

Trials? Don't Be Surprised!

by Friedel Stegen

Don't think it strange concerning the fiery trials, but rejoice and remember that trials are a test of your faith and a chance to suffer with Christ.

Duration: 47:53

Scripture: Matthew 5:11, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 4:17, James 1:2-4, 1 Peter 4:12, Revelation 21:4

Topics: "Trials"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of trusting in Jesus and obeying Him, even in times of difficulty and suffering. The speaker shares a story of a person who, despite being paralyzed, finds comfort and strength by reminding the devil of Christ's sacrifice and love. The speaker also recounts a touching Easter story told by children, highlighting the significance of Christ's resurrection and the victory over sin and death. The sermon concludes with a reminder that as Christians, we should not be surprised or discouraged by trials and persecution, but rather rejoice in the knowledge that the Spirit of God rests upon us.

Transcript

Our text we find in 1 Peter chapter 4. 1 Peter 4 verse 12 1 Peter 4 verse 12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you. 2 But rejoice, to the extent that you may know that it is not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you. 3 That you partake of Christ's suffering, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.

4 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, 5 Blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. 6 We read thus far, It's a wonderful word of encouragement to each and every one of us. It is so easy that we Christians, when we face difficulties, when we are attacked, or if temptation comes our way, we get despondent.

And we so often get disheartened, discouraged. And we say, what is wrong with us? What have we done wrong? Where have I sinned that this thing comes upon me? Why is it that I am attacked this way? And we get downhearted. We lose our faith.

We feel we are God-forsaken. If we face difficulties, financial difficulties, spiritual difficulties, we tend to lose heart. And we say, everything goes against us.

Oh, what is the good of me being a Christian? I give up. And we forget that God's word says, if these things come our way, if these sufferings come our way, we should rejoice. You know, I always was of the impression that if I've got to suffer for Christ, it'll mean that I'll be thrown into jail, I will be killed, etc.

etc. I always thought that is when I am suffering with Christ. And that's how I interpreted to suffer for Christ.

And so often, when you walk amongst Christians and live amongst Christians, then you, when persecution, you hear that word, persecution, suffering, then you think, oh, that means that I'll be tortured, my tongue will be cut out, and I don't know what all happens if I've got to suffer for Christ. And that's why so many Christians are afraid to suffer for Christ, and they say, no, I'd rather not, I'd rather go the easy way. And in our text we read that, beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trials which is to try you.

And think something strange is happening to you. And it's not that. The Lord Jesus sends these trials to us to sanctify, to purify us.

And we forget, we Christians forget, that in Romans 8 verse 28 we read, everything works together for good to them that love the Lord. And that is so important that we don't forget that. That no matter what we face up to, or what comes our way, that we always remember, everything works together for good to us who love the Lord.

If people mock us, if people despise us, if people laugh about us, that is one way to suffer for Christ. When things are difficult, when we wander around in the desert, where there is no rain, where we suffer hunger, I'm talking spiritually, where we suffer hunger. Where we haven't got a place of abode.

We are reminded of the Lord Jesus. We are reminded of John the Baptist. There in the desert.

There the scorching sun. Where there was no rain. Where things were difficult.

Where they didn't have anything to eat. Where they felt God wasn't speaking to them. To such an extent that the Lord Jesus Himself said, Lord, Lord, why hast thou forsaken me? That is how the Lord Jesus suffered.

That He also felt that the Father had forsaken Him. He suffered. And how often do we get to that point where we say, things are too difficult.

We'll never make it. God has forsaken me. And what's the good of it? I've got no water, I'm dying of thirst.

I read God's Word and it doesn't speak to me. I don't get any water. Because His Word is as the living water.

And I feel God forsaken. And everybody mocks me. They laugh at me, they say, just look at him, he calls himself a Christian.

Just look at how he fails. And you are mocked by people. And you can't stand it.

And you lose your faith. And you forsake the Lord. Instead of waiting upon the Lord.

That you tell your soul, be quiet, be still. Wait upon the Lord. And say, Lord, you cleanse me.

