



HOW TO HAVE A ROCK-SOLID FAITH

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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How to Have a Rock-Solid Faith

SERMON REFERENCE: Romans 5:1-5

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2054

In these desperate days, we need a faith that will hold fast in times of trouble. When the winds of circumstances, storms of calamity, and floods of affliction come, we need faith like an anchor.

In Romans 5, we learn how God builds us up to have a rock-solid faith: “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:1-2).

First, God builds our rock-solid faith through our tribulations.

Tribulation means pressure; without pressure, we do not get stronger. We need the conflict; it may come from the enemy, or it may come from God, but God is over it all.

Adrian Rogers says, “Satan will bring conflict to cause you to stumble; God will bring conflict to cause you to stand.”

Pressure will come from the world; the moment we decide to become like Jesus, the world will try to squeeze us back into its mold. It can also come from the flesh; the “flesh” is the proclivity to sin that is still in us, even after salvation. Pressure also comes from the devil, himself; when we’re saved, we find out for ourselves just how powerful he can be.

But our conflict teaches us constancy. Our endurance is built through our ability to withstand pressure. When conflict comes, some retreat or resent, and others resign. But we should resolve to follow God through the conflict.

Romans 5:3-4 says, “And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.” Constancy develops character; we grow the most when we face the hottest fires of affliction.

Finally, our faith takes its full effect. As our character develops hope, we gain godly confidence. “Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us” (Romans 5:5).

Adrian Rogers says, “Hope is faith in the future tense; it believes God not only for the present, but it believes God for the future.”

Life Application

Do you want to have a rock-solid faith in spite of stormy circumstances? Remember, conversion brings conflict, which brings constancy, which brings character, which brings hope and confidence.



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SERMON REFERENCE: Romans 5:1-5

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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) In these desperate days in which we're living, we need a faith that will stand fast.
 - i) We need some spiritual steel and concrete in our lives.
- b) Many Christians are being blown about by the winds of circumstances, scattered by the storms of calamity, and swept away in floods of affliction.
 - i) They don't seem to have an anchor that will hold in the storm.
 - ii) They are weak and floundering saints, but God wants us to be strong.
 - (1) God doesn't want us to fold up and give up.
 - (2) He wants us to look up and stand up.
- c) God wants us to have a foundation that is sure.
 - i) Romans is a foundation for our faith, a solid Word for an unsure age.
- d) God is in the business of building saints.
 - i) When God gives us salvation, He's not finished with us; He's beginning with us.
 - ii) Philippians 1:6
 - iii) He wants to build into us a rock-solid faith.
- e) Romans 5:1-5
- f) Both peace and tribulation are byproducts of salvation.
 - i) Romans 5:1
 - ii) Romans 5:3
 - (1) Don't think that when you get saved, all you get is peace with no problem, no heartache, no tears and no disappointment.
 - (a) When God builds into us a rock-solid faith, He will mix in some tribulation.
- g) Today's message will focus on four things that we need to learn if we want to have a rock-solid faith.

2) CONVERSION BRINGS CONFLICT (ROMANS 5:1-3)

- a) "Being justified by faith" speaks of peace with God.
 - i) Paul is talking about access by faith into this grace.
- b) The word "tribulation" in this passage literally means "pressure."
 - i) The word used here is the same word that is used when a person would crush grapes to get wine and when someone would crush olives to get oil.
 - (1) God wants to build into our character the wine and oil of His strength and love.
 - (2) To build this character, God will bring pressure into our lives because without pressure, He cannot make us strong saints.
- c) We need to understand that when we have trouble, heartache, and disappointment, that God is over it all.
 - i) God is watching over it all.
 - (1) This may be hard for us to understand.
 - (2) Thomas Watson: "Where reason cannot wade, there faith must swim."
 - ii) Conflict and pressure may come from Satan, or it may come from God; but God is over all.
 - (1) Satan will bring conflict to cause us to stumble.
 - (2) God will bring conflict to cause us to stand.



