

Prepared through Trials



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The Apostle Paul was accustomed to being tried in every circumstance which he faced.

If anybody ever went through trials, Paul certainly did. And all those trials were right in the center of God's will for his life.

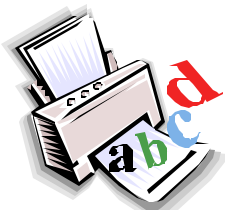
Yes, God worked through all those experiences to accomplish His purpose in Paul's life.

Philippians 4:11-13

Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

This isn't an easy thing to learn.

It takes grace to be content in every kind of circumstance. This is why God works in us through trials: He wants us to know that His purposes will be fulfilled regardless of the situations we may face.



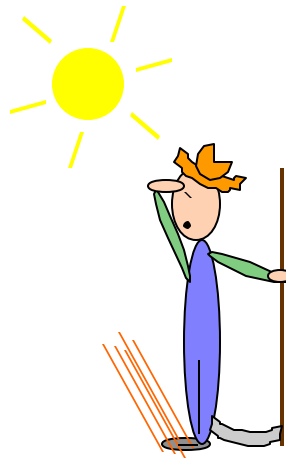
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God is glorified when we're willing to stand in the midst of all that may come our way and continue to wholeheartedly serve Him.

When we face trials and testings in His strength, we're enabled to stand firm - no matter how dark things may seem to be.

We're living in a day when things are really humming. Life is going by at a very fast pace. And in this fast age, as we attempt to keep up with the pace, we can expect to have numerous trials and numerous tests.

In olden days, people were able to slow down and pace themselves to have more time. They were busy - but they weren't rushing about like we do today.



They weren't filled with worries and cares as so many are today.

Oh, they had their trials and testings back then - but the trials and tests of our day are of a different sort.

Normally speaking, God doesn't give a week's notice before He sends along another trial. He doesn't explain His reasons and purposes for each trial and test. Nor does He tell us how to react to them.

In fact, they usually come unexpectedly.

We wake up in the morning, and, for some unexplained reason, find ourselves in a trial that we didn't ask for. Unexplained things happen: we didn't do anything; yet here we are in a trial.

All through life, trials suddenly appear - completely unannounced.

Many times they prepare us for something in the future. At other times, they are sent to strengthen our faith to endure.

How long are we to be tested and tried?

Back in the early days of our experience, Sister Dailey and I faced many hard faith battles.

Why? because God knew what was waiting further down the road. He knew we'd need those early tests to prepare for the battles which lay ahead for us.

There's a misconception in the minds of many concerning the ministry.

They believe the ministry is a dignified position in life where everything is just a bed of roses.

It is wonderful to be in the ministry, yes - but it certainly is not a bed of roses.

I've found out that the ministry is not just working for the Lord. It is standing in the midst of fierce battles. It is being concerned about the same things which Jesus is concerned about.

We won't accomplish a thing unless we firmly stand in the heat of the battle. We've got to be willing to endure those things which come our way.

Matthew 10:24, 25

The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.

It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of His household?

Do you understand what Jesus means here?

He doesn't want you to think for a moment that you're any better than He is. If they persecuted Him, what makes you think you can avoid being persecuted? If they mocked Him and scoffed Him, they're not going to just pat you on the back.

Paul's trials - Let's take a look, now, at the trials Paul had towards the end of his ministry.

He wasn't young any more. Trials weren't anything new to him.

He'd already gone through quite a bit in his walk with the Lord. Yes, he was a seasoned veteran in the battle, used to taking the rap.

But I suppose that, even after having been exposed to so much suffering, Paul might have wondered why he had to go through this latest trial.

After making his appeal to be tried before Caesar, Paul set sail for Rome. This was just a routine trip, such as our taking a plane from one major city to another.

Everyone on board thought they were going to Rome. But Paul seemed to be aware that the journey would be hindered. He tried to convince the centurion they shouldn't go.

But who would take the time to listen to a prisoner's advice?

Everything looked calm, so instead of paying heed to Paul's warning, they listened to the ship's master . . . and headed out.

This sometimes happens to us. There's a lull before the storm, a little season of calm. Everything looks like smooth sailing.

But, watch out! the storm soon comes from out of nowhere, and begins to rage all about.

