

Rough, but Friendly

by C.H. Spurgeon

God's providence is often rough but friendly, and His rough dealings are meant to refine and purify His people, and to prepare them for greater blessings and favors.

Duration: 32:47

Scripture: Genesis 42:6, Matthew 24:6, John 16:33

Topics: "Joseph"

Description

The sermon transcript discusses the concept of experiencing deep trouble and affliction as a means for God to bring about blessings in our lives. It uses various analogies, such as the lapidary's wheel and the balancing of a ship, to illustrate how God uses affliction to shape and stabilize us. The sermon also emphasizes the importance of humility and self-reflection, as it is through affliction that we are reminded of our faults and need for God's mercy. Overall, the sermon encourages listeners to expect blessings in the midst of trouble and to trust in God's sovereignty.

Transcript

The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Rough but friendly A sermon published on Thursday, November 6th, 1913 Delivered by C. H. Spurgeon at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington Genesis 42, 6 Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn And to restore every man's money into a sack And to give them provisions for the way And thus did he unto them An immense number of persons came down into Egypt from all parts of the world to buy corn Many of these Joseph never saw Many others came into his personal presence I do not find that of all who came he treated any of them roughly except his own brethren Strange, you will say And if you did not know the sequel of the story it would not only seem strange but cruel You would not know how to account for such a thing Very like this is the manner of God's providence There are thousands of people living in this world With all of whom God deals according to wisdom We all bear trouble in a measure For man is born under trouble as the sparks fly upwards Some have more troubles than others And these often happen to be those who are dearest to the Lord If any man escaped the rod the true-born children of the royal family of heaven never can Some may sin and prosper But the righteous if they sin, suffer The ungodly are permitted to fatten like sheep for the slaughter to have no bands even in their death Their strength is firm.

They are not in trouble as other men. Neither are they plagued like other men But as for God's people The waters of a full cup are wrung out to them Through much tribulation they inherit the kingdom To them there

is a special promise which is sure to be fulfilled In the world you shall have tribulation Now if we do not know the end of the Lord and his great design in thus dealing with his people It would seem to be strange Inexplicable mystery that the best beloved should be the most afflicted and that the brethren of the reigning savior should be those whom he treats most roughly Others take their sacks of corn and go These tis true shall have their sacks filled and more But they shall not go until first there have been some rough passages of arms between them and the brother Who though he loves them so well Speaks so shortly to them Laying it down then as a rule That God's servants will be dealt roughly with by their master That the brethren of christ must accept it I shall now proceed to offer a few thoughts which per adventure May be comfortable to those of God's people who are in trouble From the text and its surroundings I gather this truth When the Lord is about to give great favors He often deals roughly with those who are to receive them Joseph intends to bless his brethren He has the most liberal of the royal designs towards them, but he first deals roughly with them Before the Lord Jesus Christ shall come to give his church her last and most transcendent blessing in his millennial reign of splendor There are vials that are to be poured out There will be wars and rumors of wars There will be the shaking of heaven and earth great distress famine pestilences and earthquakes The greater the blessing the greater the trial that shall proceed it And so too with our own souls When the Lord Jesus Christ intended to save us And to give us a sense of pardon of our sins.

He began by convincing us of our iniquity He dealt heavy blows at our self-righteousness He laid us in the dust and seemed to roll us in the mire It seemed as though he delighted to tread upon us and to crush our every hope and destroy every fond expectation It was all to wean us from self-righteousness To pull us up by the roots To prevent our growing and taking fast hold in the earth To constrain us to rest in his blood and his righteousness and to seek our soul's life entirely from him That great blessing of salvation was with the most of us at any rate preceded by thick clouds and tempests We were convinced of sin of righteousness and of judgment to come and our heart trembled and Afterwards when he had dealt roughly with us, he said thy sins which are many are all forgiven thee Go in peace It seems then Our experience is general and common That the love letters of our lord christ have come to us in black envelopes And there has generally been a thunderstorm preceding a shower of special mercy The clear shinings have been after the rain The flood tide has come in most gloriously, but there has been an ebb first It has always been so with us till now I think experienced christians begin to dread their joy And to expect blessings from their sorrows When things go ill apparently They know they go.