- iii) We will know pressure as Christians.
- d) Pressure will come from the world.
 - i) Romans 12:2
 - ii) When we come to Jesus, the world will begin to bring pressure on us to try to squeeze us into its mold.
 - (1) We will see this from the entertainment world, the business world, the social world and the political world.
- e) Pressure will come from the flesh.
 - i) Once we get saved, we receive a new nature, but the old Adamic nature is still there.
 - ii) The proclivity to sin is still there.
 - (1) The Bible calls this “the flesh.”
 - (2) The flesh is an enemy inside the fort.
 - (3) We will feel a civil war within us.
 - iii) Galatians 5:17
- f) Pressure will come from the devil himself.
 - i) We never really understand the power of Satan until we get saved.
 - ii) If you don’t have any difficulty with the devil, it’s because you and the devil are traveling in the same direction.
 - (1) If you turn around, you’ll have a collision with him; right now, you’re in collusion with him.
 - iii) When we get saved, Satan levels all of the artillery of Hell against us.
 - iv) Satan came against Jesus, and he will come against us.
 - (1) An unsaved person is spiritually dead; therefore, Satan doesn’t have to bother him.
 - v) A person may even think that they’re not saved because of the pressure and conflict.
- g) Pressure will come from God.
 - i) It will come from God to cause us to stand.
 - ii) Hebrews 12:6
 - iii) God is not trying to make us happy, He is trying to make us holy.
 - iv) Temptations, testing and trials are a part of life.
 - (1) It is a false gospel that says that we will have no adversity, persecution or pain if we come to Christ.

3) CONFLICT TEACHES CONSTANCY (ROMANS 5:3)

- a) The word “patience” means “constancy.”
 - i) When the pressure or crisis comes, it doesn’t make us; it just reveals what we’re made of.
- b) “Patience” also means “endurance.”
- c) We will never have strength, victory, prosperity or contentment without patience.
 - i) We will never learn much of anything worth learning if we don’t have constancy, endurance and patience.
 - (1) If you want to play the piano, you have to learn the scales.
 - (2) If you want to learn Greek, you have to study the verbs.
 - (3) If you want to build character, you have to persevere and endure.
 - ii) There is no instant maturity.
 - iii) Conversion brings conflict, and conflict is meant to teach constancy and patience.
- d) There are four things we can do when conflict comes:
 - i) Retreat
 - (1) Some people run away from conflict, either physically or emotionally.
 - ii) Resent



- (1) They pout and hold a grudge against God.
- (2) They become cynical.
- iii) Resign
 - (1) They cave in and give up.
 - (a) They lie down on the field and surrender their shield.
 - (2) They give in to discouragement and despondency.
- iv) Resolve
 - (1) God's plan is for us to resolve by faith that we will follow Him.
 - (2) Faith is shown more in patience and constancy than in any other way.
 - (3) If you really have faith when trouble comes, you will endure.
 - (4) Faith is not receiving the things that we want nearly so much as it is accepting from God the things that He gives.
 - (a) Tribulation works patience.
 - (b) Don't try to wiggle out of what God is doing.
 - (c) Job 13:15
 - (5) William Barclay described constancy in this way:
 - (a) It is not the patience that sits down, bows its head and lets things descend upon it and passively endures until the storm passes.
 - (b) It is the spirit which can bear things, not with resignation, but with blazing hope.
 - (c) It is not the spirit which sits statically enduring in one place, but the spirit which bears things because it knows that these things are leading to a goal of glory.

