender yourself to the way God has revealed and choose to work it in. Father, we thank You that Your love is from everlasting to everlasting. We thank You for this journey in life. What a precious tour, what a precious adventure that you bring us to the mountain tops and you bring us to the valley deep, and we may know You, trust You, that we would have a beautiful experience with You, in the times of difficulties and trials. God, would You, open the eyes of our understanding, to know that You have brought us right where we are, and that You are fulfilling, working out Your beautiful purposes in our lives. Would we rejoice in You help us to do so, so that at the end of life, our lives would be a trophy of Your grace, Your goodness, Your power and all others may see, that God is real, not in times of success and prosperity only, but in times of suffering and pain. Thank You, that we can rest in Your Word and know for sure, that You make no mistake. Father bless this to the hearts of Your people, comfort them, cause them to rejoice, for evermore, we ask this things in Jesus name, Amen. God bless.