

ENDURING TRIALS

2 Thessalonians 1:4

John 15:18-27

Acts 14:19-23

Have We Seriously Considered the Cost?

(Luke 14:25-33)

- YES, there is a COST in being a Christian!
- Our SALVATION is ABSOLUTELY FREE! (Ephesians 2:4-10)
- Living the Christians LIFE is DIFFICULT. (Matthew 7:13-14)
- Christ sent His disciple out as "sheep among wolves"! (Matthew 10:16-18)

Trials to Persecution

- (John 16:33) You will have tribulations! - PROMISE by Christ.
- (Matthew 6:34) Each day has enough trouble of its own.
- God is SOVEREIGN over everything that happens to me (Lamentations 3:37-38) and has appointed everything for my good. (Romans 8:28)
- (Matthew 10:37-39) He/she who does not pick up HIS/HER cross is not worthy of the Christ. Crosses are APPOINTED! (1 Thess 3:2-3; Acts 9:16; 1 Peter 4:12)
- Trials can be as small as a toothache to daily difficulties to being sentenced to death for living the Christian life.
- Trials, troubles, afflictions, difficulties and persecutions comes to all saints.
- Trials, troubles, afflictions, difficulties and persecutions TEST our faith. (1 Peter 1:6-7)
- The trials we are speaking of today are those trials that come as a result of us LIVING OUT OUR FAITH.

The Church of Thessalonika (2 Thessalonians 1:4)

- A church to be boasted about.
- BUT Paul's boasting was not in anything that the Thessalonians were doing – BUT what God was doing in and through the Thessalonians. (See Philippians 2:12-13)
- The church of Thessalonika was a TRUE church of God.
 - She had realized that she was PURCHASED by God Himself. (Acts 20:28)
 - She realized that she was NOT HER OWN. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)



14 February 2021

- She had PICKED UP HER CROSS and decided to FOLLOW in the FOOTSTEPS of her Saviour and LORD. (Luke 9:23; 1 Peter 2:21)
- She had COUNTED the COST! (Luke 14:28, 33)
- She understood that she had been granted (given the gift) of FAITH and the PRIVILEGE of suffering for (with) Christ. (Philippians 1:29)
- Her election as God's chosen/special people was obvious to others. (1 Thessalonians 1:4) She lived as the children of God and not the children of the world/devil. (1 John 2:28-3:10)
- Her faith WORKED - did what her Lord commanded. (1 Thess 1:3; James 2:14-26) She was known by others for her faith/works. (1 Thess 1:8)
- Her faith was GROWING EXCEEDINGLY. (2 Thessalonians 1:3)
 - ☆ She had a DESIRE to grow. (Ezekiel 11:19; Luke 9:23; Hebrews 8:10)
 - ☆ She was DETERMINED to grow. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)
 - ☆ She was DISCIPLINED. (Galatians 5:22; Eph 4:2; Col 1:11)
 - ☆ She was DILIGENT. (2 Peter 1:5-10; 2 Tim 2:15; Heb 11:6; 2 Peter 3:14-18)
 - ☆ She DID the Word of God. (James 1:22; Matthew 7:21-23, 24-27; 12:50; 28:20; Luke 8:21; 11:28; 1 Peter 4:2; 1 John 2:3-6; Deuteronomy 10:12-13; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)
- She was an EXAMPLE for others to follow. (1 Thess 1:7; 1 Cor 11:1)
- She SOUNDED FORTH ("sounding the trumpet") the Word of God. (1 Thess 1:8)
- Her LOVE LABORED - it was not just words. (1 Thess 1:3; 1 John 3:16-18)
- Her love toward each other was ABUNDING. (2 Thess 1:3)
- She ENDURED in the midst of great tribulations and persecutions. (1 Thess 1:3; Acts 14:22)
- She turned away from the things of the world and SERVED (δουλεύω douleuo - "to be a slave; to obey; to serve") God. (1 Thess 1:9)
- She groaned for the return of her Lord. (1 Thessalonians 1:10)

Promises of Tribulation/Persecution (2 Thessalonians 1:4)

- PERSECUTION, TRIALS and TRIBULATION is a PART of God's plan!
- Consider carefully what God says about persecution:
 - Persecution is a MARK of true followers of Christ. (2 Timothy 3:12)
 - Jesus Christ PROMISED His disciples that they would be HATED and PERSECUTED. (Matthew 10:22-24; John 15:19-21)
 - Tribulations are a PART of LIFE for a Christian. (John 16:33)
 - Christ warned those who would consider following Him that they MUST pick up their crosses and deny self in order to FOLLOW Him. (Luke 9:23; Matthew 10:37-39)

- Paul and Barnabas “strengthened the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in **the** faith, saying, “**WE** must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:22)
- It has been granted us (“graced”) to believe **and** suffer for His name sake. (Philippians 1:29)
- Promise of reward because of persecution:
 - (Matthew 5:10-12) The reward of persevering through persecution for Christ’s sake is a GREAT REWARD in heaven.