Well, really And when things go well apparently We are very apt to fear and tremble for all the good which god makes to pass before us And fear lest in the dead calm there may lurk some mischief to our souls Why does the lord deal roughly with his servants when he means to bless them? Is it not to keep them sober? High spiritual joys have about them an intoxicating element to our poor nature Lest I should be exalted above measure said the apostle There was given unto me a thorn in the flesh a messenger of satan to buffet me Sometimes the trial comes before the mercy sometimes with the mercy sometimes after the mercy but a trial and a high degree of spiritual joy are usually wedded together So that when you get the one You may look out of the window for the other tis to keep us sober Here is a brisk gale of spiritual influence upon our fluttering sail What then and why?

Our poor bark would soon be upset But god ballasts us with a weight of affliction So that the vessel may keep steady amidst the waves Master brooks gives us a simile In which he shows us the danger there is even in the best and most spiritual enjoyments he says Suppose a man loved his wife so very dearly And gave her so many rings and jewels and earrings That she prized these and wore them till she began by

and by to dote upon her ornaments And to forget her husband You could not blame him if he took those away Because he wants her love for himself not for his gifts Now instead of taking away these things which it would be necessary for him to do in order to keep us from spiritual ruin The lord is pleased to check our lives There are the bright stripes or evidences of grace And then there are the black squares of our troubles and afflictions In that way An equilibrium is kept up.

We are balanced We do not grow top heavy We are unable to walk safely in the ways of the lord That is one reason he speaks roughly and deals graciously To keep us sober Is it not likewise? To keep us humble When a child of god gets one inch above the ground in his own esteem he gets an inch too high Whenever the man of god saith I am rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing He is hard on spiritual bankruptcy None are so rich in grace as those who pine for more None are so near to fullness as those who mourn their emptiness The men who find their fullness not in themselves, but in christ jesus the lord Brethren those ten sons of jacob must have felt their importance evaporate when joseph put them in prison Here they were true men as they said the sons of one man But no respect is paid to the patriarch or to their patriarchal descent They are put in the ward as if they were common spies whose fate is generally the most ignominious Now They begin to think of themselves in a very different light From that in which they did when they set out with their money in their hands to pay for their corn and have their money's worth They were gentlemen merchant traders when they entered egypt But after a while, they seemed like beggars in their own esteem And better still they begin to recollect their faults They called to remembrance that they were verily guilty concerning their brother And the lord never intends us to ride the high horse in thinking large things of ourselves One thing I have always noticed as an observer That whenever any man of god begins to get great God always makes him smart I think I have never seen a brother prospering in the ministry or anywhere else Who began to be too large for association with his brethren too good and too holy perhaps even to meet with common christians?

Such a man has never kept up long That balloon has come down that bubble has there long gone to pieces The profession of very extreme holiness has generally ended in the most dolorous iniquity And the professed exaltation of the heart on account of talent and success has generally led to degradation and shame Hence the lord who would not have us exalted above measure Speaks roughly to us to keep us humble as well As to keep us sober Why does he deal? Roughly with us.

Is it not to give us another reason for coming to him?

Jacob's sons might not have come down to egypt again They might have said We would rather starve than go to be bull baited by the lord of the land But when simeon is in prison They must go down They have a reason for going and a reason which overcomes them Let them strive against it as they may And child of god When the lord favors thee with his smile And with the light of his countenance he takes care at the same time to give thee a trouble That shall constrain thee to come to the mercy seat Oh, but me thinks it is a blessed thing to go to the throne of grace on an errand Many pray out of custom perhaps that as well But I believe there is no praying like the praying of a man who has got an errand He who goes to god because he needs must go has something to ask for And these rough

dealings of god keep us well stocked with motives for being much on our knees For much pleading with the father of mercies that he would deliver us out of affliction and out of temptation And is not this kindness on our father's part thus to deal roughly with us that he may compel us to the sweet duty of prayer moreover brethren Does it not strike you that the lord's rough dealings with his people when he intends to bless them Have the effect of making them see how utterly dependent they are for that blessing upon him

