

Sermon Notes for April 25, 2010

Sermon Series
Trials in the Christian Life
“Dealing With Our Trials” – Part II
Romans 5:1-5

Introduction

- A. There Is **A CERTAIN WAY THAT CHRISTIANS SHOULD THINK.**
 - 1. **Verses**
 - a. **Proverbs 23:7 (KJV)** – “For as he **thinketh in his heart**, so is he:”
 - b. **Matthew 22:37-38** – “Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul **and with all your mind.**”
 - c. **Romans 12:2** – “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, **but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.”
 - 2. Our Christian lives will be determined **BY HOW WE THINK!**
 - B. There Are **CERTAIN BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES THAT WE ARE TO THINK ABOUT.**
 - 1. We are going to look today at the need to think about:
 - a. our **justification**
 - b. our **glorification**
 - c. our **sanctification**
 - 2. And, not only will we look at these wonderful Biblical principles, but we will look at how they affect our lives today, especially in our daily trials and struggles as Christians.
- I. We Are TO REST IN OUR PAST – Our JUSTIFICATION**
- A. **The REALITY OF OUR JUSTIFICATION**
 - Vs. 1** – “Therefore, **since we have been justified** through faith,”
 - 1. **AS CHRISTIANS, WE NEED TO GRASP THE REALITY OF OUR JUSTIFICATION.**
 - a. **Man’s problem** with sin
 - 1. What most people do not realize is that, due to man’s sin, **God must punish sin**
 - 2. And man will either have to pay for his own sins or have someone else make that payment for him
 - b. **Jesus’ payment of sin**
 - 1. Jesus Christ came to this earth to “become” that payment for man’s sin
 - a. Jesus Christ lived a perfect life on this earth
 - b. And then went to the cross and died for the sins of man as the perfect sacrifice
 - 2. Jesus suffered the wrath of God upon the cross and fully “absorbed” God’s punishment.

c. **Man's position**

1. If sinful man personally receives Christ's work on the cross, that person is seen as "justified"
 - a. to be righteous
 - b. to declare one to be just
 - c. innocent, faultless, guiltless
2. Because of the believer's dependence upon Jesus' death, God "sees" sinners "**through**" the righteousness of Jesus Christ (**slides**)
2. So, as Christians, we need to "rest" in our justification.
 - a. As Christians, we must believe that Christ's work is enough on our behalf
 - b. We do not need to "do anything" else but rest in His finished work.
 - c. TO DOUBT YOUR SALVATION IS TO DOUBT WHETHER JESUS' DEATH WAS "ENOUGH"

B. The **RECEPTION OF OUR JUSTIFICATION**

Vs 1 – "Therefore, since we have been **justified through faith**,"

1. The "**means**" by which we receive this justification is "**by faith**".
 - a. All that we have to do to be saved and justified is to receive by faith Jesus' finished work on the cross on our behalf.
 - b. We simply need to say to God: "God, by faith, I accept Jesus' work on the cross to save me from my sins." **THAT IS ALL YOU HAVE TO DO TO BE SAVED**
 - c. The bombardier on the Enola Gay
 1. At 8:15 a.m. on Aug. 6, 1945, **Colonel Thomas Ferebee**, then a 26-year-old major, **pushed a lever in his B-29 bomber, the Enola Gay**, making sure an automatic system he had activated seconds earlier had functioned. He watched as a single, 9,000-pound bomb turned nose-down and fell toward its target, Aioi Bridge, which he had personally selected from aerial photographs.

He said, "Bombs away!" forty-three seconds later, when the Bomb had fallen from 31,000 feet to 1,890 feet above the target, the sky erupted in a dazzling light, and the earth soon seemed to seethe like boiling liquid. The bomber, also called The Superfortress, veered away from the swirling explosion in a steep, 150-degree turn.

