

=====

==

THE TRIAL OF YOUR FAITH
by Paris Reidhead

=====

==

Summary: The sermon explores the significance of faith trials as essential for spiritual maturity and the believer's relationship with God.

Duration: 39:19 Topics: "Trial"
Scripture References: Mark 10:17, Hebrews 12:11

--

DESCRIPTION

--

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the purpose of trials and challenges in the lives of believers. He emphasizes that God allows these experiences to refine and shape our faith. The speaker shares personal anecdotes about being disciplined as a child and expresses gratitude for the lessons learned through those experiences. He concludes by highlighting that the ultimate goal of all life's experiences is to bring praise, honor, and glory to Jesus Christ.

--

CONTENT

--

Will you turn, please, to 1 Peter, the little epistle of 1 Peter, this letter that was written by the apostle to people that he said were scattered abroad, scattered, driven, hunted, persecuted, men and women that had lost their homes and families and friends and had become religious refugees. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ to the strangers scattered through Alpontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace be unto you and peace be multiplied.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in

heaven

for you who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time wherein ye greatly rejoice.

Though

now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, at the trial of your faith being much more precious than of

gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, whom having

not seen ye love, in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Peter was greatly concerned that these people to whom he wrote should never indulge in the

impossible luxury of self-pity.

They'd lost their homes, they'd lost their friends, they're perhaps separated from their families. Many of them had seen their fellows die in martyr's death because of their faith in Christ. How easy it would have been for Peter to have consoled them and said, well, we never thought it would be this hard when we invited you to come to Christ.

We never expected you'd have to suffer this way. How, what a contradiction it would have been. How impossible.

Easy, yes, because always we enjoy someone that will sympathize with us

and indulge in this luxury of self-pity with us because, you know, it's

easy to get folk to do that. We're all prone to it and everyone feels that they're going to need similar attention and help shortly. And so there's a readiness on our part to do that.

Peter did not do that because he preached to these people. Undoubtedly many of them were his converts. He himself had witnessed to them.

It all depends upon the terms in which you come into any kind of a contract as to whether or not you're going to stay after the conditions

have changed. The Lord Jesus Christ had a young man come to him one day

and said, what must I do to inherit eternal life? The Lord could have said many things. He dealt with a man on the basis of what he'd known in the past.

Doesn't the law say, obey your father, honor your father and mother and

not to lie and steal and murder? Yes. He says, I have observed this.

I've obeyed this since my earliest youth, but still I don't have the assurance of eternal life.

There must be something more. And I've come to you that we could discuss it. And our Lord said, sell all that you have, give it to the poor and come follow me.

The terms were unacceptable. The boy had great wealth, great riches, and he wasn't of a mind apart with them. We have every reason to believe that these were the general terms that were presented to sinners in this day and time.

For certainly when our Lord spoke to his day and used the word cross, he invariably applied it to those who would be his followers. Only four times in the ministry of Christ is the word cross used by him. And in each instance he says, take up your cross, take up your cross.

It is thus directed to the person that would become a disciple of his. You can, unless you take up your cross and come follow me, you can't be my disciple. Now, the Lord didn't present to them the idea that to follow him was kind of a picnic.

They were going to have carousel rides and songs and dancing, and that it would be just a sweet time to be happy while living in selfishness. He never did that. He didn't say this.

He didn't say, believe on me to be successful. He didn't say, believe on me to achieve fame. He didn't say, use me as a handmaid to your ambitions.

He had none of the folk religion that characterizes the 20th century where God is reduced down to an agency that's going to be of help to the ambitious. Now, this just simply was not in Christ's ministry, nor was it ever in the ministry of the apostles. Invariably, the approach was this.

You were made for God. God only is big enough and good enough and wise enough to be obeyed and worshiped and served by you. And if you do less than obey him and worship him and serve him, you are committing the highest crime in human experience, because the crime is in proportion to the deserts of the one against whom you commit the crime.

