

Romans 5:3-5

5:3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

To know God (Phil 3), Grow up into Christ (Eph 3) -> Power and ministry comes from misery, it allows us to receive glory and honor from God in the end, it causes us to rule and reign with Christ if we handle it correctly

“We glory in tribulations”

Paul gloried in the trials and tribulations that he endured. Isn't that a strange thing? Who does that? Most of us, including me, get upset and often complain and murmur about it. But that is not how God wants us to go through it. There is a purpose and reason behind our sufferings, trials, and tribulations as Christians, and the Apostle Paul knew this and that is why he got excited when trouble came his way.

The Bible is crystal clear that a Christian will suffer (Philippians 1:29, 1 Timothy 4:10-11, James 5:10, 1 Thessalonians 3:3-4, 1 Peter 1:6-7). How does the LORD want us to handle our sufferings? Be happy in the midst of them (1 Peter 3:13-17, 4:14-16). If we suffer for sin, take it patiently, if we suffer for doing right, take it patiently (1 Peter 2:19-21). The scripture says we have need of patience (Hebrews 10:36) for the LORD is patient.

Paul said his tribulations were for the glory of others (Ephesians 3:13-21, 2 Corinthians 7:4). The sufferings and tribulations of Jesus Christ were for the glory and benefit of others! Paul would actually bow down and praise God for his tribulations (Ephesians 3:14, 2 Corinthians 7:4). He goes on to pray that the Ephesian Christians would understand that strength, power, and knowing God's love, and being filled with the Holy Ghost is related to suffering (Acts 14:21-22).

Ministry comes from misery.

Paul said his tribulations were for others; his problems were for the benefit of others. You know something, not everyone can climb the mountain and get to the top. But everyone has spent plenty of time in the valley. You know what, not everyone can relate to our mountain top experiences with God, but everyone can relate to the valley of the shadow of death experiences we all have had with God. The Psalmist said, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for thou art with me (Psalm 23:4). You are a better minister if you suffer and spend some time in the valley.

Look at Philippians 3:7-14.

In order for Paul to know the Lord he had to suffer the loss of all things and realize all those things were crap in comparison to knowing the Lord Jesus Christ. He did this that he might know him, the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings.

In order to know him, we need to experience the things Christ experienced, not only the sweet fellowship of the Father, and the comforting of the Holy Ghost, but also his

sufferings, and reproach. You ever have anyone say to you, “You just walk one day in my shoes and you’ll see what its like” or something like that? We can have limited knowledge about something from the outside but we truly do not know what it is like unless we have walked in that person’s shoes, experiencing what that person experienced. So it is with Christ, we are to put him on, and go through what he went through, why? As Paul said in Philippians 3, that we might know him and the fellowship of his sufferings.

If we desire to grow as Christians, suffering and tribulations are required. How else will you grow? Unless there is resistance, your body won’t get stronger. Likewise, unless there is resistance in the Christian life, you won’t become a stronger Christian. God wants you to become stronger and grow, so he allows tribulations to come into your life so you can become stronger. God says, I think you are ready for some more weight and we tend to despise it. But that’s what is going to make us stronger, that’s what is going to cause us to grow, that’s what is going to increase our knowledge of God, that’s what’s going to enable us to be better ministers for God.

The Bible says we are to grow up into Christ (Ephesians 4:15) and we will be conformed to his image (Romans 8:29). How can we expect to grow up into Christ without going through what he did? And he suffered. Suffering is tied in to spiritual growth and perfection (Hebrews 2:10, 5:8-9). It behooved him to be made like unto his brethren that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour [to help, aid, relieve from difficulty] them that are tempted (Hebrews 2:17-18).

As it behooved Christ to suffer first, then be glorified, so it is with us that we too are to first suffer, and then be glorified. As it behooved Christ to be made like unto us, so we too must be made like unto him. As he was made perfect through sufferings, even learning obedience thereby, so we too are made perfect through sufferings, even learning obedience to God thereby.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. We too are sons of God by believing on him. If Christ was made perfect through sufferings, how much more does it behoove us to suffer that we might be perfect? If Christ learned obedience by the things which he suffered, how much more do you think particular sufferings, afflictions, persecutions, and temptations, are coming our way that we might learn obedience to God?

As soon as the Spirit descended upon the Lord, he was immediately driven into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. You know, as soon as the Holy Ghost comes upon us, we too are immediately found in temptations and persecutions.

God uses suffering in this life to perfect us (1 Peter 5:8-11). I think this goes back to that age-old question on why God allows evil? (Romans 9:22-24) The book is clear that God suffers long with the wicked that he might make certain characteristics about his person known to his creation that could never have been manifested if God didn’t allow evil for a short while.

When suffering or tribulation comes into your life, it is an opportunity to learn something about God that you can't learn about in heaven. God wants you to know him and he knows that there are only certain things you can learn about him if you suffer – so you suffer. But he is right there with you and goes through it with you!

You know something, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, would have never met the Son of God if they were not cast into the fire! It was when they were cast into the fire, they met the Son of God and the flame hurt them not, but consumed the dross and refined the gold. Not only that, but the Bible says they were cast into the fire all bound up, but when they met Jesus in there, they were loosed from their bounds! God can use the fires of your sufferings and tribulations to free you from the things that bind you!

Lion's den. Without being in the fire they would have never known the Son of God. Some of the closest times in your life with the Lord were when you went through sufferings