4) CONSTANCY DEVELOPS CHARACTER (ROMANS 5:4)

- a) "Experience" here is translated many times as "character."
- b) God wants to build into us character.
 - i) Reputation is what others think about us; character is what God and your spouse know about you.
- c) The word "experience" was used in the Bible to describe gold that's tried in the fire and comes out pure.
 - i) God will put us in the fire of affliction to test us.
 - (1) The faith that can't be tested can't be trusted.
 - (2) This is the way we learn how much dross there may be in our lives that needs to be burned out of our lives.
- d) The times we grow the most are not when everything is going fine, but when we are going through sorrow and pressure and trouble.
 - i) Robert Browning Hamilton: "I walked a mile with pleasure; she chatted all the way. But left me none the wiser for all she had to say. I walked a mile with sorrow, and not a word said she. But oh the things I learned from her when sorrow walked with me."
- e) As God builds character into our lives, He does not remove us from difficulty or pain.
 - i) God is in the transformation business.
 - (1) God does not take away evil; He transforms it.
 - (a) God didn't stop the crucifixion; He gave us Easter.
 - ii) God's method is not the method of substitution.
 - (1) We want God to give us health instead of sickness, wealth instead of poverty, friendship instead of loneliness.
 - (2) We want God to substitute things.
 - iii) God took Paul's weakness and transformed it into strength.
 - iv) Job 23:10



- f) There is no way we are going to have character, which is translated “experience,” without experience.
 - i) We can be instantly spiritual but we cannot be instantly mature.
 - (1) You can only be young once, but you can be immature for a long time.
- g) Most of us just want to get out of the fire of affliction.
 - i) God knows what He is doing.
 - ii) The refiner who is refining gold knows that it is pure when he can see his face reflected in it.
 - (1) God is looking for His character, His likeness, reflected in our lives.

5) CHARACTER WILL GIVE CONFIDENCE (ROMANS 5:4)

- a) The word “hope” in the Bible does not mean “maybe” or “it might be.”
 - i) The word “hope” means “rock-solid faith.”
 - (1) The Second Coming of Jesus is called “the blessed hope.”
 - (a) Titus 2:13
 - (b) This is not the “blessed maybe;” it is talking about hope as an anchor of the soul.
- b) Hebrews 6:19
- c) When we’ve been through the fire, we know that He has not failed us and that He has kept His Word.
- d) Romans 8:38-39
- e) Hope is faith in the future tense.
 - i) It believes God not only for the present, but also for the future.
 - ii) No matter what, we have that absolute confidence.
- f) Romans 5:4-5
 - i) “Maketh not ashamed” means it will never disappoint us.
 - ii) God cannot fail, and He will not fail.
 - (1) But we need to get a bulldog grip on the things that really count.
 - iii) No one ever has or ever can put his faith in Jesus and then be disappointed or ashamed that he did.
- g) Character enables us to trust God in the darkest storm.
 - i) Hebrews 6:19

6) CONCLUSION

- a) Ephesians 4:18
 - i) The Apostle Paul spoke of those who were lost as being alienated from the life of God without hope in this world.
- b) There is a hope, not a maybe but a certainty.
 - i) That hope begins with conversion.
- c) Would you like to be saved today?
- d) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- e) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16



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Would you take please the Bible and look now in Romans chapter 5, find it if you will. I heard somewhere of a little boy who had a horse and the horse was really just an old, oat burning nag. The horse was decrepit, sway-backed and wasn't much of a horse; really sort of a flea-bitten horse. And a man was making fun of a little guy and his horse. Now, the boy loved the horse very much because they'd been pals for a long time. The man, in order to ridicule the little boy and have some fun with him said, "Son, is that horse any good?" He said, "Yes sir, he's the best horse in the whole world." He said, "Well son, he doesn't look so good," said, "Can he run fast?" He said, "No sir, but he can stand fast."

Now, I want to talk to you about how to have a faith that will stand fast. How to have an anchor that will grip the solid rock. How to put some spiritual steel and concrete in your life because in these desperate days in which we are living, you will need it. Many Christians today are being blown about by the winds of circumstances and they are being scattered by the storms of calamity. And they are being swept away in floods of affliction. And they don't have an anchor that will hold in the storm. To the contrary, their life seems to be built on eggshells and Jell-O. They are weak and floundering saints. And God wants us to be strong. God doesn't want us to fold up and give up. God wants us to look up and stand up. God wants us to have a foundation that is sure. The book of Romans is a foundation for our faith, a solid Word for an unsure age.