You sanctify me. You purify me. You get me to that place where you will be well pleased with me.

I'm not losing hope. Because you, Lord Jesus, said, if the Comforter will come, if the Holy Spirit will come, He will lead you into all the truth. Do you believe that? That the Holy Spirit is going to lead us into all the truth? That we trust Him as Bernice trusts Corbus.

When she accepted the ring, she trusts Him and says, I know He will be faithful to me. And by accepting it, I'll be faithful to Him. Why can't we do it with the Lord Jesus? Because if she wouldn't trust Him, she wouldn't have accepted that ring.

And the Lord Jesus, when He died on the cross for us, He promised us eternal life. If you stay true to me, I will stay true to you, the Lord Jesus said. And I am only testing you whether you are going to be faithful to me or not.

That's why I allow these things to come your way. That's why these fiery situations I send your way. Do not think it strange concerning the fiery trials.

And these are only there to test you, to try you. And don't think that's something strange that's happening. No, that belongs to us Christians.

That's what we've got to go through. That's how we are being tested. And if we look at our lives today, how easily are we influenced by circumstances, by things which come our way, and we lose heart.

If somebody criticizes you and uses abusive language, how do you react to that? In Matthew 5 verse 11 we read, Blessed are you when men shall revile against you, to criticize in an abusive language, and persecute you, to speak ill about you, to ill treat you, to oppress you, Because of your religious beliefs, they worry you, they annoy you. They talk lies about you. They accuse you of things you haven't done.

And if they talk evil about you, and they falsely accuse you, The Lord Jesus says, if that happens to you, if you suffer with me in that way, you are a blessed people. And in verse 12 we read, Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven. And if we then look at our lives, we stand ashamed and say, oh Lord Jesus.

What kind of Christians are we that get despondent, that lose heart, if a mosquito bites you, then immediately you have malaria. And you've got no backbone whatsoever, and we've all become people, Christians, like butter that melts in the sun. We are the Christians today that can stand, and that will be steadfast, and won't be moved as men of old.

And the Lord says, if we are prepared to suffer with Christ, be rejoicing, be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven. Why is it that we so easily get down hearted? Why is it that if we meet up with difficulties, if people don't understand us, if people talk bad about us, we lose heart, and we want to give up our faith. If somebody doesn't greet me, I'm deeply offended.

If people don't bow before me, and honor me, and respect me, I lose my faith. If I am in bed, and I can't get up, I'm sick, I lose heart, I lose my faith. Oh, may we become a people who will be steadfast and stand.

A man in Dundee in Scotland, he was bedridden for 40 years. And when he was 15 years old, he had an accident, and he broke his neck. And he was completely paralyzed.

But his mind was perfectly clear. But strangely, his spirit didn't get hurt. He was always full of joy and peace.

He even inspired others, the visitors, with a hope that when they left him, they said, oh, I've been blessed by this man. And one day a visitor came to him, and he said, tell me, doesn't the devil come to you and plant doubt in your heart? The day when you've been lying for 40 years in bed, you're bedridden, and doesn't the devil come to you and say, hey, the Lord doesn't love you, he's cast you away? Doesn't the devil come and tempt you that way? And then this man said, oh yes, the devil comes very often. And he tries his level best to take away my joy and my peace.

And when I see my friends running around, going into the cars, enjoying their life, working, and you've got to lie on your back, can't move, is there nothing in your heart that aches and says, why? Why does the Lord allow you to lie there on the bed now for 40 years? Why did he allow that you broke your neck? What do you do when the devil comes and speaks to you like that? And this lame man said, oh, that's no problem to me. When the devil comes to me and speaks to me that way, I immediately take him to Golgotha. I say, devil, come along, let's go to Golgotha.

And then, you know what I do? I show him Christ. And the deep wound on the side. And I show him the hand pierced hand.

And I tell him, do you see what the Lord Jesus has done for me? He has forgiven my sins. Do you see how he loves me? And this is only a timely thing. I'll be spending eternity with him in heaven.

And I tell the devil, do you see the Lord Jesus loves me? And you know, the devil hasn't got an answer for that. And every time the devil's got to flee. And that's why I'm full of joy, full of peace in my heart.

