

Life Link

Countdown:

Back Ground: Light at the End of the Tunnel

Music Video: In Christ Alone

Sermon Video Illustration: Living Hope (Sermon Central)

Title: "When Life Throws You a Curve"

Big Idea: Christians can rejoice through trials as God refines their faith through them.

Text: 1 Peter 1:6-7 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, NKJV

Introduction: We can rejoice as we go through hard times when we understand: There are **two main purposes** for the trails that come into our life. **One of the purposes is to purify our faith.** It is to purge our faith. The trial of your faith is to purge out some impurities. The **goldsmith** will take the gold, and he will put it into a melting pot. Then he will **begin to heat that pot**. As the gold begins to melt and liquefy into hot liquid, the **gold settles to the bottom** and the **impurities of the gold rise to the top**. Then the goldsmith will take a skimmer and he will **skim those impurities off the top**.

That is exactly what happens when trails come in our lives. When you and I get into the fire of troubles and difficulties and when the fire of difficulties comes, it causes the impurities in our life to rise to the top. When the pressure is on, when the fire is on, and when we're going through the fire, we learn a great deal about ourselves. All of the sin begins to rise to the top.

The first purpose of our trails is to purge the sin from our lives – make it surface so God can rid it from our lives. But the second purpose is make our faith more genuine. Remember Peter writes in verse 7, "*7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold.*" Now he says that purpose of trouble is to purify our faith so that our faith will be genuine and real. We never know what our faith is really like until it goes through the fires of testing

I. **God's Perspective on Our Trials**

"Though for now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials."

- a. God uses the trials to refine and define our faith much as if were preparing for an athlete prepares for competition. 2 Tim 2:3-7 that we must endure the hardships, the various trials so that may please God through the appearing of Jesus. Our faith is strengthen so we can receive the crown of life. 2 Timothy points out that a farmer must work hard in preparation to receive the fruit of his labor. Therefore the Christian must realize as a Child of the King we will face difficulties, and those difficulties are not meanness but strengthen our faith not in ourselves but in God and His Son.

2 Tim 2:3-7 You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. 5 And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. 6 The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops. 7 Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things. NKJV

- b. "Various Trials" implies that each trial or testing will vary from the next. As we are strengthened in one area of our life God then begins to work on another aspect of our lives to bring us to a point of completion of our faith. Just as a weight lifter must not only work on the strength of his arms but also develop his whole body in order to reach his goal.

Text Illustration: God Is The Goldsmith

God - the goldsmith, looking at the gold in the fire, has His eyes on the gold. He's got his hand on the thermostat and he's very careful. He'll never put too much fire on us. He'll never put the fire to the point that it will harm my faith or your faith but rather that it will purify our faith.

How does the goldsmith know when its time to take the gold out of the fire?" When the Goldsmith sees His own reflection in the gold, he knows that it's time to take the gold out of the fire.

Are you going through a hard time? Are you having troubles and it's straining your hope? You wonder when the fire is going to be over. Jesus is looking at you and me, and He wants us to become more like Him. As our faith is put to the test and tried, when we become more like Jesus and He can see the image of Himself in our life. When we are more like Jesus, then the LORD takes us out of the test. God's purpose is, one day, that you and I shine for Him in glory.

1 Peter 1:7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, NKJV

- *"That the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes,*
1. **Trials Proves Genuineness -Genuineness of Our Faith** is the absolute corner stone of redemption. Faith without testing is not faith but a claim that is unproven. Strong's defines the word *dokimion* as a testing or a trustworthiness of our faith. **James 1:3** "Knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience". The testing ("**fiery trials**") brings about patience and perseverance in our lives. The test which we undergo brings about a result more precious than gold that will "perish" but it will produce a faith that will endure to the praise, honor and glory when Jesus Christ comes.

1 Peter 1:6-7 Pure gold put in the fire comes out of it proved pure; genuine faith put through this suffering comes out proved genuine. When Jesus wraps this all up, it's

your faith, not your gold, that God will have on display as evidence of his victory. (from THE MESSAGE: The Bible in Contemporary Language © 2002 by Eugene H. Peterson. All rights reserved.)

Text Illustration: **TESTING THE GENUINE**

All sorts of things are tested to prove that they are genuine. When you go to a bank and give a \$20 bill to the cashier, she holds it to a special light. Why would she do that? Because she is testing it to make sure it is genuine. During the time when the Philippines was not using a special light to determine the genuineness of the dollar bills. The bank tellers would just hold the dollars close to the light and then examine the pictures that were printed on the dollar bills. I was so curious what the teller was doing and I asked him how to know that the dollar is genuine by just looking at it. He told me that if the hair of the picture of a man on the dollar is not combed properly the dollar is fake. (Joel Sumaqaysay, Evangelical Christian Church)

2. **Trials Brings Value**- We expect EVERYTHING that has value to be tested. The faith that is not tested is the faith that cannot be trusted. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb 11:6). therefore it is not enough to say "I have faith", faith that is not tested and has not been proven to be genuine (The Message by Eugene Peterson) is not "faith" at all. Genuine faith is put to the test and proven. Peter compares the faith that is real and genuine to be tested as if it were ore mined from the earth and then put in the fire and subjected to testing in order to determine it's purity an value.

