

God's Promise to Christians that Suffering is rewarded

2 Thessalonians 1:5-10 *"Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."*

God has taught us that we are "bound" to give thanks in all things, even in trials and persecution. God has predestinated our life and the path it will take, all the way down to our death. **Job 14:5** *"Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;"* If we believe that God has truly set our bounds then we must accept that our life is also set, if we believe in election then we must also believe our life is set, if we believe that God is Sovereign then we must believe our life is set. God does not chance anything; God ordains and controls all things. God either decrees and causes all things or God decrees and allows things to happen, but all of our life events are by Gods will.

Therefore, God either causes or allows tribulations, trials, and persecutions in our life for a purpose just as God did with Job. God did not do the persecutions, but God did allow Satan too. **Job 1:6-12** *"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power;"*

only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So, Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.”

As Christians we must accept that God ordained what our life is, life has no accidents, no surprises to God, God has allowed or cause all things in our life to be. People who deny this fact deny God is Sovereign and has us in His hand. This is why we are obligated to thank God for not only the good things in life but also the bad. If we listen to God’s word we will understand that being God’s child and living as a Christian has blessing’s only for us, what we think is bad is only temporal and when this life is over all blessings are ours.

This is what God said about His own apostles being arrested and persecuted, **Acts 5:41** *“And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.”*

So now we are going to see that God will reward our sufferings on this earth. As we study in 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10

1. Our persecutions and trials in this life is *“...a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God”* V. 5
 - a. What does *“manifest token”* mean, - an indication, - of *the righteous judgment of God*” did you hear that?
 - b. The token is the patience and faith with which Christians endure persecution and tribulation. It is a token of the righteous judgment of God, in that it points to the future glory which God will execute at their final judgment and the righteous award which will be given to the persecutors.
 - c. But our rewards will also be God’s righteous judgment, we do not sometimes realize the rewards it is to suffer for the Lord. **Matthew 5:10-12** *“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”*
2. It is a blessing to suffer for the Lord.
 - a. Please listen closely to **Philippians 1:29** *“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;”*

- b. Notice the words “*For unto you it is given*” What does this mean? “to grant as a favor, but you know what else it means? It is GRACE” The same grace that brought our salvation also brings our suffering.
 - c. It means not only "for the sake of," but "in the place of." It has been graciously given the saints to suffer not only for the sake of but in the place of Christ. When Jesus Died, His people were to carry on His work of Christianity and suffering in His place.
 - d. Listen to Paul speak about his own suffering, **Colossians 1:24** “*Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:*” Paul said as Christ suffered for the church, so do I. Most people refer this to Christ, but it’s Paul’s suffering.
3. The blessing is “being counted worthy to suffer”. “...*that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:*” V. 5
- a. Let us understand the saved and the lost are not the same, God doesn’t treat us the same.
 - aa. God judges us different; God judges the saved with love and grace, He judges the lost with wrath and anger. **Deuteronomy 32:43** “*Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people.*”
 People who do not understand Christian’s persecutions, doesn’t understand God. It is a glory for Christians to suffer for God.
 - bb. The Christians life on this earth is different from the lost, this earth is their heaven, this is their only good time. Some ask why this is so, so did Jerimiah, **Jeremiah 12:1** “*Righteous art thou, O LORD, when I plead with thee: yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?*” – The Psalmist wrote these words, **Psalms 73:12** “*Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.*”
 - cc. God promised Christians that on this earth we shall suffer persecution. **2 Timothy 3:12** “*Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.*” – I believe, the stronger of a Christian, the stronger our biblical

understanding, the stronger our walk, the stronger of persecution. God uses these persecutions to build our strength and faith in Him. They are not to bring harm to our faith or weaken us.

dd. The believer is not concerned with self. **Matthew 16:24** *"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."* – As Christians we are to deny everything about ourself, our life is no longer about ourself it is about God's glory.

ee. Moses is our great example. **Hebrews 11:24 - 26** *"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward."*

- b. *"Counted worthy"* means - to be deemed entirely deserving – *"of the kingdom of God"* Not that you worked your place in heaven, **Eph. 2:9** *"Not of works"* but that you fought the good fight and will be blessed with God's righteous rewards. Entering heaven with battle scars (so to speak) will be a blessing to us.

aa. As Christians we are never worthy of the kingdom of God, we are worthless sinners, the worst of God's creation. We are what we are only by God's merciful grace and love. But by grace we are accounted worthy; God of his free grace will account us worthy.

bb. **Luke 17:9 - 10** *"Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."*

- c. God has chosen us in the battle as He did us all to salvation, I thank God I was chosen also for the battle. The God counted me worthy to suffer as my Lord suffered. Even if it cost me my life on this earth.

aa. Even in our judgment, no matter how much we have done we still must pray God will have enough grace to accept us as worthy. Paul wrote in **2 Timothy 1:18** *"The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well."*

1 Peter 1:2-9 *“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 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 lively 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: That 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 honour 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.”*

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