Would you like to have rock solid faith? Would you like for your anchor to hold? You see, God is in the business of building saints. When God gives you salvation, He's not finished with you; He's beginning with you. The Bible says in Philippians 1 verse 6, "He who hath begun a good work in you will perform it." So getting saved does not mean we're now the finished product. One man was wearing a lapel button and it just had a series of letters on it. It said, "P-B-P-G-I-N-F-W-M-Y." That's all it said on the button. And a friend asked him, "What does that mean?" He said, "It means, 'Please be patient, God is not finished with me yet.'" And God is not finished with you yet. God wants to build into you a rock solid faith.

Now our Scripture tells us how He does that in four steps and I want you to look at it right now. Romans chapter 5 beginning in verse 1 through verse 5, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience, experience; and experience, hope, and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost."

Now I want to ask you a question: when God saves you, what does God give you as the byproduct of that salvation? Is it peace or is it tribulation? The answer is yes. Now we read about the peace of God in Romans 5 verse 1, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." But notice verse 3, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations." Don't think, dear friend, that when you get saved that all you get is peace and there's no problem, no heartache, no tears, no disappointment. Oh no! When God is going to build into you a rock-solid faith, He's going to mix in some tribulation.



Four things I want you to notice. Now folks, this is for your welfare. Don't let this blow past. I mean, this is God's Word to you now. We're not just playing games. And if you want to have a solid faith, then you're going to have to learn today. Point number one: conversion brings conflict. Did you get that? **Conversion brings conflict.** In Romans 5 verses 1 and 2, he's talking about our conversion, "Being justified by faith." Talking about peace with God, he's talking about access by faith into this grace, "Wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." Oh yes! Praise God! Hallelujah! We like that. But now move into verse 3, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations."

Now, the word tribulation means pressure. That's literally what the word means. It's translated here tribulation, but it was used when you would crush grapes to get wine, the same word tribulation is used. It was used when you would crush olives to get oil. And God wants to build into your character the wine and oil of His strength and His love. And so God is going to bring pressure into your life because without pressure, God cannot make you a strong saint. Without tribulation God will not make you a strong saint. You need conflict. You need pressure. Conversion brings conflict. A diamond is a lump of coal that's been under pressure for a long, long time.

Now you need to understand the ways of God that when you're having trouble and heartache and disappointment, God is over it all. The word luck does not belong in a Christian's vocabulary. And the word fate, F-A-T-E, does not belong in your vocabulary. God is watching over it all. Now you may not be able to understand it. Thomas Watson said, "Where reason cannot wade, there faith must swim." But you must understand that God is over all and when you come to Jesus, you're going to come into conflict and pressure. Now this conflict and this pressure may come from Satan or it may come from God, but God is over it all. Satan will bring conflict to cause you to stumble; God will bring conflict to cause you to stand, but you're going to know pressure as a Christian.

Now some of this pressure is going to come from **the world**. You know the Bible says in Romans 12 verse 1, "Don't be conformed to this world." The minute you come to Jesus, this world is going to begin to bring pressure on you to squeeze you into its mold and you'll feel that every day: in the entertainment world, in the business world, in the social world, in the political world. There will be incredible pressure upon the child of God. And this world with its theories and with its thrills, this world is going to come against you in so many ways.

