Teaching: Blessed Through Trials
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Why does God allow trials?

- God did not create us for trials
- Because of sin, the world is broken
- Why doesn't God stop them?
- He will in the end, but God does not wish that any should perish
  (2 Peter 3:9b)

How does God use trials?

Pruning (e.g. Job)
John 15:1-2 *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit."*

- Pruning only occurs if we are walking with God
- It is not the result of sin; God uses it to draw us closer to Him and increase our faith
- Do not avoid the Lord's pruning; you may fall into sin, which could lead to discipline

How does God use trials?

Discipline (e.g. King David)

Hebrews 12:11 *For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

Discipline

- Discipline occurs when we allow sin to reign in our life
- God uses discipline to draw us back
- If we cooperate with God's discipline, He will care for us while we go through it
- Do not avoid the Lord's discipline, if you do it could eventually lead to punishment

How does God use trials?

Punishment (e.g. Ananias and Sapphira)
Acts 5:4b-5a *You have not lied to man but to God." When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it.*

Punishment

- Punishment occurs when we reject God and his plan for us
- God uses it as a last resort when we refuse to respond to His discipline
- God uses punishment as a warning to others
- God uses trials to draw us and/or others closer to Him
- So why don't we always feel blessed?
- We have a worldly view instead of an eternal view.
    - Esau took a worldly view and lost his birthright Hebrews 12:16-17
    - Jesus took an eternal view of the cross Hebrews 12:2

Desire	World's Way	God's Way
Exalted	Promote yourself	Humble yourself
First	Push others out of the way	Be last
Rich	Accumulate wealth	Give wealth away
Blessed	Avoid pain	Suffer trials
Heaven	Less sin than others	Acknowledge you're a sinner

- We think of a blessing as something received in this world
- God views blessing as something received in eternity
- Remember the Beatitudes! Matt. 5:3-11
- Why would God bless me with something on earth that would cause me loss in eternity?

Other benefits of trials

- A more complete understanding of God's sovereignty
- A witness to others (if we respond positively to pruning or discipline)
- To comfort others (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

My story

1 Peter 2:24 *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.* ***By his wounds you have been healed.***

Our trials are like a woman in labor

John 16:21 *When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world.*

- The pain is real; we don't have to like it
- The pain seems like it will last forever, and we question why it is necessary
- But – we know the pain has a good purpose, so we can endure it
- No woman would wish her pain away by wishing her baby away
- When the baby is born, she forgets the pain because of the joy of holding her new miracle of life!
- When in a trial, focus more on the future benefit rather than your pain

God promises that everything we go through will benefit us eventually

Romans 8:28

And we know that for those who love God ***all things work together for good****, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

But remember why God allows these trials in our life

Romans 8:29

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be ***conformed to the image of his Son****, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*

Luke 22:42-44 *"Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

My favorite quotes on trials

God will not protect you from anything that will make you more like Jesus."

Elisabeth Elliot

We can trust and find joy in the trials He brings, knowing that they purify and strengthen us. When trials come, ask God for perseverance and faith before you ask Him for relief.

Rob Gerber