The bombardier napped on the way back to the air base in the Mariana Islands, just as he had on the flight to the target. **He had been asleep two hours earlier** when the pilot, **Col. Paul W. Tibbets**, who had named the Enola Gay after his mother, **first told the crew they were carrying an atomic bomb.**

2. Colonel Ferebee was born in **Mocksville, NC**. He attended Lees McRee College in **Banner Elk, NC**. Trust me, Colonel Ferebee knew nothing about atomic energy. **He simply “by faith” pushed the lever that dropped the bomb that ended the war in the Pacific.**
 - a. we make the same “kind of step of faith” when we trust in Jesus
 - b. the great transaction that happened between a wrathful God and the Lord Jesus Christ is received by a simple “act of faith.”

2. WHAT A PARADOX!

- a. we are justified
 1. seen as righteous
 2. seen as perfect
- b. by an act of faith
 1. nothing that we did to earn it
 2. we simply ACCEPTED it.

II. We Are to REJOICE IN OUR GLORIFICATION – Our FUTURE.

Vs. 2b – “And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”

A. We Have CONFIRMATION IN OUR ETERNITY.

1. Not only should we be confident that we are justified in this life
2. We are to have the same confidence that we will spend eternity in heaven **BECAUSE OF OUR JUSTIFICATION!**
 - a. This is not just some “Sunday School teaching”
 - b. We are talking about being in heaven FOREVER.
3. When we die, we will be taken to heaven
 - a. There, we will see the glory of God
 - b. There, we will see the resurrected, glorified Lord Jesus Christ
 - c. There, we will receive a glorified body!

B. We Have CONFIDENCE IN OUR ETERNITY

1. The word for rejoice actually means to boast
2. So, not only are we to have confidence in our eternity, WE ARE TO BE PROUD OF IT!

A. HOW CAN YOU BE PROUD OF SOMETHING THAT YOU DO NOT KNOW IS TRUE?

- b. We believe in the reality of our eternity with Jesus Christ SO MUCH that we can BOAST ABOUT IT!

III. We Are To REASON WITH OUR JUSTIFICATION AND GLORIFICATION

A. Now, WHAT DOES OUR JUSTIFICATION AND GLORIFICATION HAVE TO WITH OUR TRIALS AND STRUGGLES?

1. We can **rest in our justification**
 - a. We can know that we are saved – that we are justified
 - b. We can understand that we are seen as righteous by our heavenly **father**

- c. We can depend on Christ's work for us in the **PAST**
- 2. We can **rejoice in our glorification**
 - a. We can know that one day, when we die, we will be taken to heaven where we will live forever
 - b. And will be given a glorified body to live with Christ forever – in the **FUTURE**

B. Our Justification and Future Glorification DOES NOT PREVENT US FROM EXPERIENCING PRESENT SUFFERING.

- 1. In **SPITE** of our righteous standing with Christ, because of His work for us in the past, and our glorification in heaven in the future . . .
- 2. **WE ARE CURRENTLY LIVING IN THE PRESENT**
 - a. Where God **STILL** has a lot of work to do in and through us
 - b. "Before" we get to heaven

IV. We Are To REALIZE WHAT IS HAPPENING THROUGH OUR SANCTIFICATION IN THE PRESENT

A. We Are To EXPECT TRIALS IN THIS LIFE.

- 1. It may be confusing to understand why "justified" and "to be glorified" saints need to be "sanctified."
- 2. Let me give you an illustration of marriage.
 - a. When a couple gets married, they are legally united, either in a religious or civil ceremony
 - 1. The ceremony makes the marriage "official"
 - 2. That marriage is now legally binding
 - 3. This is just like our conversion—it is a legally binding relationship to God, just like our justification.
 - b. After years and years of marriage, the couple looks to retire.
 - 1. They look forward to their "golden years" together
 - 2. They don't have to work and can enjoy their lives together
 - 3. These "golden years" in a marriage could represent our future glorification, the end of our Christian lives on this earth.
 - c. **HOWEVER,**
 - 1. despite a couple being legally married or "justified"
 - 2. and despite a married couple's golden years – their "glorification"
 - 3. That married couple spent some 30 – 40 years "between" their getting married and their golden years
 - a. the years of building a marriage
 - b. the years of buying houses, cars and clothes
 - c. the years of starting and raising a family
 - d. these "in between" years represent the Christians' life between the "past of his justification" and the "future of his glorification"
 - e. and inasmuch as a married couple needs to learn to change during those years of marriage, the Christian needs to "change" between his justification and his glorification.