Why jacob's sons could now see that joseph could lock them up for life or take away their lives Or could send them back if he pleased with empty sacks to starve They were entirely in his hands They had no more power to escape than the dove has from the talons of the hawk So

god would have us know that we are entirely and absolutely In his hand as the clay in the hand of the potter If he pleaseth to withhold his hand all the world and all heaven cannot help us If the lord did not help thee whence shall I help thee out of the barn floor out of the wine press That well stopped All the world is walled up There are no other bottles that can water thee Child of god thou art as dependent today upon the bounty of heaven as at thy first conversion A babe in grace is not more dependent upon god than the mature and venerable christian Our life is in the hand of christ our breath is in our nostrils Let the foundations of our lives either natural or spiritual Be taken away by a cessation of divine power and we crumble into spiritual and into physical death We shall hold

on our way glory be to god, but not from any power that is in us nor through our own innate strength These shall melt away and droop and die under the exigencies of our spiritual pilgrimage It is from the overflowing fountains of inexhaustible strength we must derive our supplies And so hold on to the end thus Treating us roughly makes us like bottles in the smoke We become dry and shriveled up and empty Still it leads us to see how much the lord can do for us Being brought into need it shows that all that is done is done of his mercy and his sovereignty and not of our merit Nor through any concurrent help from us, but altogether utterly and alone of himself Now child of god Let me put this point to thee very plainly without saying anything further Art thou in very deep trouble tonight?

Do all god's waves and billows go over thee Doth deep call and to deep at the noise of his water spouts Then expect That now some great blessing will come of it that stone On the lapidary's wheel has been cut and cut and cut again That other stone in the corner of the shop is but a common pebble And he never vexes it upon the wheel for it is worthless But the more precious the stone is in his esteem the more diligently does he cut its facets Thou art dear to god therefore is it that he tries thee again and again But good shall come of it And thou shalt blaze and sparkle and glitter with grace, which would have been otherwise unknown to thee Thy tribulation Shall work in thee patience And patient shall work experience And experience hope And hope shall make thee not to be ashamed because The love of god is shed abroad in thee Thou art trading in a profitable market There is no usury so heavy as the interest of affliction The black ships of trouble come home laden with pearls of grace Therefore be of good cheer Take the rough usage from thy brother joseph thou must and will prevail But I must change the tune Our next observation upon the text is that while the lord deals roughly with his servants He usually gives them at the same time provision by the way That they may be enabled to bear his roughness and to endure all the difficulties through which they are called to pass you observe joseph had put simeon in prison And it treated his other brethren very roughly Yet he gave them their sacks full of corn and put money into the mouths of their sacks And then as a third blessing He gave them provisions for the way Never does a child of god pass through trial Without some special provision being made for him during his time of need But what provision is this?

Why dear brethren? There are different provisions according to different needs Sometimes the child of god under trial has a wonderful sense of divine love Oh how he loves me saith he There comes stroke after stroke Husband dies child is buried the property is wasted and yet the dear child saith I cannot weep or repine for I feel god loves me I know not how it is But I feel it's so fresh and strong upon my soul and I have such a wonderful impression of that dear love of his That it quite overcomes my sorrows and takes the edge off my griefs and let me say There is nothing that under trial Can support a soul so well As the

love of god shed abroad in the heart by the holy ghost which is given unto us To know that my father sees it all and orders all in love in special love to me Oh, this makes the back strong enough to bear a very world of trouble And yet not to be wearied At other times god's servants have been fed on a joyous view of the covenant of grace I have known some who in their trouble have come to understand the deep doctrines of the word as they never understood them before And could then say with david although my house be not so with god yet Has he made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things in sure?

And as they look to the provisions of that covenant To the sureness of the covenant to the blessings of the covenant to the everlasting nature of the covenant Their souls have been so ravished and transported with joy that they could bear poverty Or pain or whatever form of roughness their heavenly joseph might choose to put upon them Others of the lord's people have been sustained in their trouble By a delightful outlook to the end of their sorrows and the better land on the other side of jordan Oh there have been saints upon sickbeds Who have scarce felt the torture of their pain or their disease through the excess of bliss They have enjoyed in foretaste of the better land Martyrs have been heard to call the fiery faggots a bed of roses And sometimes it has been almost questionable whether they did suffer The bodily pain must have been there But the wonderful excitement of sacred joy in the thought that they were so soon to be with christ And that their burning pile was but a chariot of fire to bear them to their beloved has lifted them up above the tormenting sensation Treated roughly They have been But they have had such provision by the way That they forgot the roughness as they rejoiced with joy Unspeakable and full of glory well may the traveler trip over a rough road When his home is so near before him The glittering spires of the new jerusalem the everlasting rest the sweet fields arrayed in living green the rivers of delight Oh, could we stand where mooses stood and viewed the landscape or Not jordan's stream nor death's cold flood should fright us from the shore Roughly treat us as thou wilt good lord If we have this money in our sacks mouth and this provision by the way, we will be well content The lord sustains his people sometimes under his own roughness By the recollection of their past experiences My god, my soul is cast down within me Therefore will I remember thee from herman and from the hill mizah The faithfulness of god in the past had been so vividly remembered That the child of god could not dare to doubt the evidence of god's love was so strong Vehement and fresh in his soul that he cried though.

