

(Secrets of Victory) 6. God Has a Purpose in Every Trial

by Zac Poonen

God's ultimate purpose in our lives is to bring us to a place of stability and security in His love, where we can walk in the footsteps of Jesus and partake of His nature.

Scripture: Numbers 21:6, Jeremiah 29:11, Luke 14:33, John 17:23, Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 4:10, Philippians 2:5, Philippians 4:6

Topics: "Sanctification", "Trials And Tribulations"

Description

Zac Poonen preaches about how God's purpose in allowing challenges and hardships in our lives is to draw us closer to Him, leading us to repentance and blessing. He emphasizes that God uses even difficult circumstances to turn people away from sin and sanctify them, shaping them to partake in His nature. Poonen highlights the importance of detaching from material possessions and finding joy in God alone, following the example of Jesus who found His joy in the Father. He challenges believers to die to self, forsake worldly attachments, and embrace total dependence on God's perfect love, which brings peace that surpasses understanding.

Transcript

Life becomes wonderful when we see that God has a purpose - a glorious purpose - in everything He permits to come into our lives. When He says 'No' to our prayers, that too is an answer that comes from a heart of perfect love.

When God sent fiery serpents to bite the Israelites in the wilderness, was that out of love?

The Lord sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. (Numbers 21:6).

That was certainly an act of love, for that was the means that God used to make those Israelites repent and turn back to Him so that He could bless them. He wanted to bless them, but He could not do so until they had repented.

I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for calamity - to give you a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11).

One reason why God has permitted this world to be an uncomfortable place to live in - with disease and sickness and poisonous snakes etc., - is so that people may turn to Him in their distress - so that He might bless them. And so we can see how God uses even the evil (that Satan causes), to work for the furtherance of His purposes.

When we meet the ransomed in eternity, and hear their stories, we will discover more fully how God used snake-bites, financial difficulties, cancers etc., to turn people away from sin to become His children. We will also hear how God used suffering to sanctify His children so that they might partake of His nature.

In that day, we will thank God for many things that we could not understand here on earth. But the man of faith does not have to wait until that day. He believes in God's wisdom and love right now - and so he has already begun to give thanks for everything.

The ultimate purpose in all of God's dealings with us is that we might partake of His nature. God works all things together for our good - the good being that we might be conformed to the likeness of His Son.

God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren". (Romans 8:28, 29).

Why does God allow us at times to lose money accidentally, or to be cheated by unscrupulous people. Many of us have had the experience of having our pockets picked in crowded trains and buses. I've always made it a point to pray for the thief or the cheat on such occasions. But apart from that, God also desires to detach us from an inordinate attachment to money and material things. He doesn't want us to be so calculating, that we worry over every rupee that we lose and rejoice over every rupee that we gain! He wants us to find our joy in Him - a joy that cannot be increased by any material gain or decreased by any material loss.

Jesus walked on earth like that - and we are called to walk even as He walked. The Bible says,

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5).

If someone had given Jesus a gift of ten thousand denarii, out of gratitude for His ministry, that would not have increased Jesus' joy even slightly. His joy was already full and overflowing in His Father.

At the same time, Jesus' joy would not have decreased through any material loss either. Judas Iscariot was often pilfering much of the money that came in as gifts to Jesus. Jesus knew about it; and although He must have felt sorry for Judas, He was never disturbed over the loss of the money itself.

What a different story it is today, with many preachers, and their attitudes to the offerings of God's people! But let us leave the preachers alone! What about us? Can our joy be increased or decreased by material things? Then we certainly need to work out our salvation from such an attitude, by judging ourselves.

If you are really earnest about partaking of the life of Jesus, God will allow a thousand-and-one things to happen to you, in order to deliver you from the love of material things, from seeking the honour of men, from self-pity and many other un-Christlike attitudes.

He won't compel you to go that way if you don't want to. If you are content to live the substandard, defeated life that most believers around you live, He will leave you alone.

But if you are thirsting for God's best, He will deal with you ruthlessly, cutting out the cancers that are ruining you and destroying the idols that corrupt you. He will allow you to suffer pain, disappointment, loss, shattered hopes, humiliation, unjust criticism etc., in order to bring you to that place of stability - where you can't be shaken any more.

Then it won't make any difference to you thereafter, whether you are rich or poor, criticised or praised, honoured or dishonoured. Having gone down into the death of Christ to everything of this world, you would have partaken of the life of Jesus that causes you to walk like a king on this earth.

Always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body" (2 Corinthians 4:10).

Few find this way to the abundant life in Christ because few are willing to pay the price - of total death to Self. We cannot live by faith if we do not die to Self. If we are not willing to be crucified with Christ, our knowledge of God's perfect love will always remain theoretical. We cannot be the disciples of Jesus, if we do not forsake everything of this world,

Jesus said,

No one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions." (Luke 14:33).

We looked at John 17:23 earlier:

I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me.

Jesus wasn't praying there for the world or for carnal Christians. He was praying for His eleven disciples who had forsaken everything to follow Him. Those disciples could find a security in the Father's love that carnal Christians and worldly people could never know.

Why is any Christian a carnal Christian? Isn't it because the Devil has deceived him into thinking that he can be happier if, instead of yielding himself totally to God, he tries to get "the best of both worlds" (as they say). But this is a deception.

If we believed in God's perfect love, we would gladly give up everything for Him, unreservedly. We would then be totally free from anxiety.

Philippians 4:6, 7 commands us:

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Carnal Christians are always wondering whether their boat will sink in the middle of the storm. Jesus could sleep right through the storm, because He was secure in the love of His Father. He knew that the Devil couldn't drown Him so easily. His Father was watching over Him all the time. How wonderful life becomes when we realise that the extent to which the Father loved and cared for Jesus, He loves and cares for us too.

When we finally see God, we will be surprised to discover how much greater His love for us was, than we had ever imagined. We will then realise how foolish all our anxieties were.

But what will be the use of realising it then? Now is the time to have our eyes opened to the fact of God's love and to live by faith.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/secrets-of-victory-6-god-has-a-purpose-in-every-trial/>

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