B. We Are To Be EDUCATED IN OUR TRIALS IN THIS LIFE

1. Our attitude in trials

Vs. 3 – “Not only so, but we also **rejoice** in our sufferings”

- a. Just as Paul called believers to “rejoice in our glorification” we are to “**rejoice in our trials**”

- 1. in both cases, the word means to

- a. rejoice
- b. boast
- c. to give praise

2. WHY WOULD ANY SANE PERSON GLORY OR BE PROUD IN HIS SUFFERINGS?

- a. **ONE**, DESPITE our present justification and future glorification, **BELIEVERS ARE STILL SINNERS!**

- 1. and, as sinners, WE STILL NEED A LOT OF WORK!

- 2. BECAUSE OF OUR SINS, GOD MUST CHANGE US AND MOLD US in order to make us more like Himself.

- 3. Christian let me ask you some questions:

- a. **Do you need to be more spiritual or are you now “just like Jesus?”**

- b. **Do you live your life in a totally Christ-like manner?**

- c. **Do you think more of others that you do of yourself?**

- d. **Do you love the Lord and others more than you love yourself**

- e. **And finally, are you really ready and prepared to meet Jesus the way you are today?**

- b. **TWO**, God’s work to change and mold us proves that God is in our lives and at work in us

- 1. God started the work in us

- 2. and He will finish the work in us

- 3. **Philippians 1:6** – “being confident of this, that **He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.**”

- b. So, that is why we “rejoice” in our trials

- 1. trials hurt

- 2. but, they “prove” that God is at work in our lives

2. The **appraisal of trials**

Vs. 3 – “Not only so, but we also rejoice in our **sufferings**”

a. suffering **defined**

1. Greek

- a. thilipsis
- b. to squeeze; as in olives or grapes
- c. to burden
- d. a narrow, confined space

2. Latin

- a. tribulum
- b. a board with spikes used to separate the wheat from the draft

b. suffering **applied**

1. suffering should not be defined as catastrophic circumstances only
2. suffering or trials in this text refers to “**anything that takes you out of your comfort zone**”
 - a. a struggle at work
 - b. a problem at home
 - c. unpaid bills
 - d. the loss of a job
 - e. being persecuted because you are a Christian
3. these struggles “cause” you to be uncomfortable and to seek the Lord
 - a. these situations make you feel uneasy
 - b. Many years ago, fishing for **codfish** up in the Northeast had become a lucrative commercial business. The fishing industry in the northeast recognized that there was a great market for codfish all over America, but their problem was distribution. At first, they simply froze the fish, as they did all of their other products, and shipped it out all across the country. But for some reason, after the codfish was frozen, it lost its taste. So, the owners decided to ship the fish in huge tanks filled with fresh seawater. But to their disappointment, this process only made matters worse. Because the fish were lethargic and inactive in the tanks, they became soft and mushy and once again lost their taste.

Then one day, someone decided to put some **catfish** in the tank with the **codfish**. Catfish and codfish are natural enemies, so as the tank traveled across the country, the codfish had to stay alert and active and be on the lookout for the catfish. Amazingly, when the tank arrived at its destination, the codfish were as fresh and just as tasty as they were in the Northeast.

