**Romans 5:3-11 – When Life Hits Us Hard**

As we continue in Romans, we are still in **Rom. 5**. One of the things that we struggle with sometimes as Christians are those difficult, trying times in our life. **Jam. 1 and 1 Peter 1** discusses that trials can grow our character and prove our faith to be real.

Here in **Rom. 5** Paul continues his thoughts regarding the fact that we are justified, made right in our standing before God. That we have peace with God and experience peace in our lives. We have direct access to God through His grace and faith in Him, and we have a hope for the future.

Beginning in **vs. 3 of Rom. 5**, Paul brings to light that the character of who we are, where we really are standing spiritually, maturity wise, is seen in how we handle difficult times. In **vs. 2** Paul noted that we can rejoice in the hope we have that our future is secure in Christ because we are justified, at peace with God, and have direct access to Him.

In **vs. 3** Paul says because of these truths, and that we are secure in our future, and knowing what trials can do to us if we approach them with a wrong attitude, Paul says, because of all that God has done for us, we should be able to **“rejoice in our sufferings.”**

The idea of **“rejoicing”** has to do with us glorifying God because of our relationship with Him, the closeness we have with Him, the love and care He has for us. Trials were never taken off the table just because we became a Christian.

The word **“sufferings”** is not something we look forward to. But it is the reality of life, and Christians, no matter who they are, go through them.

As a side note, I find it fascinating that some teachers, specifically those who claim that healing is our divine right and part of the New Covenant, don’t practice what they preach. One of them, for example, has a pacemaker to help with his irregular heartbeat.

Yet, one of the articles put out by this individual’s ministry, **“How To Get And Keep Your Healing”** states,

**“Your days of sickness and disease are over. No matter how long you’ve been struggling, no matter how serious your situation—healing belongs to you.”**

**The same article also says, “Healing is your Covenant right. If you want it—it’s yours. It’s not up for debate, as far as the Word of God is concerned. The problem is, most Christians haven’t truly believed it.”**

Does this preacher want what he claims we have. Does he believe that. Would God not heal his irregular heartbeat if he had faith. Others in this camp wear glasses. Would God not heal his eyesight. I am not saying these things to mock these people, though I think that many of them teach heresy in so many areas that is deeply unbiblical which we do not time to unpack today.

The point is, trials and difficulties, and that would include health issues or money struggles, were taken off the table or disappeared the moment we became a Christian. The Bible does not state that.

Now, to some points to consider.

**1) Tough times happen to everyone.** As we just noted, Christianity does not guarantee an easy, perfect life. It does guarantee that we have a God Who will walk with us through those times. The point is **“sufferings”** come to all believers. The word means **“a pressing, a pressing together, being squeezed into a narrow place, tribulation, affliction, distress, trial.”** Believers suffer troubles and difficult times. We are not immune to those.

What is important, according to Paul, is how we respond to those times in our life that stretch our faith. That is what is important. Look at the word **“rejoicing”** in **vs. 3**. Can we be joyful in trials. Yes, because joy is not connected to circumstances. It is connected to us resting in God’s amazing grace and knowing that He is with us in the most difficult of times.

Rejoicing requires a close connection to the Lord. I think it is hard to rejoice, to glory in God, even in difficult times, if our relationship with Him is out in left field. It is not that we have to say, **“thanks Lord for the illness I have.”** But it is being thankful that God is with us in that time, or in any time that is a trial. Stuff happens **(Jam. 1:2)**. Trials happen to everyone. Again, Christians are not immune.

Jesus went through tough times, more than we have or will. He was beaten and crucified for us, bearing the sins of every person who has ever lived and will live, yet note **Heb. 12:2**. The cross was horrible, but the joy of bringing us salvation trumped whatever suffering Christ endured for us.

We cannot overlook the word **“knowing”** in **vs. 3**. The knowing of trials here is to know by intuition or perception, or as we experience things. A we grow in our Christian life, we come to understand, if we are willing, that trials can work to help us grow, to develop our character.

**Point:** Have we learned anything from tough times. Do we rejoice, trusting in God that He is with us even when trials hit. Can we look to Him and be thankful for His presence. If not, we need to grow in that area of our life.

**2) We can learn patience through difficult times.** This, of course all depends upon our attitude. If I blame God or complain about tough times, it is hard to grow as a Christian. Note **Rom. 5:3**.

Difficult times can **“produce” (bring about, result in, to do that from which something results)**, if we are willing, **“endurance.”** There are a couple of words among a few others that are translated as “endurance” or “patience” in the NT. As we have noted before, one of those words has to do with when we are wronged by someone, we do not seek revenge or retaliation, that we are patient with them.

The other word, which is used here in **Rom. 5:3** and in **Jam. 1:3**, describes someone who even when going through a difficult time, a trial, they do not deviate from their faith in God. They persevere, they stand firm in what they believe. They are also loyal even in the midst of the greatest trials and sufferings as **Joseph Thayer** points out. Circumstances do not overcome our belief in the Lord.

This patience, this endurance, is something we come to know and understand over time. We must remember that. It is part of growing. It is part of our maturing as a Christian. We will face difficulties, the question is, “How will we handle them?”