And since he deserves all love and all worship and all obedience, to refuse to give it to him makes it the greatest crime in the universe. This was the approach. It wasn't from the standpoint of, accept Jesus so that you could go to heaven.

It was accept, repent and turn from your sin that you can render to God what he deserves. And the consequence of glorifying God would be that you could enjoy him forever. But that the terms of coming to God were those of utter abandonment to him, in terms of surrender to his person, and commitment to his government, and acceptance of his ownership.

These were the terms that were presented by Christ to all to whom he preached, and by his apostles who went in his name. This was the message that God was prepared to honor. They went everywhere preaching the word, and the Lord went with them confirming the word.

But the only reason God could confirm the word was because they were preaching the word that honored God and that deserved his confirmation. And thus, we have every reason to believe that these converts of Peter had been told when he met them. Now look, it's going to cost you everything to follow Christ, but it's worth everything.

You're going to have to cease as of now to consider that you're your own. You were made by God, and you were made for God, and you've stolen yourself from God. Now you're bringing yourself back to God and simply doing what you ought to have been doing the while before.

And there's no merit in this, but these are the terms on which you can be forgiven and be pardoned. And it's going to mean everything, because the God of this world whom you've lately served is the constant enemy of the God of heaven and earth, and Jesus Christ who is God come in the flesh. And therefore, you can expect that Satan is going to feel the same way about you that he felt about Christ.

There will be ceaseless warfare against you, and God loves you enough to allow you to endure that. There will be ceaseless opposition on the part of those people with whom once you consorted. Those who enjoyed you and

whom you enjoyed, who were worthy of death, as were you, now are going to resent the fact that you have by your change denounced them, and you can expect opposition from them.

And thus it was that having been presented fairly and honestly and squarely with the issues at the very door, there wasn't any disillusionment when they got down the corridor a ways. But you can see what will happen if there's a wide gate saying accept Jesus so you can be happy and successful, and then all of a sudden things begin to go wrong and things begin to crash down around you and you lose the things that once you thought were so secure. If the motive for coming is your own personal achievement and success, as soon as this is touched, then you're going to resent the fact that you were deceived.

And there will have to be a facing of issues down the corridor that in the New Testament we find were presented right at the gate. And it's my firm conviction that these people were far better able to stand than perhaps our generation of Christians. I've wondered sometimes why America has been spared from the kind of thing that's happened to our brethren, for instance, in China, when we were told by official Soviet report that some eight million people were killed and assassinated during the years of 1917 to 35 or 6 for no other crime than that they were unreconstructable Christians.

Well, I don't know, but what perhaps there was a nobler quality to the testimony of these that had from the very first been suspect, if not persecuted, by the established church. And so the Lord could trust these with this higher ministry than he could trust us with. The same is true in Korea, where we are told that 450 to 500,000 people that comprised the most spiritual church as an organization and a group that we've known in the 20th century were harvested like ripe grain.

Perhaps the reason the Lord allowed this to come to North Korea was because there was a nobler kind of Christian there than here. I don't know. And we have been told also that there have been 20 million people in a very nice term, deprived of existence in China since the communists took over some 14 years or 15 years ago now.

Again, by official statement that the reason was that half of them were religiously unreconstructable. They wouldn't give up their religious faith. Now, presumably some of these were Buddhist or were following

in
the traditions of the fathers after the order of Confucius.

We'll allow that. But a great many of them we know of a certainty were Christians. And we recognize that there is the possibility that these have had a presentation with the claims of Christ more demanding and stringent than characterizes so much of our American ministry.

But be that as it may, God has spared us. And I've wondered sometimes why he has. Certainly every mature judgment would indicate that our land is ripe for some visitation from the Lord, because no people in history have had so much truth and as a nation done so little with it as we have in the few brief centuries of our national existence.

But it is just possible that God recognizes that there has been a misrepresentation of his claims. And the idea that to receive Christ was simply to receive a ticket to pleasure, success, achievement, and finally a title deed to a mansion in the sky, rather than what the Lord said when he faced his generation, to receive me is to lose all you have. For if you seek to save your life, you'll lose it.