These mariners couldn't get enough wind to gain any speed. They had to creep along for days and days - until, finally, the wind began to blow.

**All they wanted was a breeze -
but they got a raging tempest!**

Acts 27:13, 14, 20

And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete.

But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.

And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

This certainly sounds like the makings of a full-fledged trial!

There wasn't a thing they could do in the midst of such a storm, other than to stand back and let the wind blow.

At first, it looked like a small storm, one that would soon blow over - but it wasn't long before it became fierce.

There was no relief in sight for days. They couldn't even see the sun or stars, and had no way of telling which direction they were heading in.

It seemed as though all hope of ever surviving was taken away.

Can you imagine what it felt like to be on that ship? We may not be out in a storm at sea, but there are trials and battles in this life which seem to be just as impossible to get through.

Impossible, that is . . . but for God.

I don't care how bad a trial seems to be. I don't care how much the devil may be fighting. I don't care how bad the circumstances may get.

When God is for you - nothing can be against you.

God was with these men on that boat. He knew they had nothing to fear. He was well able to deliver them in the mist of such impossible circumstances.

? ? ?

Now, we could ask a lot of questions here: Why didn't Paul, with all of his spiritual wisdom and faith, command the storm to cease? after all, Jesus did.

We don't have any record of Paul even *trying* to stop the storm.

The Bible doesn't say the passengers prayed about it - but I assume they did. If you were in a storm as bad as this one was, I am sure you would cry out to God.

These men were lost at sea. They didn't even know where they were. But isn't it wonderful how, in the midst of such darkness, God knew exactly where they were.

Storms don't hinder God one bit. He sees just as good in complete darkness as He does in the light. Nothing obstructs His vision.

God looked down through those clouds and saw that ship.

He knew what those men were going through. After all, He was in control of the whole situation.

Yes, God was able to stop that wind at any moment - but He chose to let it blow on.

This is typical of many of the things we experience. We're always looking for God to intervene and lift us up so we can just fly away from all our trials.

But God doesn't move that way. He moves in the midst of the battles of life, working through the natural course of events that shake our old ship.

And He goes right through with us. All we need do is hold still, realizing that God is in control - that He is able to take us through anything we may face.

Acts 27:21

But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

Have you ever had someone come along and say, *I told you so! If you had listened to me this would never have happened.*

But, then it's too late to change anything, even if you tried.

It was too late for these men to do as Paul had told them to do - changing their minds and spending the winter at Crete.

Yes, sometimes we're too far out in the storm to ever consider turning back.

Many have said, *I do*, without a second thought - and then it's too late to get out of the mess they've gotten themselves into.

These men were going to suffer loss just because they hadn't listened to Paul. The loss of the ship would be costly.

Acts 27:22

And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.

Cheer up. Smile in the midst of the storm. It may look bad. But it doesn't matter what it looks like - I believe God!

What did Paul say? Be of good cheer? Didn't he hear the wind howling? Can't he see the waves beating?

Here they were in the midst of that great storm, engulfed in total darkness for days, with no sign of hope - and Paul is telling them to be of good cheer!

For Paul to have said that he had to have had a visitation from God.

We need to have this attitude in the midst of our trials: *Lord, I know You're with me in the midst of the battle - so I'm not going to allow it to get to me.*

We can draw a great deal of strength from this account, seeing that God is more than able to steer our course in the midst of even a raging storm.

With the Lord at the helm, we can safely sail on any troubled sea.

Acts 27:23

For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve

This is what I want you to see. Out there in the midst of that raging storm; out there in the extreme darkness; out there in the torrential rain and fierce winds that were beating against the ship - way out there, an angel came to stand by Paul.

Acts 27:24, 25

Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

God intended to use that storm to get the attention of everyone on board.

Paul didn't know that he was on a soul-winning expedition, but he was. He didn't realize the plan of God was to reach out to the men on that ship.

There's nothing really to fear. Know that God is with us when the storm is raging just as much as when the sea is calm.

He is with us when we go into a situation . . . while we're going through . . . and when we come out.

Romans 8:31

**What shall we then say to these things?
If God be for us, who can be against us?**

Romans 8:37

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

God is Master of all that happens. He can turn any situation around and cause it to work for His honor and glory.

