

CELEBRATING ADVERSITY

In the childhood phases of the Christian life, we celebrate when we fulfill our human, earthly dreams. Our earthly desires & goals are the focus of our prayers. As we progress into spiritual adulthood & maturity, we learn that our earthly dreams often have little to do with God's dreams for us. We learn to seek & focus on the things above where Christ is seated, not the things of the earth (Col 3:1-2). We learn to celebrate our part in God's victories, to save unbelievers, edify other believers and defeat the forces of evil. We learn to celebrate our adversities knowing that God is using them to transform us from temporal concerns to eternal results.

(Rom.5:1-2) "Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, whom also we have obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we rejoice in confident expectation of the future glory of God".

Rejoice – *kauchomai* – to boast, brag, celebrate, rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

- Rejoice as we envision being there with Jesus when He returns to the earth, the drama of the Great White Throne Judgement & the new heavens and earth – forever in eternity.
- Justification, peace with God, access to the King, standing in grace – celebrating our union with Christ

(Rom.5:3-5) "And not only do we rejoice in the confidence that we will share in the Lord's glory, but we also rejoice in our **adversities**, knowing that **adversity** develops **endurance**; and endurance allows us to experience proof; and witnessing the **proof** of the power of God's promises produces **confidence**, and confidence in God never disappoints, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us".

Rejoice in our tribulations – *thlipsis* – trouble, difficulty, adversities; **Jn 16:33** in the world you will have thlipsis but be encouraged because I have overcome the world; **Jam 1:2** different kinds of temptations – *Peirasmos* – testing's, temptation to sin.

Develops – *katergazomai* – *kata* – downward pressure + *ergazo* – use energy: to develop or produce something using great pressure – to hammer out with heat; manufacture a product by pressure/struggle

a. **Endurance** – *hupomone* – remain under the weight, be steadfast under pressure

- Patience under adverse circumstances – to remain under the pressure of waiting on the Lord to fulfill His promises to us, producing confidence that He will.
- Endurance is developed confidence that God has given His word and that He will move heaven & earth if necessary, to honor it – so we stand firm, waiting on Him

b. **Proof** – *dokime* – gold having been purified by melting rendering a true, purified weight & value *Dokimazo* – process of purifying ore out of the ground by superheating it. Gold is heavier than other metals and they boil up to the top to be scooped off by the goldsmith. As he continues to purify the gold, he knows it is pure when he can see his face reflected in the gold with no blemishes – the fire of adversity.

- As we endure, waiting on the Lord to honor His word, we discover that He always does, we become totally persuaded that He is faithful – proof.
- Adversity is a challenge for the believer's faith but what is put to the test is God's word where He can prove to us over and over under pressure that He is faithful to honor His promises.

c. **Hope** – *elpis* (persuaded confidence in God’s proven faithfulness) will never disgrace us because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts....

- Disgrace – *kataischuno* – to be dishonored, disgraced, put to shame, disappointed
- When our confidence is in God, we will never fail or dishonor Him or self

d. **Love of God** – *agape* poured out into our hearts.

- Poured out – *ekcheo* PfPI – completely poured out, none left to pour out.
- At salvation, in union with the beloved Son, we became the object of all His divine love

(James 1:2-4) “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have *its* perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing”.

1. Living under the effects of Adam’s Original Sin and the devil’s world guarantees that the lives of believers and unbelievers will be filled with difficulties & challenges of all kinds.

- a. Adversity describes the outer circumstances and events that run contrary to our human agenda.
- b. Suffering describes our inner experience when we interpret difficult circumstances negatively
- c. The Old Sin Nature, plus our Belief System produces adversity within the soul that drags us away from God and His will.
- d. The Devil’s world produces adversity from the outside challenging what we believe about life

2. God uses the normal adversities of life under the Old Sin Nature and the devil’s world to perform a manufacturing work on the soul of the believer.

- a. He exposes our wrong beliefs, habituated thinking patterns & any behaviors we practice that are not aligned with His will for our life, so that we might see them to remove them.

(Deut 8:2-5) “led you into the desert to reveal what was in your heart; humbled you, let you be hungry to feed you with manna for you to know that man does not live by earthly bread alone....”

- b. He uses the normal adversities we all face as challenges us to use the armor of God and to develop New Man spiritual skills unto a mature man in Christ – practice (Eph 6:10-17)

3. God uses the normal adversities in the Angelic Conflict as His opportunity to demonstrate His Perfectly Righteousness Character and to provide the believer with the opportunity to reveal God’s blessings that trusting/obeying God produces - that fallen angels rejected!

- Satan accused God of unfairly limiting his options & unfairly & harshly judging him and his followers.
- Angelic Conflict is likened to a trial with God as prosecutor and satan as defense attorney.

(Gen 3:1-5) the devil told Eve that God was holding out on her, limiting her options to live the way she wanted.

(Job 1-2) the devil told God: take away everything & he will curse you (like we did); threaten his life and he will turn against you (same way we did) – satan justifying his actions, arguing that it wasn’t his fault.

(Eph 3:8-10) God is using us, the church, to demonstrate His wisdom to fallen angels!

4. One way to imagine the goal of the Christian life is to have moved from our earthly, human agendas to be able to rejoice when we face challenges because of the spiritual growth we experience and the impact for God as He demonstrates His love, grace, and wisdom to His creation.