And if you lose your life for my sake, you'll save it. But what is it going to profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? By implication, Christ meant it's going to cost everything. Everything.

This is what he told the rich young ruler. This is undoubtedly what Peter told these or the other apostles, for there was one voice in their testimony. Since Jesus Christ had been raised from the dead, he was God.

Since he was God, he deserved absolutely everything that they had and were. And the terms of coming to Christ were those that were met by Paul, by Saul of Tarsus. When he was convinced that Christ was alive, his response was, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? All of his possessions were abandoned in this.

All of his plans were relinquished. All of his purposes were ameliorated to the nobler, higher purpose of Christ. Now we find that the axe has fallen.

And these, dear people, to whom Peter writes, have been scattered.

They're strangers. They're pilgrims.

They're refugees. And he is first telling them something that we always must have before us, and that is this, that regardless of how difficult the circumstances may be, how difficult the privations may be, or the persecution may be, there is that for which we can be grateful. And we ought to search it out and seek it out, like the home that's known poverty and remembered that there'd been a coin dropped in the floor in days when it wasn't so important to count their coins.

But now that the coins are exhausted in the treasury, you can be sure they're going to take up the floor to find the gold coin that slipped between the slats. So it should be with you that when difficulty comes and privation arises, you ought to seek out that coin of truth that's going to encourage your heart. Well, better still, never lose the coin.

And let yourself, in the midst of all the health that you may have, remember that every time you breathe, it's just one breath nearer death. And with all the privilege you have, that one day, as Peter was told by the Lord, you're going to be carried where you want to go. We were carried into this life.

We're going to be carried in our last days out of this life. It is for us to remember that all of honors that we have, we're going to relinquish into other hands. And so instead of taking our joy in the possessions that we can clasp, and the privileges we can enjoy, and the honors that we can heap upon ourselves, let's hold these very lightly.

Because it might be in the will of God they shall be taken from us. And let's recognize that there is that which is the enduring comfort of the child of God. And what is that? Well, he has said, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us again unto a living hope.

Here's something that's transcendent, goes beyond all of these shimmering things that would seem to be so satisfying and aren't. By the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, we've been begotten unto an inheritance that's incorruptible, undefiled, and that won't evaporate, won't fade away. And we are kept by the power of God through faith

unto
salvation.

Well, Paul, writing to these people, says wherein ye greatly rejoice. Do you greatly rejoice in that? How easy it is for us to come to the place that we greatly rejoice when someone says something nice about us. Or we greatly rejoice when we secure something for which we've labored and saved.

Or we greatly rejoice when some privilege is extended we've not known. But again, God loves us too much to allow us to find our rejoicing there, and so we find here that there is recognized by the Apostle the fact that affliction is present. Notice in this sixth verse, wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in manifold temptation, if need be.

Well, dear heart, I'm sure that you feel the same way that I do about your youth, or at least I hope you do. I was spanked. My father believed that the best way to train a boy was to get to the seat of the problem with the Board of Education.

And it wasn't frequent, but it was thorough. He didn't get carried away, but he carried the point. And I'm grateful for it.

And as I look back to the visits that we made to the north side of the furnace, I've never regretted for a moment that my father went there with me, not for one moment. I know that it was needful. It was needful.

And I am certain in my heart of hearts that it didn't occur as often as it was needful. If I have any regret in regard to this, it is that he allowed so many things to pass, which if he'd had the discernment that I attributed to him, he should have known about. But I am confident of this, that every time we went, it was needful.

Now, no chastening for the present seems pleasant. This is a clear statement of the Word of God. But afterwards, it works that peaceable fruit, righteousness.

God loves us too much to get by. Let us get by with anything. Now, can you believe that? Do you in your heart of hearts believe that your

father loves you? Then if you do, you're going to agree with the apostle that these things that happened to this scattered people had not been because God's back was turned and his eyes were closed and he was heavy with sleep or weary with ages of time.