**Point:** When difficulties hit, we must lean into God by faith and not focus on the situation though we cannot ignore it. What we do is hang on to the knowledge that God has been there with us, that He has gone through difficulties (think of the cross of Jesus), and that we know that in other times of trial, God has been there with us.

**3) We grow as a person through difficult times.** Note **Rom. 5:4**. We read here that patience **“produces”** character.

The word **“character”** is descriptive of when we go through trials, it shows a level of maturity, of proven character (who we are as a person) depending on how we handle trials. This comes through experience and times of trials. How do we respond when things go south in our life? Do we blame God? Do we see what we can learn from the situation? What character issue may I need to grow in? How we respond matters in our spiritual growth.

We show our relationship with God by how we have handled the difficulties, the trials. So, when we think about throwing in the towel, or wondering what God is doing, or are unhappy with having to endure some things, think about how God is making us into a diamond for His glory. Our character comes out and is seen in how we handle life. God chips off the edges that we need to work on.

**Point:** Do we live under constant stress, worry, fears, when things get tough. Or do we face the wind and show that God is indeed Lord of our life, and we are going to allow Him to help us grow in our relationship with Him, proving our character. You could say that God gives us a “thumbs up” depending on how we handle these difficulties. We must lean on Him in those times to help us learn and walk through them.

**4) Remember that our hope is in Christ.** The idea of hope is that one day we will be with the Lord. But we also have hope now, because we know that we belong to Christ and He will never leave us nor forsake us.

And when life throws us curveballs, please remember that God is not out to get us. Stuff happens, even to Christians, and it is not always explainable. But I know that God has not left us alone in those situations. We have Him, we have the people He brings into our life.

Note in **Rom. 5:5** that Paul says that hope does not disappoint or **“put us to shame.”** Hope does not deceive us. God will fulfill His promises to us. God will not push us away or let us down and the reason: the Holy Spirit lives within us and God’s love is a part of our lives and has been revealed to us, given to us. God loves us as His child. He gives us the Spirit and reminds us of His love for us **(1 Jn. 4:9-21)**.

And we exhibit that love as a fruit of the Spirit **(Gal. 5:22-23)**. God’s love being given to us happened one time, at the moment of salvation, but the results stay with us. He always loves us, and we are to show that love to others.

He will help us to love others. I like how **Joseph Thayer** notes the word for **“poured”** in this verse. He says that **“the Holy Spirit gives our souls a rich sense of the greatness of God’s love for us.”**

Because we have the Holy Spirit, we are promised an amazing future and are **“sealed”**, given an inheritance, a place in heaven **(Eph. 1:13-14)**. See also **Titus 3:5-7**.

As God’s child we have a future as well as a present. Christ died for us, showing His love as **Rom. 5:6-10** tells us. Note **vs. 8**. God showed His love towards us that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. In these verses, including **vs. 5**, we see how God, the Trinity, is at work in our lives.

In **vs. 6**, in our weak spiritual condition, that of being ungodly, Christ died for us. We in a message several years back talked about the timing of Christ coming to earth, why He did so when He did. **Gal. 4:4** reminds us that just at the right time Jesus came to live among us.

We were **“weak” (helpless)** as **vs. 6** says, to save ourselves, to fix anything. We did not have the strength to take care of our sinless condition. We were unable, thus we needed God to step in and He did. We were powerless to do anything. As **Mounce** states, **“This refers to our inability to wage war against sin and its power. All of humanity has been asthenes (weak) at one time; many still are.”**

Do not overlook the word **“for”** in **vs. 6**. It can mean **“instead of, on behalf of.”** We should have borne the penalty of sin, but Jesus took our place, He was our substitute. We could not save ourselves. Christ did this for us, and it is to our advantage, for our benefit, that He was willing to do so.

We really do not fit with either word in **vs. 7**, **“righteous” or “good.”** For no one is righteous before God. Even if the world thinks someone is a good person, that does not mean they necessarily would be willing to die for them. And Christ died for us who were sinners, not the good or righteous. And **vs. 7** leads into **vs. 8** so we don’t need to overthink **vs. 7** as if “righteous” and “good” are separate categories of people in which some may be worth dying for. **Vs. 8** is the point to note.

God continues to show His love, literally **“is showing” (vs. 8)** to those of us who fit the category of being a sinner (that would be all of us), Christ died for us, in our place. Instead of us paying the penalty of sin, Jesus became our substitute and died for us.

**Vs. 8** also reminds us that God did not die for us because He thought, “Wow, are you awesome. I need you on My team.” It was His love that motivated Him to save us sinners, nothing in ourselves that led Him to do this.

Think about it. Love is an action word. It wants the best for others, putting them above ourselves. God wanted the best for us, and Christ was willing to do what was necessary to make it happen. See **1 Jn. 3:1** regarding God’s love for us, along with many other verses **(Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 3:16)**.

**Vs. 9** reminds us that we will not face God’s judgment, we are saved from that. Those without Christ will unfortunately be separated from God for all eternity. We have been reconciled to God because of His death and resurrection **(vss. 10-11)**. God also saves us, we could say, from the power and guilt of sin because Christ intercedes for us, and the Holy Spirit helps us to live as we should. As **Rom. 6** tells us, sin has no more power over us.

**Point:** Keep in mind all that God offers us, even when things are tough. Spend time thanking Him for the goodness and love He shows us.