Romans 8:28

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.

We can find evidence in God's Word of the truth of this verse:

Because Paul faced that raging storm, many souls were saved. Two weeks of darkness and stormy blasts were worth it to see those souls harvested.

You may never go through what Paul went through. But there are times when the storms of life come against you to where you can't see.

You can't see how you'll ever get out of that storm. You find yourself caught in the midst of the winds until you don't know if you'll make it through or not.

One thing you should keep in mind is that God told you He'd work all things together for good to those who love Him. If you believe that, then don't complain again about your trials.

Don't desire to be taken out of your trials. Determine to stand and go through them.

You don't want to be defeated in the midst of a storm. Don't complain to the Lord about the pressures. No, don't complain - rejoice.

Even when it looks like the ship is going to sink, rejoice because God is working all things together for good.

As God's people, we have to realize we're not exempt from the storms of this life - and realize that God has a purpose in them.

God hardens us for the battle that we may endure as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. He brings us to the place of standing firmly in the face of adverse circumstances,

Now, don't think that all of your trials are intended just to do something for you. Some trials are to work *through you* to do something in someone else's life.

Paul had already been through plenty of trials. He was well able to stand and keep the victory. Why, then, did he have to go through such a fierce trial as this?

Because God's purpose wasn't to work something in Paul.

It was to work through Paul in reaching other souls.

And there were souls in Rome that God wanted to touch when Paul finally got there. This trip was part of God's will for Paul's life on his way to Rome, for it was God's will that Paul appear before Caesar and let him know that Jesus died to save his soul.

Why is it that when you're in a trial you always think the end is near?

You'd best walk on with God and stop your fretting and worrying.

There are multitudes of souls out there. And, through the trials and testings of your faith, God is able to reach out and win souls through your life.

How? People will see something in you that they don't have when they face similar situations. They will see the peace of God though you're in the midst of the storms of life.

Psalm 66:10-12

For thou, O God, hast proved us:

Thou hast tried us,
as silver is tried.

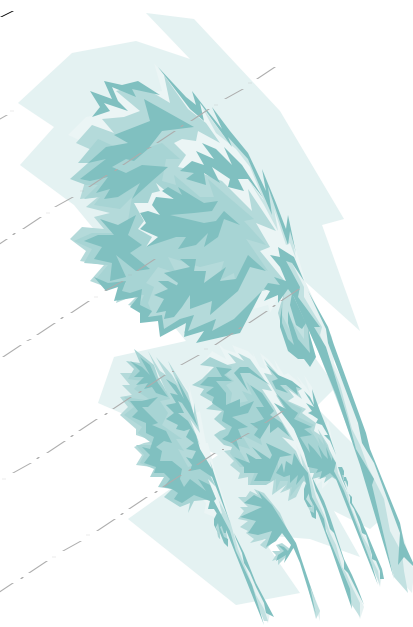
Thou broughtest us
into the net;

Thou laidst affliction
upon our loins.

Thou hast caused men
to ride over our heads;

we went through fire and through water:
but Thou broughtest us out

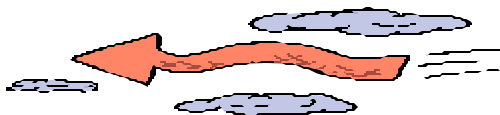
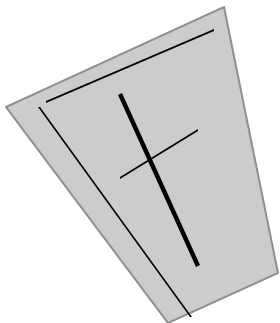
into a wealthy place.



For the Word of God
is quick and powerful,
and sharper than
any two-edged sword,
piercing even to the dividing asunder
of soul and spirit,
and of the joints and marrow,
and is a discerner
of the thoughts and intents
of the heart.



Hebrews 4:12



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Rise, and Fight

How great and powerful is God's Word!
It is our strength, defense, and sword
In conflict or battle
and attacks of the devil.

In times of discouragement
We must rise and fight -



Using God's Word, put the devil to flight.

How great and powerful is God's Word!
Victory is ours, O, Praise the Lord!

Patricia Dailey

October 4, 2001