That isn't why it happened. That isn't why tribulation happens to you. It's because it's needful.

Well, wherein does this tie to something that we can grasp? Remember Romans 8, 28 and 29, this fulcrum of the Christian's experience, this very point on which the whole lever of experience rests. For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose, for whom he did foreknow he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Now, it was needful for the sculptor to take the chisel and to cruelly cut the stone, because if he hadn't, it never would have been the image that he wished to produce from it.

And it was needful for the Lord, says Peter, to allow that present affliction to come into the lives of these people to whom he wrote. It was needful. Now, God never gives us more than we need.

Oh, sometimes when we look at it, we say, well, why did I need that? She didn't have to have that happen to her, and he didn't have to have that happen to him. Why should it happen to me? Well, you see, the thing is this again, that we're being dealt with not by circumstances that are a nameless, senseless, brutal thing that comes without chart or compass at all. No, indeed, we're being dealt with by a kind, loving, heavenly Father that realizes this is all the hell we're ever going to know.

And when we die, it'll be heaven forever. And he also recognizes for those who've never been born into his family that this is all the heaven they're ever going to know. And when they die, it will be hell forever.

And so God is trying to get us ready. And it's needful, therefore, that certain things touch us that perhaps don't touch others. There are other

areas in dealing with children of different temperaments and personality
we don't deal with all the same way.

With some children, it's not necessary to take them to the north side of
the furnace, as it was in my case, because they are responsive to a look
or to a word. There's difference in disposition. And so punishment has to be on the basis of not of the numerics, how many times to the woodshed or how many strokes with a razor strap.

This is not the manner in which our heavenly Father deals. He deals with
us in terms of our personality, in terms with our nature, in terms of that which is obstructing the image that he wishes to have unveiled in us. Now, Paul, Peter recognizes, and he wants these to whom he writes to
recognize, that there is a purpose, that there is a purpose in these experiences through which they are passing.

Let's see it. What is this purpose? That the trial of your faith, being
much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of
Jesus Christ. This is that for which all the experience of life are moving.

It's toward this goal. Now you will notice something, that be found unto
praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Why does a
parent take a concern about his children? It would be so much easier at
times to allow an issue to be ignored, to allow a situation to go undealt with.

Why do parents, in a sense, create problems for themselves by establishing standards and expecting them to be adhered to? Why? Well, the answer is not far to seek. Deep in the heart of the parent is the realization that sometime this son, this daughter, is going to have to take his place in community, in society. And there's a deep desire that
the child should be, well, what? Be found unto praise.

Be praiseable. Be praiseable. And God wants you to be praiseable.

Your heavenly Father wants you to be worthy of praise. You say, well, doesn't this refer to the Lord Jesus? Well, perhaps it does, and

certainly he is worthy of praise. But I feel that herein is another matter.

God is allowing circumstances and experiences to come into your life which are of the nature of discipline, that you might be found unto praise. You might be found unto praise. How frequently we hear of Amy Carmichael, this dear missionary to India, whose poems have been the instrument of blessing to countless thousands, who, after many years of service, was afflicted with arthritis that gave her continuous pain.

And yet, in the midst of all of this, a veritable pilgrimage of men and women would come to her station, there to go in and talk with this dear person. And through the eyes that had been opened, perhaps in some measure by her experiences, they could be blessed. And Amy Carmichael was found unto praise, for she had, in the midst of all of these circumstances, developed a character and had achieved a maturity in Christ that, well, people came away and said, isn't it wonderful? You've known others similar, you've known situations such as this, and it isn't necessarily true that God's going to allow you to be afflicted in this manner.

I don't mean to imply that. But I do imply, and I do mean to state even more strongly than that, that in God's love purpose, everything that he allows to touch us is that we should be found unto praise. Now, who's going to do the praising? Are we going to take some honor that's given to us by the thoughtless and the unheeding and become arrogant with it? No, no, not that at all.