But not only is the pressure going to come from the world, it's going to come from **the flesh**. You're going to find out that once you get saved, you receive a new nature. But the old Adamic nature is still there as we read in Galatians 5:17. The proclivity to sin is still there. You feel it. I feel it. You never get beyond it. The Bible calls this, "The flesh." It is an enemy inside the fort. And you're going to feel a civil war within you. I felt it when I first got saved as a teenager boy. I can remember a particular time after I'd given my heart to Jesus, I was out with some friends and an incredible temptation came to me. And I can remember as it were yesterday the incredible war that was going on within me because my flesh said, "Adrian, that's something you want to do. That's something you need to do. Everybody else is doing it." And the Holy Spirit said in me, "No, you're different. You cannot do that." And I felt the biggest battle going on in my heart and I prayed and I struggled as a new Christian. And friend, you'll feel that. When you come into salvation, you're going to find out that the world will be working on you to squeeze you into its mold. And you'll find out that inside there's something that rises up in you and there is raging in you a conflict, a civil war. Am I the only one who's felt that? Have you felt it? Okay. You feel it. That's in all of us. The Bible



says in Galatians 5:17, “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh and these are contrary one to another.”

Then, not only will there be the conflict with the world and not only will there be the conflict with the flesh, but the conflict with **the devil** himself. Friend, you never really understand the power of Satan until you get saved, until you get saved. You know you say, “Well, I don’t have any difficulty with the devil.” Well if you don’t, let me tell you why. It’s because you and the devil are traveling in the same direction. You turn around, you’ll have a collision with him. Right now, you’re in collusion with him. But you turn around and you start the other way, if you’ve never met the devil, it’s because you and the devil are going in the same direction. That’s all I’m saying to you is when you get saved, when you give your heart to Jesus, Satan is going to level all of the artillery of Hell against you. And if you are not struggling against the devil, if you’re not in battle with Satan, may I tell you, you must be a little better than Jesus because He was. And Satan came against Jesus, he comes against me and he will come against you.

There was a man who had a farm hand that worked on his farm. The man was not a believer, the farm hand was. The two of them, however, were friends and they went out duck hunting together. And the man who was not a believer was saying to the farm hand, he said, “Look, you’re always talking about fighting with the devil and wrestling with the devil.” He said, “I never have to fight with the devil, I never have to wrestle with the devil and I’m not even a Christian.” He said, “Boss, if you and I shot two ducks, one was wounded and one was dead which one would you go after first?” He said, “Well, I guess the wounded duck.” He said, “That’s right.” He said, “The devil knows you’re a dead duck.” Now friend, that is true. If the devil doesn’t bother you, it’s just because you’re a dead duck; he doesn’t have to bother you. But I’m saying this, listen to me, conversion bring conflict; conflict like you’ve never known. You may get the idea that you’re not even saved because here you’re sailing along and then one day you give your heart to Jesus and bang here comes the world, here comes the flesh, here comes the devil against you. The Bible calls that tribulation. The Bible calls that pressure.

But not only will it come from Satan to cause you to stumble, it’ll come from **God** to cause you to stand. God himself will bring tribulation and pressure. The Bible says in Hebrews 12:6, “Whom the Lord loves He scourges and disciplines every child of God.” You see, listen, God is not trying to make you happy; God wants to make you holy. And temptation and testing and trials are a part of life. It’s a false gospel that says, “If you come to Christ there’ll be no adversity, and there’ll be no misfortune, there’ll be no persecution, there’ll be no pain.”

The late, great, Vance Havner said this and I’ve copied it down for you. I want you to listen to it. Here’s what Vance Havner said, he said, “I’m often amused and amazed by the way we equate Christianity with success, popularity and prosperity. We may not admit it, but we use the same old gage that the world uses, except we use religious language. It would appear that gain is godliness with us, in spite of Paul’s formula that godliness plus contentment equals prosperity.” No, I’m telling you folks that the first step in God building a rock-solid faith is conflict. He tells us in verses 1 and 2 that we’re going to be saved. And then he tells us in verse 3 that we need to glory in tribulation. And remember the word tribulation means conflict, it means pressure.