There's nothing that's going to separate me from Calvary. There's nothing that's going to separate me from Christ who died for me, who shed his blood for me on Calvary for the forgiveness of my sins. And how glad I am every time when I sin, I can come to Calvary and say, Lord Jesus, forgive me and he forgives me.

And you know, then I forget that I've been bedridden for the last 40 years. Tell me friend, if you've got a headache, are you still full of joy? Have you got your peace in your heart? And or are you depressed? You lose hope. And if I'm getting old, or if I am old, better said.

It's strange when you get older, you get a pain here, you get a pain in your finger, you get a pain in your back, and you get a pain in your knee, and in your foot. And I'm so old already, I can't climb the ladder anymore. And that fellow who was 40 years bedridden, he had joy, he had peace, and every time when the devil comes with that headache, with that sore toe, with that gout, or with that sore thumb, I take him to Calvary.

And if I'm in financial trouble, Oh, everybody can see it on my face. We lose our joy, we lose our faith. Instead of being like this man from Scotland, and don't forget Scotland, they all say these Scottish people, they miserly.

I hope we haven't got any Scottish people amongst us here this morning. And it plays such an important part in our lives. And we lose our joy, we lose our peace.

And people watch us. And they read us. And they say, is that Christianity? Oh, let us become Christians again, who serve a living God.

That we serve a Jesus who is risen from the dead, reminds me of another story. There was a Sunday school teacher. And at Easter time, she said, you bring me an Easter egg to school.

And take a plastic Easter egg. And you put something which is alive into that plastic. Which symbolizes the resurrection of Christ.

And the children brought a plastic egg. And she opened the first egg. And in this egg, she found a little flower.

And the teacher interpreted this little flower. And she said, do you see this beautiful little flower? That's what happened on Easter Monday, Easter Sunday, when Christ arose. He brought new life to us.

The other child brought her egg. And she had a picture of the Lord Jesus. Where Jesus arose from the dead.

And she spoke about the resurrection of Christ. And then the next child came with her egg. And she opened that egg.

And there was a nail in that egg. And then she spoke about the nail that nailed the Lord Jesus onto the cross. The other one had a small stone in her egg.

And she spoke about that stone which was moved from the door of the grave. When the angel came and pushed that stone aside, and Jesus could arise. And then a seven year old little boy came along.

And he also brought his egg. And the teacher said, Brian, what have you got in your egg? And this little boy was mentally retarded. And he gave her the egg.

And she opened the egg. And there was nothing in the egg. And then Brian said, before the teacher could ask why.

Brian said, the grave was empty. My Jesus has risen. And I believe in a risen Christ.

I believe in a Christ that holds the whole world, the whole universe in His hands. And the grave is empty and He is in my heart. That is why I brought you an egg that was empty.

But I have Him in my heart. He leads and He guides me. He speaks to me.

He leads me into all the truth. He keeps me from sinning. He says, my child, no, no, not that way, but that way.

And although I walk into the valley of death, I know He is with me. He has risen from the dead. Do you know that Christ? Do you know Him? Or are you just a Christian that's something that's written on a piece of paper? Or is He a Christ that is alive? That speaks to me.

That walks with me. That talks with me. That keeps me from sinning.

And even if I don't feel or see anything, I know He's with me. And I trust Him that He will bring me to the portals of heaven one day. All I need to do is obey Him.

Obey Jesus. And I trust Him because He died for me. He gave His life for me.

That He will lead me into a glorious eternity. Let me just read that once again. Something beautiful.

Rejoice and be exceedingly glad for great is your reward in heaven. Be sober. Be vigilant.

Because your adversary, the devil, walks about like a roaring lion. Seeking whom he may devour. Resist him.

Steadfast in the faith. Knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the whole world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, may He perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.

To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, Thou hast encouraged us this morning. What a privilege to suffer with Thee. But we want to go through the suffering victoriously.

Because it's only for a little while. And then it will all stop. And then we'll enter into glory.

And we worship and praise Thee for it. Amen.

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