

## ***Confidence in God in the Midst of Trials (Rom. 5:3-5)***

### **I. ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD (ROM. 8:28)**

- A. We can have confidence in God in our trials, knowing that He overrules the pressures in our life to cause them to enrich our relationship with Him and to be conformed to the image of Jesus.

***<sup>28</sup>We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose... <sup>29</sup>to be conformed to the image of His Son. (Rom. 8:28-29)***

- B. Joseph's brothers sold him into prison (over ten years). Later, he became the most powerful man in Egypt under Pharaoh. God overruled the evil of others to release great blessing through him.

***<sup>20</sup>But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people... (Gen. 50:20)***

- C. In our trials, we declare the truth to the enemy, "It is written, *all things work together for good.*" This life transforming truth in Romans 8:28 was introduced by Paul in Romans 5.

### **II. STANDING IN GRACE (ROM. 5:2)**

- A. Paul taught that our ***standing in grace*** is the basis for confidence that our life is anchored in the glory of God (Rom. 5:2). Trials cannot stop His glory in us (Rom. 5:3), but are to lead us to live a God-centered life (Rom. 5:11). The word translated *rejoice* (v. 2) is also translated *glory* (v. 3).

***<sup>2</sup>...this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>And not only that, but we also glory [rejoice] in tribulations...<sup>11</sup>But we also rejoice in God... (Rom. 5:2-3, 11)***

- B. Paul gave three ways to help us to receive the full benefits of standing in grace (Rom. 5:2-3, 11).

1. ***We rejoice in the glory of God*** (v. 2) by seeing it as our destiny *now* and in *eternity*.
2. ***We rejoice in tribulation*** (v. 3) by trusting God to overrule them for our good (Rom. 8:28)
3. ***We rejoice in God*** (v. 11) by living a God-centered life that passionately pursues Him.

### **III. WE REJOICE IN THE GLORY OF GOD (ROM. 5:2)**

- A. Paul calls us to rejoice in the certainty that our lives are anchored in the glory of God (Rom. 5:2). The word *hope* means *certainty*. We hope in the glory of God in two ways—by seeing that our destiny is to live in God's glory *now* and in *eternity*. Our weak service and love for God release and express His glory *now*, and our deeds have continuity with His glory in our life in *eternity*. The Lord so values our small acts of love and service. This makes our life successful in His eyes.

***<sup>2</sup>We...rejoice in hope [certainty] of the glory of God. (Rom. 5:2)***

- B. Our life releases and expresses God's glory in this age. The challenge is that often we do not "see" the glory of God in our life, because it is indiscernible, even "hidden" from our five senses.

***<sup>3</sup>For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup>When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. (Col. 3:3-4)***

#### IV. WE REJOICE IN TRIBULATION (ROM. 5:3-5)

- A. Paul gave insight into how trials can cause us to experience more of God's glory (Rom. 5:3-5). He connected three virtues to help us understand our trials—*perseverance*, *character*, and *hope*. As we see *why* these virtues are so important and *how* they are connected, then we can rightly respond to God in the process in our trials. By understanding this, we are able to trust God more.
- <sup>3</sup>*We also glory [rejoice] in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;*  
<sup>4</sup>*and perseverance, character; and character, hope.* <sup>5</sup>*Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit... (Rom. 5:3-5)*
- B. Tribulation includes many types of trials or pressures. James called them *various trials* (Jas. 1:2). We each have many pressures that include physical or emotional pain, financial lack, and various fears, along with regularly being mistreated, misunderstood, resisted, or rejected, etc.
- C. There are four main sources of pressure in our lives: God, Satan, man, and fallen creation.
1. God *loves*; therefore He *disciplines* His people and *shakes* nations. We must *agree* with Him.
  2. Satan *rages*; therefore he *attacks* us and the nations. We must *resist* him.
  3. Man *sins*; thus he *hurts* himself and others. We must *repent* of sin and *forgive* sin against us.
  4. Creation *groans*; therefore it *troubles* the nations (Rom. 8:20-23). We must *cleanse* it.
- D. Many trials are the result of various combinations of these four sources of pressure. Regardless of the source of the pressure, if we respond rightly to God, it will result in our good.
- E. How can we rejoice in God's glory in times of pressure? Paul's message was that trials are not counterproductive to us experiencing God's glory. They do not have to diminish our life in God, but are actually meant to strengthen it. Paul's point was that trials do not contradict the fact that we have God's favor and blessing; rather, they are meant to help us experience them more.
- F. **Knowing:** We can rejoice in trials when we realize that they relate to growing in perseverance, character, and hope in God. *Trials can cause us great despair if we do not see a purpose in them.*
- <sup>3</sup>*...knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;* <sup>4</sup>*and perseverance, character; and character, hope. (Rom. 5:3-4)*
- G. The devil lies by telling us that our trials are proof that we are forgotten by God, disqualified from His blessing, and destined to fail, or that our relationship with God is deficient.
- H. **Perseverance:** This speaks of our fortified resolve or commitment to continually *realign* our heart to love, obey, believe, and pursue Jesus instead of giving up, giving in to sin and unbelief, or drawing back from passionately pursuing Jesus.
1. Pressure causes us to *ask questions* about the purpose of our life, the condition of our life and relationship to God, and why we should persevere in pursuing God without quitting. It causes us to rehearse the consequences of persevering in God or of giving up (quitting).

