

Trials from God and the results He intends from us.

Our lives and circumstances – what are they? To ourselves, to us as we focus on ourselves, we are quick to lose sight of what our lives and circumstances truly are. The truth is, in light of God’s view, everything we are – our lives and circumstances – are at best secondary. We must always be recalled to the fact that God, not we, is the Center of everything, and in turn, everything revolves around Him and His agenda. Whatever that agenda may be. It is all His, and we do well to remember this. We are His possession, His charge, His servants. We own nothing.

The good news is that this totally Sovereign God over all things is a True, Loving, Perfect, Flawless God.

Ps 18.30 – ‘As for God, His way is perfect; the word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.’

He is without fault, and His way is perfect. We must, and can, trust Him. To those who do, He is our Protector and Shield. He has not nor ever will fail – He has and continues to prove it in His actions. His actions never sway from His character.

As our Shield, we are promised safety. Safety in the One who alone can truly provide, can truly deliver on His Word, Who alone has shown His ways to be perfect. In Him we are truly safe from true harm.

Isa 41.10 – Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

He is True, Perfect, Righteous – and will help and strengthen us. He is trustworthy, and tells us not to be dismayed, for He will hold us up with His right hand, His flawless, strong hand.

This same Protector works our lives, the same ones He alone owns, for His good purpose, for His good agenda. He does all of this while remaining Perfect, our Shield, strengthening us, holding us up, assuring us not to dismay, not to despair. As He conducts our lives and circumstances, we can trust in why and how He does so:

Rom 8.28 – And we know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

These are assurances reserved for those who belong to Him, and who, loved first by Him, respond in devotion back. These same children of God must know that

all are indeed orchestrated by Father to achieve His agenda. We, who belong to Him, are included in the process achieving His purpose. All of His orchestration, which He perfectly conducts over all creation, is worked in harmony for this purpose – and we can indeed trust Him while He does His work. We must trust, we can trust – He is God Almighty, He loves us, and His directives are clear.

So, in this, as we find ourselves in the various circumstances of our lives each day, we must conclude to stop and ask ourselves: what is the situation I have found myself in, what does God think about it, and how must I respond? We must ask this while remembering the above truths, and our answers must also reconcile with these truths. Finding ourselves in any given situation, we must acknowledge we are still and remain the possession and responsibility of an All Powerful, Omnipotent, Loving, True and Pure God – and that He has brought us to this situation sovereignly, and in this He intends His purpose, and that He protects us from true harm, and that all of life works together, and that He will use these issues to develop His children – and that we are to count our trials as all joy because of these truths. But how? We must first understand, then in faith in God’s Word, we must do our best to obey.

Jas 1.2-4 – My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Relying on God’s working of all things to His good, this too must include trials. The trials we face are in an endless variety, yet all trials can be sure to share one thing in common – they will bring us to face a decision to believe God, or not. In some way, every trial arrives to exercise our faith by challenging our belief and measuring it by our reaction. Because these exercises are always under the ultimate Lordship of Father, we can be glad He is sovereignly committing us in order to work His purpose of growing our faith, and so producing patience. This patience is apparently valuable to God, and so to us, for if we ‘let patience have its perfect work’, we will enjoy the purpose He intends – our growing towards His completion as his craftsmanship.

Jas 1.12 – Blessed be the man who endures <trial>, for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

‘Who endures trial’ is a truer translation than ‘endures temptation’. More so, let each find its rightful place in order, for temptation is a trial, but a trial is not a temptation. Trials include many possibilities, including temptation. These trials are ultimately for our benefit, and are so from God. Yet, temptations are not from God, for ‘He Himself <does not> tempt anyone’.

By enduring the trials brought to those who love Him, we participate in a Holy Work, the Work of Sanctification, whereas we are purged of the sinful habits of rebellion and of calling God a liar. In exchange, we are of those under His tutelage and who will be brought to His approval as the Finisher of our faith.

Jas 1.19-20 – ‘So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.’

This Sanctifying work, conducted by Father Himself, is also typically a slow and prolonged process. We all possess a rate at which we are brought to understand, absorb, and embrace the righteous attributes of God. His work is of the Spirit in us as believers, yet while still in our sinful flesh – a body bent on sin, yet at the same time embodied by the very Spirit of God Himself. This same flesh resists God, left to itself. This same flesh will be increasingly brought to comply with the Spirit within it, until we are called to our Maker, our Saviour. An arduous process, we easily rebel as our old ways are exchanged for the New. In our discomfort, we are urged to be ‘swift to hear’ the good counsel before us, to be ‘slow to speak’ so as not to stifle our counselors, and to be ‘slow to wrath’ and not reject God’s good administration of our lives and circumstances. Only in patient obedience will we enjoy the benefit of His efforts. And so, for this we will count it all joy.

Rom 5. – ‘But we <also> glory in <afflictions>, knowing that <affliction> produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.’

So, obeying and counting it all joy, knowing there is also purpose behind it, we read also of glory in these afflictions which again bear the fruit of Sanctification. Father’s goal is achieved in our open obedience to His Prescription; steadfastly enduring affliction ‘produces perseverance’, the willingness to stay the right course; producing then ‘character’, the evidence of good personality, one of experience in God’s dealings; then to ‘hope’, the disciple’s far-reaching expectation of his Lord’s response. This hope is the Creator’s goal, the prize, the fruit borne of His craftsmanship – the hope which He does not hastily create but rather draws forth in a patient harvest. He does not settle for a one dimensional, forced, created response – He instead delights in a genuine longing fermented of genuine response from His creatures. And perhaps this is one of the joys He derives from His work – not simply stones crying out upon command, but beings of will, of His Hand, responding in a way one step past His direct input.

‘Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.’

Is this His joy? The hope forged in us in response to His Husbandry? Yet can this hope also directly impress Him too? He began the work in the pouring out

of love in us, and the echo we return to Him is our hope. Perhaps we can all enjoy this hope, even God.

This response, this hope, this crafting of our lives – all of this is reserved for the children of the King. Everyone else must look to their father in expectation and receive only the bitter loss he has to offer. For we read that there are only two of whom we may belong – the prince of this world, or the King of all kings. And for either to whom we may belong, to one or the Other, we can expect the fruit borne out of what character each possesses. The Liar is a hateful, hopeless, deceptive, wicked task master, and those under his charge can know only the same. They must, because he has nothing else to offer. Yet the Lord God is all that is Good, and His children will flourish in His abundance.

‘Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.’

Faith in our Lord Jesus and faith in what God says about Him in His Word to us; in this faith, in Jesus alone, we are Justified to God the Father, to Whom we have been an enemy in our offense and sin, for He alone is a Holy God Who cannot nor will not tolerate offense nor suffer it unpunished. Yet in His obedience to the Father and in Grace then towards us, our Jesus received Hell’s punishment for mankind that we might be ransomed in the forgiveness which is remarkably, undeservedly, offered to sinners. This forgiveness brings us before the Father, reconciled to Him in the now absence of sin’s debt. We are free!

‘our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.’

Having faith, believing in what God says, ushers us into this grace of forgiveness, and from this vantage we may gaze towards the glory of God, in justifiable hope of Its Revelation.

Peace. Faith. Hope. All three exclusive property of God, offered only to His children. All others must be devoid of these three. So where does this leave us in the trying times sure to visit us in this life? For the lost, they have nothing from their father to help them, and only more of the same to torment them. There is no hope, only despair and false comfort. Yet for those Found, we shall count it all joy because we can be assured that no aspect is lost on our God. He may, He will, bring trials to us – but He will *never* forsake us. His righteous approval waits for all who will understand and respond. Amen.