He slay me yet will I trust in him? Let him do what he will to me yet. Do I know that in very faithfulness he hath afflicted me He could hear these Silver bells thousands of them all around above below beneath Ringing out this tone For his mercy shall endure ever faithful ever sure Oh, let the hell drum be beaten as loudly as the devil can beat it And let affliction come from heaven and earth and hell all at once While we know that god's mercy endureth forever our mouth shall be filled with laughter and we shall boast in the name of the lord The saints of god have also had this provision by the way in their sufferings They have enjoyed a sight of the greater sufferings of christ Why should I complain of want or distress?

Temptation or pain? He told me no less The heirs of salvation I know from his word through much tribulation Must follow their lord How bitter that cup no heart can conceive which he drank quite up that sinners might live His way was much rougher and darker than mine Did christ my lord suffer And shall I repine? A sight of the steps of the crucified one has often checked the tears Which had been flowing while the enraptured child of god would stand and sing in holy wonder christ leads me through no darker rooms than he went through before He that into this kingdom comes must enter by this door Thus I might continue to show what kind of provision it is That the lord gives by the way But the time fails me Indeed for me to tell you of it Has nothing to do with receiving it Oh child of god, let me rather put it close to you and may the holy ghost comfort you with it You shall never be sent a journey without provender and you shall

never have to go to battle at your own charges If the lord tries you It shall never be above what you are able to bear For he will with the temptation make a way of escape That you may be able to bear it He may treat you roughly But he will fill your sack He may speak sharp words, but he will put your money into your sack's mouth He may take your simeon and bind him before your eyes But he will give you provision by the way till you get to the goodly land where you shall need no more provision But the lamb shall be forever with you and you with him the third lesson which we draw from this is That though the lord treats his people roughly sometimes more roughly than he does any other people yet He gives them the best of the bargain in the long run these his brethren Were the only ones joseph spoke roughly to but they were the only ones upon whose necks he afterwards fell and wept They were the only ones that made the tears come into his eyes They were the only ones of whom he said I will preserve you alive They were the only ones for whom he sent the wagons to bring them down saying also Regard not your stuff for the whole land of egypt is yours They were the only ones whom he brought in before pharaoh and said Behold my father and my brethren They were highly favored And they dwelt in the land of goshen And they had rest child of god You will have the best of it soon Even now you are the only ones that christ deigns to call his brethren You are the only people of whom it is written that you are a people dear unto him You are the only people for whom christ prayed For he said I pray not for the world But for those whom thou hast given me out of the world That they may be one You are the people for whom all things work together for good As many of you as have believed in the lord jesus and are resting upon him for salvation Though your path may be rough and thorny You are the only people Who have god himself to be your captain?

Who have his fiery cloudy pillar to be your direction? And who shall have the everlasting rest? the eternal portion Be of good courage Your riches in reversion are such That you can smile at poverty Your rest which is yet to come is such that you may well despise the labor Which makes you eat your bread in the sweat of your face Your glory which is to come so excelleth that you may forget your poverty and your reproach Your being with christ will be so superlatively divinely blessed That you may well for a while bear to have a rough word or two from him Forever with the lord.

Amen. So let it be when it shall be so When you are forever with the lord if you could be ashamed You would be ashamed and confounded To think that you ever murmured Or ever entertained a thought of complaint against the kind and gracious god Who ordered all things for the best for you to promote your prophet and his glory? May that thought cheer you You who are depressed and cast down And may you go on your way rejoicing As for such as have never trusted christ It often makes my heart bleed when I talk of these things to think that I cannot speak to them That I cannot tell them that these comfortable things are theirs oh unbeliever Thou art an alien and a stranger to the privileges of heavenly citizenship For thee there is no blessedness either now or hereafter Why wilt thou remain an unbeliever Why wilt thou continue to be careless and godless christless I trust the lord hath designs of love to thee Leave thy sins for thou must either leave them or be lost Trust Trust the savior Rely wholly upon his blood and righteousness for there is no other righteousness that can ever help thee But if thou cast thy soul upon him It shall be well with thee forever God grants that we may all be found in the day of the appearing of our lord. Jesus christ as brethren Who are in allegiance to him? So may it be with you all

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