The PRIVILEGE of Suffering for Christ. (1 Peter 4:13; Acts 5:41; Matthew 5:10-12)

Our RESPONSE to Tribulations:

- If we REVILE back (criticize, attack, speak evil of, revenge) we have sinned because we have not FOLLOWED the in steps of Christ.. (1 Peter 2:21-23)
- Our response MUST be GREAT JOY!
 - (Matthew 5:10-12) – Rejoice GREATLY.
 - (Luke 6:22-23) – Leap for JOY!
 - (Acts 5:40-42) – Consider it a privilege to suffer for His sake. (See 1 Peter 4:13-14; 2 Thessalonians 1:5)
 - (James 1:2) – Consider ALL JOY! Tribulations produce perseverance in us!
 - (Romans 5:3) – GLORY in tribulations because they work patience in us!
 - (2 Corinthians 12:9-10) – Take PLEASURE in them because “when we are weak we are strong” – because we learn to TRUST in Christ alone.

When Trials Come . . . (2 Thessalonians 1:4)

- **PATIENCE/ENDURANCE:** self-control; self-restraint; persistence; perseverance; endurance; determination; resolve.
- How to ENDURE trials/tribulations/persecutions for the glory of God:
 - ① **EXPECT** tribulation and persecutions. (2 Tim 3:12; Acts 9:16; John 16:33; John 15:18-20)
 - It is God’s plan to PERFECT our FAITH. (1 Peter 1:6-7)
 - Our FAITH is more important to God than our bodies.
 - We are called to IMITATE Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:1; Eph 5:1-2)
 - ② **PRAY** for endurance/patience,steadfastness – not necessarily freedom from and deliverance from. (James 1:12) Pray for MORE GRACE. (James 4:6)
 - ③ **PUT on the ARMOR** - Satan will use tribulations/persecutions to shake one’s faith. Put on the WHOLE armor of God is a command. Above all else, take up the SHIELD of faith. (Ephesians 6:10-20)

- ④ **REJOICE** that you suffer for His sake as He suffered for your sake.
 - Matthew 5:10-13; 2 Corinthians 4:11; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10; 1 Peter 4:13; 1 Peter 5:10.
- ⑤ **MEDITATE** on the glories to come and how they make today’s tribulations like nothing.
 - Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17; Hebrews 10:34; Matt 5:10-12
- ⑥ **LOOK to JESUS and the CROWN.** Christ ENDURED the Cross for US! He was FAITHFUL to God’s will for His life. (Hebrews 12:2) He looked BEYOND the Cross knowing something much better was promised by His Father. God had promised a CROWN to those who remain FAITHFUL unto death. (Revelation 2:10; 2 Timothy 4:8; James 1:12)
 - (Hebrews 6:10-12) Those who endure receive inherit the promises!
- ⑦ **CHOOSE to BE FAITHFUL TODAY.** Christ told His FAITHFUL saints at the Church of Smyrna, “Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer . . . BE FAITHFUL . . .” (Revelation 2:10)
- ⑧ **CHOOSE to LEARN & GROW in the MIDST of TRIBULATION, TRAILS and PERSECUTION.**
 - (Romans 5:3-4) Tribulation produces perseverance; perseverance produces character. (James 1:2-3)
 - (1 Peter 1:6-7) Trials, tribulations, and persecutions will grow our faith to the glory of God.
 - (Psalm 119:67, 71, 75) Affliction grows our obedience.
 - It is WRONG to ask God, “Why is this happening to me?” in the sense that we feel we do not deserve this trouble.
 - God is FAITHFUL is all His judgments. (Psalm 119:75)
 - We should ask, “What are You trying to teach me?”

NEVER WASTE A TRIAL

- ⑨ **REMEMBER** that it is God’s place to bring vengeance not ours – and He has PROMISED that He will.
 - Nahum 1:2, 6; Deuteronomy 32:35; Romans 12:19; Hebrews 10:30
 - Christ is our EXAMPLE. (1 Peter 2:21-23)

WHEN TRIALS COME

Glorify God and GROW!