But what is it referred to? It refers to that praise, certainly, that's going to come from the Lord Jesus. You say, is he going to praise his people? Yes, because you remember what he said to the woman that broke the bottle of box of alabaster and poured the spikenard upon his hand? She hath done what she could. Oh my, there's no higher honor than this, no higher praise than this, no higher glory than this.

Now, if the Lord did it for a woman that took that which she had and brought it and poured it upon his hand, we have every reason to believe that he's equally sensitive to you, he's equally concerned about you, and therefore the experiences that he allows to come into our lives

are

the similar to that which a teacher brings into the life of the student.

You know, the profession of a teacher is a noble one indeed. I had one in Phoenix for the council a few months ago, the experience of meeting Elsie Born, this dear woman that was my seventh and eighth grade teacher.

Born without hip sockets, had to walk in such a crippled way, never reached a height more than just a little over four feet, but a person whose heart was desperately in love with Christ and had used the experiences of life not to, like age makes vinegar more bitter and wine

more mellow. In her case it was that it gave to her warmth and a mellowness and a kindness. And when she came to that seventh and eighth

grade in this country school that I attended back there, there was something about her.

And now as I look back upon those years, I can do it with praise and with honor and with glory that God allowed me to touch someone. I believe this is the second area. Honor and glory and praise from those our fellow pilgrims who meet us in the way and say, thank God he stopped by me.

Thank God he touched my life. Thank God they moved in next to us in this apartment building. Oh, I'm so grateful that he started to bring his dry cleaning here.

I'm so happy that I met them every morning in the subway. I'm so grateful and honor and praise and glory. I believe this too is what he has reference to.

It's that from people that have met us and then from the church where Paul writes and he says, commends Phoebe and he commends Eunice. Well, my dear heart, the church, those who know us best and work with us the closest, I believe in that they are going to be privileged to say, yes, there was faithfulness. Yes, there was devotion.

Yes, there was earnestness. And I believe that this is that which ought to be before us. Now, can you not remember some of you here actually were in internment during the last Second World War? I know the Stearns family interned in Japanese camps and exchanged and looked back to those

days of privation and suffering and when a little, little, little kindness, a little gentleness, just when life reaches its elemental values and all the superficial has been stripped away, how often just a little kindness, a little thought, a little word, honor, praise and glory.

And I believe that these people that are refugees and they're scattered and they've lost. You know, when you haven't any food, a piece of bread seems like a lavish meal. And when you haven't any clothing, just a little garment to keep out the cold seems like a gift of magnificent proportions.

And my feeling today is that this is what he has reference to, that the pressure, the temptation, the test is going to give to you a rapport with those that are tempted and tested. It's going to give to you a sympathy. It's going to give to you an understanding and you're going to be able to share.

I suppose that the person that's undergoing great moral test and great erosion of the moral fiber of their spirit and being put on the rack and torn and twisted can never be ministered to by anyone except that person that's under known what it is to be tempted and tested and tried and found that their faith endured. I suppose that person that's undergoing loneliness and loss and heartache in the deep wash of the cold wave of the remembrance of the parting never to be on this shore established again can never be comforted by anyone that hasn't known such parting. I'm certain that the person that has known what it is to have their their fortune and their business evaporate with some national calamity is going to be able to speak encouragement.

And you know I have a deep, deep feeling in my heart that the Lord Jesus Christ is going to allow most of the members of his body to be brought into that place of test, that the comfort wherewith you are comforted may be used to comfort others also, undoubtedly. But notice now we've seen the presence of affliction and the purpose of affliction, but let's see for just a moment the price of faith, the value of faith, that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perishes. For a while I thought it was the trial that was more precious, but it isn't.

It's the faith. Why? Gold is extremely useful and handy to have here. Unquestionably a much large portion of our life is spent in some kind of endeavor to secure gold or its monetary equivalent so that we can survive.