Like the catfish, maybe your adversity, your weakness, was dropped into your path, into your life for a purpose. Maybe these stresses were put in your life to challenge you, to strengthen you, to sharpen you, to keep you fresh, to keep you alive and active – to **MAKE YOU TOTALLY DEPENDANT ON GOD FOR HELP AND STRENGTH**

- c. Let me ask you a question: What is the catfish that is in “your tank” today? More than likely, God is using that stress to keep you sharp and depend on Him.

3. The **action of trials**

Vs. 3 – “Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering **produces** perseverance;”

- a. Paul gives **THE REASON** why Christians go through trials
- b. The word produces means to create something that was not there before
 - 1. because humility was not in our lives before our conversion, God “creates” situations that create humility through trials.
 - 2. because serving others was not in our lives before our conversion, God “creates” service through trials
 - 3. this week, a Kenyan runner ran the fastest Boston marathon, 2.05, that has ever been run (previously 2.07). Do you think that this Kenyan runner was able to run that fast sitting at home watching T.V. and eating twinkies?
 - a. Kenyans run all the time in their home country
 - b. That is why they are the greatest distance runners in all of the world
 - 4. **Evangelist Billy Graham** illustrated this by a story from the Great Depression. A friend of his had lost a job, a fortune, a wife, and a home. But he was a believer in Jesus Christ, and he hung to his faith tenaciously even though he could see no purpose in what was happening. One day in the midst of his depression, he was wandering through the city and stopped to watch masons doing stonework on a huge church. One was chiseling a triangular piece of stone, “**What are you doing with that?**” he asked.

The workman stopped and pointed to a tiny opening near the top of a nearly completed spire. “**See that little opening up there near the top of the spire?**” he said. “**Well, I’m shaping this down here so that it will fit in up there.**” Graham’s friend said that tears filled his eyes as he walked away, for it seemed to him that God had spoken to say that He was shaping him for heaven through his earthly ordeal.

4. The accomplishment of trials

a. perseverance

Vs. 3 – “Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces **perseverance**,”

1. perseverance **defined**

a. patience under pain

b. to continue working and serving in the face of strong opposition

2. perseverance **applied**

a. Biblical perseverance suggests that, because a person has experienced trials, they have learned to continue to serve Christ **DESPITE** the trials

b. That person will also continue to serve without complaint

c. If a believer cannot learn perseverance, he or she will never “last” in serving others, but will “drop out” when life gets hard

d. James Boice – “So, here is one thing that separates the immature person from the mature one, the new Christian from one who has been in the Lord’s school longer. The **new believer** tries to **avoid the difficulties and get out from under them**. The **experienced Christian** is **steady under fire and does not quit his post**.”

e. trials that teach us perseverance are training us to be able to serve Christ “in the fourth quarter”

1. football games are won and lost in the fourth quarter

2. that is why the best basketball coaches run their players so much in the off season

3. Coach Bruce Pearl noticed that during the NCAA tournament, Ohio State “had lost their legs” toward the end of their game with Tennessee

b. character

Vs. 3-4 – “Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, **character**, and **character**, hope”

1. character **defined**

a. proof, testing

b. character actually refers to the making of coins

1. In ancient times, coins were not made in a mold as our coins are

2. Some people would often trim off some of the precious metal of a coin

3. After enough metal was trimmed away, they would sell it for new coins
 4. After a coin had been trimmed for a long time, it was no longer worth as much as when it had been originally made so the coin would be taken out of circulation
 5. the coin was no longer worth its original amount
2. character **applied**
- a. a person who has been through a great deal of trials begins to change
 1. in fact, their very “character” changes
 2. whereas, they had been selfish, because of their trials, they became selfless
 3. whereas, they had become prideful, because of their trials, they became humble.
 - b. perhaps the best illustration of this is seen when dentists make gold teeth
 1. when a dental technician uses gold to make a tooth or filling, the gold “looks” to be solid and pure
 2. however, when the technician puts the gold in a crucible and then turns on the bunsen burner
 3. after the gold has melted, something called “dross” begins to rise to the top, unseen impurities that were in the gold before it was melted
 4. after being melted and heated, the gold’s “character” has been changed, due to the heat placed upon it.
 - c. My 10-year High School reunion
 1. I became a Christian in high school
 - a. before my conversation, I was the most prideful, arrogant, selfish, judgmental person in my school
 - b. after my conversion, God began a work of changing me
 2. At my 10-year high school reunion, I was voted “least changed” of all my classmates. I knew however, that I was the “most changed” of everyone there, because of who I had become since high school
 3. some of those people had not “changed at all. Their character” was still the same