2. Trials are meant to cause us to realign our heart to resolve to live closer to Him and to lay hold of our core identity as those who are loved by God and who love God in response. They are to motivate us to *press in* for the Spirit's breakthrough solution to our problems.
  3. Pressure, when responded to rightly, helps us to focus and think clearly, to be desperate for the Spirit's breakthrough and to lose the "*taste*" for things outside of God's will.
  4. Pressure causes us to work our "faith muscle." Resistance training builds muscle strength in our body. A muscle is strengthened when it is exercised beyond the norm by using weight that breaks down and builds up the muscle.
  5. Pressure is meant to produce or "work" good things in and for us as it repeatedly causes us to exercise our faith by realigning our hearts to God, the truth, and our true identity.  
<sup>17</sup>*Our light affliction...is working for us an...eternal weight of glory... (2 Cor. 4:17)*
  6. A butterfly's struggle in a cocoon is necessary to develop its wings. To help the butterfly by cutting its cocoon would result in its wings remaining undeveloped.
  7. We do not rejoice in the trials themselves, but in what they produce in us as we respond rightly to God. The trials do not change us; our response to them changes us as we align our heart to God. We become *better or bitter* in our trials, depending on how we respond.
  8. Trials lead many to be offended with Jesus' leadership, instead of seeing them as an escort to encountering His heart, love, power, and leadership in overcoming the trial. We can "waste a good trial" by yielding to fear and offense instead of looking to Jesus.
  9. Our natural response is to be angry with those who cause pressure in our life. We may get angry with God, people, or ourselves, but our anger does not accomplish God's purpose.  
<sup>20</sup>*For the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. (Jas. 1:20, NAS)*
- I. **Character**: This speaks of long-term changes in our attitudes and actions. When we persevere in choosing to pursue, obey, and trust the Lord's leadership, it leads to a change in our character.  
<sup>3</sup>*...tribulation produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup>and perseverance, character; and character, hope. (Rom. 5:3-4)*
1. Our love and confidence in Jesus' leadership is not mature (character) until it is walked out under pressure. After Abraham offered Isaac, God said, "Now I know you fear God" (Gen. 22:12).
  2. There is a connection between *what we do* in our character and *how much we see* in God and His ways. As we grow in character, our capacity to receive understanding increases.  
<sup>8</sup>*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (Mt. 5:8)*

J. **Hope**: is the certain expectation of experiencing God's glory and love in this age and in the age to come. Hope comes from seeing more clearly. Our capacity to see our hope in Christ increases as we grow in character or purity (Mt. 5:8). Paul connected confidence and clarity with character. Hope includes seeing that God loves us and that He releases His glory in and through us, even by our weak efforts to love, obey, and serve Him. This hope frees us from despair and hopelessness.  
<sup>3</sup>*...tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. (Rom. 5:3-4)*

K. **Hope that does not disappoint**: We will not be disappointed when all the information about our life in God is made known on the last day. We will not be disappointed in the outcome of what we hoped for, because our hope is based on the reality of God's love and not on exaggerated human optimism. False hope or expectation is very painful and always leads to disappointment.  
<sup>5</sup>*Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit... (Rom. 5:5)*

1. The revelation of God's love poured into our heart by the Spirit continually assures us that our hope in Christ is real. Whatever we expect in this hope is far too low (1 Cor. 2:9).  
<sup>9</sup>*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. (1 Cor. 2:9)*
2. We will not be disappointed when we see how much of God's glory we really did experience in this life and how our tribulations resulted in good fruit in us.

## V. WE REJOICE IN GOD (ROM. 5:11)

A. **To rejoice in God**: We do this by living a God-centered life that passionately pursues God with confidence in His leadership, gratitude for His greatness, and fascination with His beauty.  
<sup>11</sup>*Not only that, but we also rejoice in God. (Rom. 5:11)*

B. Paul was preoccupied with living fascinated by the knowledge of Jesus. We can live in the superior pleasure of being fascinated by God. This liberates us from the inferior pleasures of sin.  
<sup>8</sup>*I count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ... (Phil. 3:8)*

## VI. QUESTIONS FOR SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS (i.e., FCF FRIENDSHIP GROUPS)

*Ask each to pick 1 question—after everyone answers one; then pick another to answer (if time permits)*

1. What is one point in this session for which you would like more understanding?
2. What is one point that inspired or challenged you? Why? What will you do differently to apply it?
3. What is one point that you want to impart to a younger believer? Why? How will you elaborate on it?
4. What is one point in this session that needs to be emphasized to the larger body of Christ? Why?