

Crossroads Baptist Church
April 22, 2007 10:00
Romans 5:3-5
Romans #26

“You Can Rejoice in Hard Times” Romans 5: 3-5

Extreme Home Makeover on ABC was like that. There was a lady in Brandon, MS that had given so much to hurricane relief but she was a single mom living in a house that the toilet did not work, no running water in the house. They sent her and her three children away and demolished her house, built her a new one with all new furniture and then said, “There is more.” They then gave her a new Ford SUV.

God is like that but even better with His gift. He keeps giving and giving.

I. You can rejoice because you know that God still has good things for me.

“Not only that...” – we have peace with God, access by His grace and a confidence that we shall see Him in all of His glory – There is more!!! We can also rejoice in our hard times.

Trials are not a possibility, or even a probability, they are a promise. Trials are not always a sign that something is wrong; they can be a sign that something is right.

Acts 14:22 “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”

Jack Taylor said that there is one word that will always describe a spirit filled believer and it starts with a T. Its not tongues, but trouble.

“Tribulations” - pressures, the feeling of being crushed, hemmed in, squeezed, hardships, sufferings – hard times!! It was used of squeezing the grapes to produce grape juice or pressing the olives for olive oil.

But instead of murmuring and complaining, we can rejoice. We can glory in them. Someone said, “We don’t growl in our tribulation, we glory in them.”

“We boast...” The word describes the neck of a person who is proud over himself or a possession. The person here Paul is describing is proud of the rejoicing that he can have over the trial he is going through.

The Holman Bible translates this “But we also rejoice in our afflictions....”

James 1: 2-4 “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.”

We are to boast in our trials. This is not for the super Christians, but the normal Christian. It would be abnormal not to.

It does not mean we enjoy the pain or put on a fake “happiness.”

II. You can rejoice because of God’s purpose for my hard times.

“knowing” – this is not something you come to know, but you already know it.

What do we know?

A. God’s purpose is to produce endurance in us.

Perseverance – endurance. It has the picture of steadfastness. This word is some times translated patience, but another word that is used more for patience deals with the ability to endure difficult people. The word here is *hupomone* which literally means “abide under.” To stay under the load.

It’s the word used in Hebrews 12:2 speaking of Jesus “...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross,”

There is no true salvation with endurance. We would have never been able to be saved had Jesus not endured, and if you are saved you will endure.

The parable of the soils in Matthew 13: 20-21. The third soil has received the seed with joy but it has no root and it endures for awhile. For when tribulation (the same word used here in verse 3) arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.”

If we have the real thing in us, we will endure. Manley Beasley said, “Faith that fizzles had a flaw from the first.”

The testing does not cause the flaw, it just exposes it.

Matthew 10:22 “He that endures unto the end will be saved.” It’s the same word.

God is a masterful gardener. He will only send a storm strong enough to test the root and strengthen it, but not destroy it. And with each storm, the tests get harder in order for the root to become stronger so you can endure more and more.

Sir Winston Churchill was invited back to his alma mater, Harrow, to address the students near the end of his storied life of public service, which included guiding Britain through her darkest and finest hours. When the five-foot, five-inch bulldog of a man took the platform, everyone waited breathlessly upon his words—and they would never forget what they heard:

“Young gentlemen, never give up.
Never give up.
Never give up!
Never! Never! Never!”

With that Churchill sat down. We are to diligently live out in their faith. Are you about to give up beloved? Don't do it! Never give up! Never! Never! Never! He Who promised is faithful to fulfill His promise that He would never, ever, no never leave you nor forsake you. The Christian life is not a sprint, but a marathon. Over the years we have been repeatedly saddened by acquaintances who did not persevere and who dropped by the wayside of this world.

This endurance then leads to another purpose of God:

B. God's purpose is to produce character in us.

The word “character” in the LXX was a word that was used of testing materials for purity and genuineness.

We should know that God will test us to prove our faith.

An untested or untried faith is not a reliable faith.

Hebrew 5:8 “Jesus was matured, humanly speaking, by the things he suffered.”

God's purpose is for us to be like His Son.

Romans 8:17 “...if we suffer with Him ..we will also be glorified with Him.”
Romans 8:29 “For those He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son,”
Job 23:10 “knows the way I take; when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold.”

James 1: 12 “Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been proved (same word as character), he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”

I Thessalonians 3:3 (NAS) “so that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this.”

Then this character produces.... Hope.

III. You can rejoice because you know God will get you through the hard times.

Enduring these hard times produces hope that it builds a confidence in you that you are seeing good things; we know that God is at work; and that the trials are not meant to kill us but purge us.

With this passing of the trials, you will never be disappointed or ashamed. The longer you stay in something, the more you invest. And may be at some point you wonder, is this worth it? Am I going to regret that I've put this much money or energy or time in this?

But with Christ, the answer is that you will never regret it. You will never be ashamed that you put so much trust in God and leaned on His Word.

IV. You can rejoice because you know God still loves me despite the hard times.

“God's love has been and continues to be poured out.”

This is not our love for God; but God's love for us.

The question of God's love has been settled.

Romans 8: 35 “Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation (that's the same word as verse 3), or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”

Don't you want to give your life and follow a God like this?