c. **hope**

Vs. 3-4 – “Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character, and character, **hope**”

1. hope **defined**

- a. expectation of good
- b. to anticipate, usually with pleasure

2. hope **applied**

- a. you need to notice why Paul put these three words in this order; **perseverance, character and hope**

1. as a young believer, you have no **”spiritual endurance”**

- a. So, God has to “put you through the paces” to develop your perseverance and He does this through trials.
- b. for those of you who are runners: do you remember the first time that you ever ran? You thought that you were going to die, and now, you run 5 k’s and marathons.

2. you then begin to experience **“a change”** in your life

- a. you saw that you could “do it”
- b. you realized that God was doing a work in your life
- c. you were changing. Your **character** and make-up were changing
- d. you were becoming a “different person”

3. you began to see God move in your life “so many times” and “in so many ways” that you actually began to **“have hope”** when you began to go through a trial

- a. you saw that God was faithful. You learned that God was working in your life.
- b. so much so, that you had hope in the trial, knowing that God was doing a work in your life
- c. as if to say, **“What is God up to now?”**

- d. my 10 years as a Pastor in a small town
 - 1. I was trained to be a Bible teacher
 - 2. I built buildings
 - 3. I learned about world missions
 - 4. and then, I was called to plant a church in Knoxville
 - a. I had been “trained” to plant this church
 - b. I had “done it all before”
 - c. The “trial” of being in a previous church prepared me to plant this church.

Conclusion:

1. You can be a believer who is **“justified”**
 - a. one who **knows** the Lord Jesus Christ and rests fully in His finished work on the cross on your behalf
 - b. one who knows that you are righteous **DESPITE** your sins
2. You can be a believer who looks forward to heaven and his future **“glorification”**
 - a. you know that, just as Jesus Christ went to heaven and glory after His death . . .
 - b. so will you
3. **BUT**. . . **DESPITE** knowing all of this, you must realize that God still has a lot of work to do in and through you on this earth, “between” the time of your justification and your glorification
 - a. and the main method that God uses to change us on this earth is through trials, stresses, and struggles
 - b. trust me . . .there is a purpose in these trials—to make you more like Jesus; more of a servant, more of a Godly person, more of a light to the world.

4. **The Cracked Pot by Mary Dessein**

A water bearer in India had two large pots.

Each hung on each end of a pole while he carried the pots across his neck.

One of the pots had a crack in it.

While the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master’s house,

the cracked pot arrived only half full.

For a full two years, this went on every day.

However, the bearer delivered only one and a half pots full of water to his master’s house.

Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made.

But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, the poor cracked pot spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream.

“I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you.”
“Why?” asked the bearer. “What are you ashamed of?”

“I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master’s house.”

Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don’t get a full value from your efforts,” the cracked pot said.

The water bearer said to the cracked pot,
“As we return to the master’s house,
I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path.”

Indeed, as they went up the hill,
the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path,
and this cheered it some.

But at the end of the trail, the cracked pot still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load.
And so again, it apologized to the bearer for its failure.

The bearer said to the cracked pot,
“Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of the path, but not on the other pot’s side? That’s because I have always known about your flaw. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path and every day while we walk back from the streams, you watered them.”

For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master’s table.
Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house.”

5. **II Corinthians 4:7-10** – “But we have **this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.** We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of **Jesus may also be revealed in our body.**