

Facing Trials with Faith: Growing through adversity.

With Bishop Ronald K. Powell

Introduction:

A great time of testing is coming upon "those of understanding." Who are these people to be tested? They are the righteous, those who do exploits for the Lord, who walk with God and have the wisdom of Christ.

Perhaps you've wondered lately, "why am I being tested? Why is all of this happening to me?" Go back to your school days. When a test was given, it revealed how much you had actually learned of what you had been taught.

Paul speaks of a different school, one where we are "learning Christ" and are "taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus" (Ephesians 4:20-21).

If you belong to Jesus, you are in His school. If you have served him for many years, you may have thought you'd graduated, but none of us graduates until we are in glory with him.

David spoke often of being tested and tried: "I know also, my God, that you test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness." (1Chronicles 29:17)

My dear brothers and sisters, if you desire to walk righteously before the Lord, rest assured you will be tested. In fact, the deeper your walk with Jesus, the more intense your testing will be.

The Bible makes this clear: "Daniel 11:32 King James Version.

32 And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. 33 Those with insight will instruct many, though for a time they will fall by sword or flame, or be captured or plundered. 34 Now when they fall, they will be granted a little help, but many will join them insincerely. 35 Some of the wise will fall, so that they may be refined, purified, and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time.

Today we gather to reflect on the challenges and trials that we face in our lives. It is important for us to understand that these trials are not meant to break us, but to strengthen our faith and character.

As we delve into this topic, let us seek guidance from the scriptures and explore the meaning behind the tests that we encounter.

We are tested by afflictions and sufferings, both our own and sufferings of other believers.

Scripture 1: James 1:2-4 (NIV)

"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."

Explanation:

In this passage, James urges us to view our trials as opportunities for growth rather than as reasons for despair. The testing of our faith is not intended to cause us suffering, but rather to produce in us the endurance and maturity that will make us whole. When we face trials with a joyful spirit, we demonstrate our trust in God's plan for our lives and our willingness to grow through adversity.

We are tested by delayed answers to prayers.

Scripture 2: 1 Peter 1:6-7 (NIV)

"In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."

Explanation:

Peter reminds us that our trials serve to refine and strengthen our faith, just as fire refines gold. The genuineness of our faith becomes evident through the endurance and perseverance we exhibit during difficult times. Moreover, when we remain steadfast in our faith, it brings glory and honor to God, and it testifies to the transformative power of our relationship with Christ.

We are tested by our Falls and Failings.

Scripture 3: 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 (NIV)

"For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So, we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."

Explanation:

Paul encourages us to maintain an eternal perspective when facing trials. While our troubles may seem overwhelming in the present moment, they are temporary when compared to the eternal glory that awaits us. By fixing our eyes on the unseen promises of God, we can find hope and strength to endure the challenges that we encounter in this life.

Scripture 4: Romans 5:3-5 (NIV)

"Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."

Explanation:

In this passage, the apostle Paul tells us that our sufferings can lead to positive outcomes. Through suffering, we develop perseverance, which in turn builds our character and ultimately leads to hope. This hope is rooted in the love of God, which sustains us and enables us to endure the trials we face.

Four types of Satanic assaults

1-Temptation Matthew 4:1-11

Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness

1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple.

6 "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"

7 Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.

9 “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”

10 Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

2- Oppression Acts10:38

³⁸ How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

3-Fear Romans 8:1-15

8 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

³ For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

⁴ That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

⁵ For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

⁶ For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

⁷ Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

⁸ So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

¹⁰ And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

¹¹ But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

¹² Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

¹³ For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

¹⁵ For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

4- Accusations of the brethren-reminds you of past sins which have been forgiven

Revelation 12:10 ESV

And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.

- 1- Satan it is written
- 2- Jesus healed all that were oppressed
- 3- Perfect Love Cast out fear
- 4- We overcome by the blood of the lamb and the word of our testimony

Conclusion:

My dear friends, as we navigate the trials that come our way, let us hold fast to the promises of God. Our faith is being tested to produce perseverance, maturity,

genuineness, and hope. Let us rejoice in the knowledge that our temporary struggles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. May we trust in God's plan for our lives, and may our faith shine brightly as a testament to His grace and love.

Let us embrace our trials with faith, knowing that they are not arbitrary but purposeful. They serve as opportunities for spiritual growth, refining our character and deepening our trust in God. As we face our trials, may we draw strength from the scriptures and the examples of faithful individuals who persevered through adversity. Let us remember that God is with us in our trials, and He will never forsake us. May we emerge from our trials with a stronger, unwavering faith, ready to serve and glorify God in all that we do.

As we move forward, let us keep in mind the words of James 1:12 (NIV), "Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him." May we all find comfort and strength in the knowledge that our trials are not in vain, but are part of God's redemptive plan for our lives. Amen.

Let us Pray!