Step number two, now, this is what God is going to do to build character into your life. **Conflict teaches constancy**. Notice again in Romans 5:3, “Knowing that tribulation worketh patience.” Now what is patience? Not the ability to thread a needle. Not the ability to finish a crossword puzzle. No, the word



patience means constancy. It means consistency. You see, when the pressure comes, the crisis comes, it doesn't make you; it just reveals what you're made of. The same sun that melts the ice hardens the clay. The word patience again, it means endurance. The New American Standard says, "It brings about perseverance." Goodspeed says, "It produces endurance." How many would say, "Pastor, I want strength. I want victory. I want prosperity. I want contentment." Oh, you'd say, "Everybody here wants those." I wonder if I were to ask, how many of you want patience? Very few of us would say, "I want patience." But, you'll never have these other things that I've just mentioned without patience, without constancy, without endurance. You see, tribulation works patience.

Now come up close, I'm going to tell you something. You will never learn much of anything worth learning if you don't have constancy, endurance, and patience. You just won't do it. If you want to learn how to play the piano, you're going to have to learn the scales. If you're going to learn Greek, you're going to have to study the verbs. Sorry about that. If you want to lose weight, you're going to have to have constancy. If you want to build character, you're going to have to persevere; you're going to have to endure. There is no instant maturity. Conversion brings conflict and conflict is meant to teach continuance; constancy. The Bible calls it patience.

What do you do when the conflict comes? Well there are four things you can do. Some people just **retreat**. They just run away from conflict. Whether physically or emotionally, they get a plane ticket, they take a pill, they turn up a bottle, they take a needle, they take a gun. They just try to run from conflict. One man said, "The way to fight a woman is with your hat." They said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Grab it and run."

So some when conflict comes they retreat; others when conflict comes they **resent**. I mean, they say, "I gave my heart to Jesus Christ. I went down there, I got baptized, I started going to Sunday school, I started tithing, now look what has happened to me." And they pout; they get a grudge with God. They become cynical. They don't retreat, they resent.

Others **resign**, they just cave in. They give up. They lie down on the field and surrender their shield and they give in to discouragement and despondency.

But what is God's plan? God's plan is not for you to retreat, not for you to resent, not for you to resign, but to **resolve** by faith that you will follow Him. Faith, listen to me, faith is shown more in patience and constancy than in any other way. If you really have faith when trouble comes, you will endure. Faith is not receiving the things you want nearly so much as it is accepting from God the things He gives. Tribulation works patience. Don't try to wiggle out of what God is doing to you. Job said in Job 13 verse 15, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

Winston Churchill was a man; he looked like a bulldog, stood like a bulldog. He was the one who said, "Never, never, never, never give up." And he reminded us that a bulldog has his nose slanted backward so he can hold on and still breathe. That's a bulldog. Now what you need to do is to get a bulldog grip on Almighty God and like Job say, "I don't care what is happening, what my children do, what the doctor tells me, what my banker tells me, I will not let go. My anchor holds."

You see, what is this constancy? William Barclay describes it so well; I want you to listen to what he said. "It is not the patience that can sit down and bow its head and let things descend upon it and passively endure until the storm is passed. It is the spirit which can bear things, not simply with resignation, but



with blazing hope. It is not the spirit which sits statically enduring in one place, but the spirit which bares things because it knows that these things are leading to a goal of glory. It is not patience which grimly waits for the end, but patience which radiantly hopes for the dawn." That's the kind of endurance that the child of God has. Oh, I wish you would hear what he says.

So notice: conversion brings conflict, conflict teaches constancy and **constancy develops character**. Now watch it, look in Romans 5 verse 4 if you will, "And patience experience." Now what does he mean experience? Well, I looked this up in a number of translations and it is translated many times; character. The translation you may be holding may say character. Patience, constancy brings character and God wants to build into you character. God wants to build into you, rock-solid faith. God is building His saints with spiritual steel and spiritual concrete. You see, reputation is what others think about you. Character is what God and you wife know about you. God wants to build character into your life. This word experience was used in the Bible of gold that's tried in the fire and comes out pure. Same word, that is, it has character to it.

