**Our Future is Brighter with Jesus**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**1 Peter 1:3-7**

**Wednesday Evening**

**November 4, 2020**

**1 Peter 1:3-7**

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ...

**Throughout the World, People are Hurting**

Saints, the reasons vary, but many of us ask the same question:

**“Where’s God in all this?”**

When difficulties and heartaches are overwhelming, we often struggle to make sense of the situation. When we don’t know why the Lord is letting this happen or how we should respond, we remain trapped in our misery.

Peter wrote a letter to a group of Christians who were in this same kind of situation.

**1 Peter 1:4-5**

4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Saints, He reminded them that they had an imperishable inheritance reserved in heaven. Furthermore, God was protecting them “through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

Although they could lose everything on earth, they would never lose their salvation or their heavenly inheritance. Peter advised them to rejoice in this promise even though they were presently experiencing various trials.

**Although our pain and trouble may seem pointless to us, God has a divine purpose for everything He allows into our lives**

**Romans 8:28-30**

28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

Saints, because He is absolutely omnipotent, (meaning all powerful) He could stop any hardship which comes our way. But if he doesn’t, we can know with certainty that He has allowed it in order to accomplish His good purpose.

**2 Timothy 1:8-9**

8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, 9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began...

However, we don’t usually understand what He’s up to. From our perspective, it just doesn’t make sense, and the pain we’re experiencing drives us to simply want relief.

**God uses life’s trials to accomplish His secondary purposes**

Saints, although we may never know the specific reason for each difficulty in our lives, we can know the Lord’s secondary purposes.

**1. To Surface whatever is Detrimental in our Lives**

Saints, we may have beliefs, attitudes, or actions, which are not only hurting us but are also damaging our relationship with God and with others. Since we’re usually unaware of them, the Lord uses pain to get our attention so we’ll recognize and deal with them.

God loves us too much to let us blindly continue down this destructive path. His goal is to cleanse us by revealing our sin and drawing us to confession and repentance.

Saints, King David brought on his own issues that God had to expose and gave him only 2 options. Either continue to live a life of rebellion towards God or turn to Him in a heart of repentence!

**Psalms 51:1-4**

1 Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness;

According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. 4 Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight--That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge.

**Psalm 51:5-11**

5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. 6 Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom. 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Make me to hear joy and gladness, That the bones You have broken may rejoice. 9 Hide Your face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

Saints, here is the only fix to get right with God. There is no other solution!

**Psalm 51:17**

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart--These, O God, You will not despise."

**2. To Test Our Faith**

God uses life’s trials to accomplish His secondary purposes

Saints, when we were saved, our faith was rather basic and childlike. We didn’t know much, but we knew Jesus had died for us. However, since our heavenly Father considers faith more precious than gold, He wants us to grow and trust Him for more than our salvation.

**1 Peter 1:7**

"that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ..."

Saints, to understand how He tests our faith, let’s compare it to muscle strengthening. We begin by lifting small weights and gradually increase the difficulty by adding heavier ones. In the same way, God grows our faith through situations that increase the pressure and require greater trust.

**Romans 1:17**

"For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

Saints, it’s fairly easy to trust Him to heal a cold, but what happens when we face a serious illness, a financial crisis, unemployment, or the loss of a loved one? When we walk through each trial depending on the Lord, our faith increases. Then when a harder challenge comes, we can remember how He led us previously and know He will lead us the rest of the way.

**3. To Test our Devotion to God**

God uses life’s trials to accomplish His secondary purposes

Saints, commitment to the Lord is revealed by our willingness to obey Him. When He gives us a challenging situation, which seems beyond our ability, we must choose whether to obey His will or go our own way. He’s given us His Spirit to enable and strengthen us

to accomplish whatever He’s calling us to do.

**Philippians 4:13**

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

**Luke 22:39-42**

39 Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. 40 When He came to the place, He said to them, **"Pray that you may not enter into temptation."**

41 And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, 42 saying, **"Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."**

Saints, the apostle Paul was willing to endure his “thorn in the flesh” because the Lord promised to strengthen Him and use it to produce the humility he needed for continued ministry.

**2 Corinthians 12:7-10**

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. 8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.

9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

We don’t need to understand all God is doing; we just have to obey and watch Him work.

**The Lord’s primary purpose is to conform us to the image of His Son**

**Romans 8:29**

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Saints, according to that Scripture this is what He predestined—or predetermined—for His children. Therefore, He allows whatever’s necessary to make this a reality in our lives. His goal is not to punish but to transform.

**Romans 8:31**

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

Saints, if we fight against the process of God, we’re in danger of suffering all the pain without receiving the benefits God wanted to achieve in our lives. However, when we yield to His sifting, sanding, and shaping work, He’ll make us into a beautiful representation of His Son. The Lord isn’t looking for perfect people but those who are committed to a lifestyle of obedience, surrender, and purity.

**God has a process for developing Christlike Character**

**1. He Controls Every Trial**

He sets the limit because His goal is to transform us not to needlessly hurt us.

**1 Corinthians 10:13**

"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

**2. He Designs Trials to Fit Us**

He knows exactly what’s required to get our attention and fulfill His purpose. In every situation, His actions are motivated by intimate knowledge of us, and personal love for us.

**James 1:2-4**

2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

**3. He Uses Chastisement**

As a loving Father, He disciplines us in order to develop character within us. Although pain is involved, it’s not given for punishment but for training.

**Hebrews 12:5-6**

5 And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives."

**4. He Uses Afflictions**

Saints, these trials are not the result of sin or rebellion but are simply trials which come to us because of our environment. Since we all have human bodies and live in a fallen world, even godly people get sick and have accidents. However, each affliction is an opportunity for God to display the surpassing greatness of His power in us!

**2 Corinthians 4:7-9**

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. 8 We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed...

**5. God’s Trials are Progressive**

He builds character and faith in us by increasing the pressure and intensity of the adversity in our lives. What we couldn’t endure ten years ago, we can now handle because our trust in God has grown.

**2 Peter 3:18**

"but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen."

**Our Response to Trials Determines the Outcome**

**1 Peter 1:6-9**

6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.

Saints, hard times and suffering come into every life, but we each have a choice regarding how to respond. If we are committed to learning and profiting from each trial, we’ll become believers who are growing in faith and becoming more fully sanctified.

However, if we refuse to submit to God’s purposes, He will turn up the heat—not because He’s mean but because He loves us and will never give up on His goal of conforming us to the image of His Son.

Saints, Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**The Little Video >**

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let's Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace." '**