We need food and clothing and shelter and vehicles and tools and all of these things which are necessary. And gold is important. If anyone says it isn't, then they just simply are lost contact with reality and in a little while they're going to find it is.

So let's not say gold isn't important. The significance about gold is that it's important for a little while. It's important for a little while, but as soon as you die you see everything, all the standards change.

This is why it's such folly to spend one's life in heaping up gold because they have to leave it. You just have to leave it. One man said, well, if I can't take it with me, I'm not going.

But he went and he had to leave it. And it's just absolutely imperative that we recognize that this is the delusion that is attached to gold. Because when you get where you're going, if it's to heaven, you'll find that they use it for paving the streets.

Now that's useful and it's valuable, but this is the highest purpose to which they could put that which has become the God that so many worship. They're using it for asphalt, for paving blocks. And I'm sure that this would give to us some insight into the reason why our faith is more precious than gold that perishes.

Without having minimized the value and need and importance of gold, and remember that money is fluid life and on it floats the gospel to the ends of the earth. But remember that faith is that which imbibes, that which endures, that which is going to carry you through earth to heaven. And listen, and when you reach heaven, it's going to bring you into the glorious fruition and fulfillment of all that for which you long.

Now notice what Paul says, whom having not seen, ye love. In whom though now you see him not yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith. And he says the salvation of your souls.

We've been trying to make you see that this word salvation is an enormous word, and it not only has to do with forgiveness, but it also has to do with that ultimate purpose of God's grace. Receiving the end of your faith, what is that? To see him face to face. Be transformed into his image and likeness, and throughout the endless, ceaseless, rolling ages of eternity, to enjoy him for whom you were made.

And this is the end of your faith, and this is why faith is more precious than gold. Gold is needful and as useful as it is. It's still a temporary commodity, but faith is going to bring joy to your heart in the midst of suffering.

It's going to bring peace in the midst of calamity. It's going to bring rest in the midst of distress. It's going to carry you safely through privation and loss and persecution, and right on through the open portal into the presence of him you love, and throughout the endless ages of eternity, to see him and to be with him for this you were made.

No wonder it's more precious than gold that perishes. Now, what does the word trial mean? Prove, to test, find out whether it's real, counterfeit, whether it's dross. Now, you know, when gold is boiled and melted and smelted, there's always a loss of the gold because there's impurity in it.

Strangely enough, when faith is smelted by circumstances and testing and privation, it increases. And so if you've come through the circumstances the Lord has allowed to come into your life, your faith is stronger today. The same amount of gold would be less in weight and quantity because the dross is removed, but the faith would be stronger and greater.

More precious than gold that perishes. Let us bow together in prayer. Our Heavenly Father, we know that every message ought to press to a point and a purpose and a decision, and we're asking thee that in this moment of closing that the decision to which we're brought by thy sweet

grace and loving spirit will be to the place where we can, in the midst of all our circumstances, see thy hand and realize that nothing touches us but what it's to the end of making us like Christ, and that the proof and the testing of our faith is but to increase it and strengthen it.

Grant our Father, therefore, that there shall come not just a vain fatalistic submission to thy sovereignty, but a joyous cooperation with thee. Believing that what thou hast begun in grace thou art going to complete in power, and since thy purpose was to make us like Christ, the cry of our heart is to be like Jesus. So haste on with the work, our Father, for we've discovered that whatever thou dost bring is needed, and whatever is needed is good, for it's to the end of making us like thy Son.

Increase our faith may be but to ask thee to allow testing to come, but this we welcome, for everything that comes from thee is good for thou art good. Meet us now as a people that have learned to trust thee more, because we've discovered that the trial of our faith, more precious than gold that perisheth, in the name and for the sake of our Lord Jesus, amen. Let us stand together for the benediction.

Now may the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be the glory now and forever, amen.

=====
==
Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/25/SID25576.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/paris-reidhead/the-trial-of-your-faith/>
=====
==