The comparison suggested by Dr. Kenneth Wuest is that of a prospector bringing ore in to be tested. The assayer gives him a certificate stating that the ore contains gold. The certificate is the approval of the ore, and this paper is worth much more than the little sample of ore that was tested. In the same way our faith is tested, a "sample" at a time; and the approval of our faith means that there are more riches to follow. The suffering we endure here will result in more glory when Christ comes. Knowing this, we love Him the MORE. (from Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament. Copyright © 1992 by Chariot Victor Publishing,)

***Psalms 66:10** For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined. NKJV*

3. **Trials Refines Our Faith**-The Psalmist in Psalms 66:10-12 states that God is testing us, our faith as if it were a precious metal to refine and define our faith in order to bring us to a point that our lives will radiate the glory of God through the "living hope" Jesus Christ.

Psalms 66:10-12 For You, O God, have tested us;
You have refined us as silver is refined.
11 You brought us into the net;
You laid affliction on our backs.
12 You have caused men to ride over our heads;
We went through fire and through water;
But You brought us out to rich fulfillment. NKJV

Job 23:10 But He knows the way that I take;
When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold. NKJV

Paul points out "...in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope." (Rom 5:3-4)

Paul tells us that the "testing" or "tribulations" will produce an absolute surety in the "living hope" Jesus Christ when He comes. Many believe that the life of a Christian is and will be trouble free, a life without difficulty but, Peter states that we will face the "fires of testing" and the testing or tribulation's end result brings us hope. That "hope" is a confident expectation of the inheritance that is to come through at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:3-4 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, **knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. NKJV**

James 1:12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; **for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. NKJV**

Isa 41:10 Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right

II. God's Purposes for Our Trials

"....so that.....your faith...may be found to result in praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

1. Purpose of Our Testing

- a. In the Book of Job Chapter One (1) Satan levels an accusation against Job, he (Job) is considered by God as a man who " perfect and an upright man, one that fears God (Job 1:8). Yet Satan challenges the faith of Job and says to God "does Job serve God for nothing" Scripture tell us that the protection of God has been placed around Job.

The Hebrew word used in the text "for nought" (OT:2600 chinnam (khin-nawm');) denotes that all that he had did not cost him anything or that he had an advantage it came freely and a result of God's favor of him and on all that he did; the work of his hands, his personal life and even the community in which he lived he had received the blessing of God. Satan insist that Job's service to God was motivated out of pure greed for what he could get as a result of service to God. Were Job's motives purely self-centered or did Job serve God because he truly love God?

Peter points out that the testing we face is for a purpose, just as God permits Job to be tested in the end Jobs testimony will not be that of things of this world but, will result in praise, honor and glory for God. Therefore the refining fires of testing define and confirm that it is God's and not ours.

Jude 24-25 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,
 And to present you faultless
 Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,
 25 To God our Savior,
 Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty,
 Dominion and power,
 Both now and forever.
 Amen. NKJV

2. **Trials Have a Purpose** -The apostle's discussion of proven faith in the first part of verse 7 actually leads into his main point in the latter half, namely that believers would rejoice in the prospect of a promised [praise], honor, [and glory]. True faith will ultimately come through all of life's troubles and trials and obtain eternal commendation from God. Peter's focus is not on Christian's honoring God (though they will--Matt.28:16-17; John 4:23, 9:38; Rev. 4:10-11), but on His commendation of them.

Text Illustration: Engineers tell us that the only way that metal can safely be used is after testing it. And it must exceed the testing requirements. Repeatedly. The metal to be used must be pure. And in order for it to be purified, it must go through fire. It must be melted, and molded to fit the designers purpose.
 Just as metal must be molded, purified, and tested; we have to be tested before God will use us for His purposes

Paul Billheimer, author of the book *"Destine to the Throne"* asserts that as a Christian, as pilgrim facing the struggles of this world prepare His Church as the bride of Christ. This preparation takes place as believers engage in spiritual warfare, and as they exercise believing prayer. God has chosen to work in the world through His children's prayers; Christians need prayer in order to practice for their heavenly destiny.

The Fiery trials that the believer face are not meaningless and have a purpose. The purpose is prove us and refine our faith That refining process produces a solid, steadfast and genuine faith that will bring glory to Jesus Christ. Additionally the life refined by the fire of tribulation will point others to Jesus.

3. Three words are used to describe this privilege/hope of believers:
- a. The word "**Praise**" speaks of God's approval of the believer as opposed to His attitude toward those who will have shame as a result of not trusting in Jesus (salvation). In addition, the Lord promised a commendation to the faithful in Matthew 25:21-23. To receive the praise of Christ is worth the temporary sufferings of life.
 - b. The word "**glory**" (doxa) denotes a state of being which is largely unattainable in this life, but which is promised to each believer at the coming of the Savior (Rom. 2:6-7, 10). The word suggests a radiant and glowing state (Luke 2:8-14). Glory may relate best to the eternal Christ likeness that God will give to every believer (John 17:22; Rom. 9:23; 1 Cor. 15:42-44; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 John 3:2).

- c. The word "**honor**" points to the exalted position of the glorified believer. It may be best understood as referring to the rewards God will give believers because of their service to Him (1 Cor. 3:10-15).

All three of these qualities are the natural properties of the Lord. They are to be bestowed upon the believer at the coming of Christ. Peter says that this the believer's hope in 1:13. Jesus also spoke of such eager anticipation of eternal reward in Luke 12:35-37.

Conclusion : In times of trouble we see just the way we really are. When we get into the fire of trouble, then all of the stubbornness, all of the selfishness, all of the ugliness and harshness, all of the bitterness in our life rises to the top. It is at that time that we need to pray and cry out to the Lord to skim that sin from our lives.

As a pilgrim, a child of the King of kings and Lord of Lords that our live will not be trouble free but it will developed our faith, and strengthen it that we may point others to Jesus and may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

James 1:12-13 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. NKJV

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