You see, God is going to put you in the fire of affliction. Why? To test you. The faith that can't be tested, can't be trusted. So God is going to put you into the fire of affliction to test you. And that's the way that you're going to learn how much dross there may be in your life that needs to be burned out of your life; the sludge that's in the gold ore. You see, that's the way God builds character. I hate to tell you this folks, but the time that I've grown the most and the time you will grow the most is not when everything's been going fine with me. You think back about those times when you grew the most in the Lord and most likely they were times when you were going through sorrow and pressure and trouble, isn't that true? Somebody wrote these lines, "I walked a mile with pleasure, she chatted all the way. But left me none the wiser for all she had to say. I walked a mile with sorrow and not a word said she. But, oh, the things I learned from her when sorrow walked with me."

God wants to build character into your life. And what God does is not to remove you from difficulty or pain, but to the contrary. God is in the transformation business. You know, God did not take away evil. What God does, He transforms it. God didn't stop the crucifixion, He just gave us Easter. You see, God's method is not the method of substitution. Most of us want God to give us health instead of sickness. We want God to give us wealth instead of poverty. We want God to give us friendship rather than loneliness. We just want God to substitute things. But God is not in the substitution business; God is in the transformation business. God took Paul's weakness and He transformed it into strength. He took his suffering, He transformed it into glory. That's the reason why Job said in Job 23 verse 10, "He knoweth the way that I shall take. And when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."

Now God wants to build into you character. And there's no way that you're going to have character, which is also translated experience, without experience. That's the reason why I think the King James version translates it experience. Somebody was talking to a businessman, he said, "How do you become a success in business?" He said, "Good decisions." Well, he said, "That's fine." He said, "Where do you learn how to make good decisions?" He said, "Experience." He said, "Well, where do you get experience?" He said, "Bad decisions." You see, what God is going to do, God is going to put you in the furnace of affliction and God is going to build your character! You can be instantly spiritual, but you cannot be instantly mature. And by the way, you can be young once, but you can be immature for a long time.

Now listen here, conversion brings conflict. Conflict teaches constancy. Constancy builds character. If you will stay in the fire, God knows what He's doing. And most of us just want to get out of the fire. We



don't want to stay there. But they say that when the person who is the refiner who is refining the gold, he knows it's pure when he can see his face reflected in it. What God is looking for is His character, His likeness reflected in our lives.

Now, here's the fourth and final thing. Are you following with me; you following along? Now listen, conversion brings conflict. It's hard, but it's true. Conflict teaches constancy. Patience, endurance; stay in there. When you do, that constancy will build character. And then you know what will happen to you? That **character will give confidence**. That's the last thing. That's the rock-solid faith I'm talking about. The confidence; look at it here in God's Word in Romans 5:4, "And patience experience," character, "and experience," what, "hope, hope." Now what does the Bible mean when it says hope? It doesn't mean maybe so; it might be. No friend, you need to understand this and if you don't get this, you're going to miss the whole thing. When the Bible uses the word hope it means rock-solid faith! That's what it means. For example, the Second Coming of Jesus is called what? "The blessed hope!" Titus chapter 2 and verse 13. That doesn't mean the blessed maybe. No, no. He is talking about hope as an anchor of the soul.

All right, now let me give you the Scripture that I thought of. Hebrews chapter 6 and verse 19, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast!" What good is an anchor without a solid rock? "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, steadfast, sure." You say, "Well, I want a rock-solid faith." All right, conversion brings conflict, and conflict teaches constancy, and constancy brings character, and character brings confidence. You've been through the fire and you know He has not failed you. You know that He has kept His Word. You know that, "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8 verses 38 and 39.

Do you know what hope is? Hope is faith in the future tense. I mean, it believes God not only for the present, but it believes God for the future. Thomas Brook said, "Hope can see Heaven through the thickest clouds." It doesn't matter what. I have that absolute confidence.

