

Pulling Indescribable Blessings out of Your Horrific Trials

I like to say that “the worst of times are often the best of times—they just don’t feel like it at the time.” As counterintuitive as this seems, anyone who has been through tough times while drinking deeply of the grace of Christ knows it’s true.

This week, I had an extensive conversation with a Christian brother who has recently endured horrific physical trials, multiple surgeries and life-threatening infections. He endured great pain, loss of income, mounting medical bills and a massive disruption of life as he knew it. Yet, he testified, “I would not trade those months and years for anything, because we experienced such amazing provision from God in every area of my life. God gave me extraordinary time and freedom to learn and apply His word.”

Some people very close to me have recently experienced some difficult weeks in a relationship. The burden has been so heavy they have lost sleep, appetite and certainty. Yet, their love for God’s Word and time spent with Him in prayer has accelerated so dramatically that grace has flooded their lives with indescribable strength.

I certainly have my own stories of hard days coupled with incredible mercies—and so do you. But why is this enigmatic principle such a common experience for Christ-followers? The Bible gives us some practical insight into why bad times can often turn out so good for us. Here are a few of these truths.

We Embrace a Deeper Obedience

Easy times can make us spiritually flabby, while trials can

awaken us to the value of God's word. David wrote in Psalm 119:67, "Before I was afflicted I wandered, but now I keep Your word." A few verses later he affirmed, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Your statutes" (Ps. 119:71), and he told the Lord, "You in faithfulness have afflicted me" (Ps. 119:75).

We Cultivate an Eternal Perspective

When we are coasting through this life on easy street, our hearts become excessively charmed by the fleeting pleasures and possessions of this world. God uses troubles to loosen our grip on the attractions of this life and to reawaken us to the values and rewards of eternity. Paul affirmed this:

"For this reason we do not lose heart: Even though our outward man is perishing, yet our inward man is being renewed day by day. Our light affliction, which lasts but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:16-18).

We Develop Godly Character

In the long run, character counts more than comfort or convenience. James 1:2-3 tells us, "My brothers, count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations, knowing that the trying of your faith develops patience." Romans 5:3-4 affirms, "We also boast in tribulation, knowing that tribulation produces patience, patience produces character, and character produces hope." Luxury and ease spoil character. Challenges and heartaches cultivate character when we receive Christ's abundant grace in the midst of the tough times.

We Assure an Eternal Reward

Godly endurance is always rewarded as we are empowered to

learn and grow through the difficult tests. James 1:12 says, "Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he is tried, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him." In a similar fashion, the apostle Peter reassures us, "In this you greatly rejoice, even though now, if for a little while, you have had to suffer various trials, in order that the genuineness of your faith, which is more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tried by fire, may be found to result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:6-7).

Our Final Exam

When we stand before Christ in eternity, He will not ask us how we enjoyed financial security or about our satisfaction with the creature comforts of life. Rather, we will be evaluated by the degree to which we grew to become like Christ. Most of this growth comes through the trials of life. Our tough times are not easy, nor are they permanent. But they are valuable beyond measure, both in this life and in the one to come.

Copyright ©2017 Daniel Henderson. All rights reserved.