Now look at it. He says here, look in Romans 5 verses 4 and 5, "And patience, experience; and experience, hope," now watch this, "and hope maketh not ashamed." What does that mean, "Maketh not ashamed?" It means it will never disappoint you. He cannot fail. He will not fail. But you need to get a bulldog grip on the things that really count. No one ever has or ever can put his faith in Jesus and be disappointed or ashamed that he did it. That was a good place for an Amen! Amen!

I read somewhere of a Salvation Army lass who had been witnessing to a family in a poor neighborhood. There were some people who lived in an upstairs tenement and the father in the home was an atheist, an avowed atheist, a philosophical atheist. And this girl who worked in the Salvation Army had been trying to lead this family to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and the father was in a conflict with her; but she just kept loving and kept going. The son in that family grew ill and he was critically ill. They didn't have enough of whatever it took to put him in the hospital. He was dying at home. This girl went back one more time to see if she could witness, to see if she could share the love of Jesus. And as she stood outside the door she could hear what was going on in the door and reported it later. The boy asked his dad, "Dad, am I going to die?" And the father said, "Son, you will die. But don't worry about it. After you die, it will be all over. You won't feel anything, you won't know anything, you will have forgotten the pain and the sorrow. So, don't worry about it son. I love you, son. And just hold on son, just hold on. After a while it'll be over." And the son said, "But father, I'm afraid and I don't want to die. And father, I need some help." And the father said,



“Son, my son, I love you. It’ll be over in a moment. It’ll be all over, all over. Son, hold on, just hold on.” And that Salvation Army lass said, “I heard that boy pathetically say, ‘Father, you’re telling me to hold on, but there’s nothing to hold on to.’”

Friend, I want to tell you something. When you know Jesus and when your feet touch those chilly waters of death, and when the winds are blowing, your anchor will hold. Your anchor will hold. You will have a rock-solid faith. That’s what hope means. Conversion brings conflict, conflict teaches constancy, constancy builds character and character enables us to trust God in the darkest storm. Hebrews 6:19, “Which hope we have is an anchor of the soul.” The apostle Paul in the book of Ephesians, in chapter 4 and verse 18, talked about those who were lost and he talked about them being alienated from the life of God without hope in this world. Aren’t you glad there is a hope? Not a maybe, a hope, a certainty. And that’s what we have today. Now it begins with conversion.

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. Would you begin to pray right now for friends who may be around you, maybe somebody who never even really thought about giving his or her heart to Jesus, but today God’s Holy Spirit has been speaking to hearts and people are saying, “Yes, that’s what I need. That’s what I want.” Would you just pray for somebody today that may be near you that might need Jesus.

And while heads are bowed, maybe as somebody is praying for you right now, but I want to talk to you. If you’re not certain that you’re saved, let me tell you how to be saved. Would you pray a prayer like this, “Lord Jesus, I know that You love me. Thank You for paying for my sin with Your blood on the cross. My sins deserves judgment. Thank You for taking my judgment. Thank You for bearing the penalty for my sin. Thank You for being my substitute. Thank You for such great love. Thank You Lord. And now Lord, just by faith I open my heart, I receive You. I believe You’re the Son of God. I believe You paid the full debt for my sin. I believe that God raised You from the dead. And now, right now, I receive You into my heart as my Lord and Savior.” Would you pray that? “Right now, I receive You into my heart as my Lord and Savior, this moment. Forgive my sin. Cleanse me and save me. I’m not asking for a special feeling. I’m not looking for some kind of sign. I stand on Your Word. I just trust You by faith. You’re now my Lord and my Savior, my God, my guide, my friend. And Lord Jesus, because You died for me, I will live for You. I will not be ashamed of You. I will confess you openly. I will follow You the rest of my life. By Your grace and for Your glory. Amen.”



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