

'GOD'S FAITH RACE FOR ALL TIME'

PART 4 GROWING STRONG IN FAITH THROUGH MANY TRIALS

We are building on The Foundation we laid last week.
That foundation shows that 'Saving Faith' is given to us by Jesus at the point of being Born Again ...
And that the Faith we receive ... we can never lose.

Jesus is The Author of Our Faith.

We also saw last week that it is God's Will for us to **live** the rest of our lives – day after day – IN & FROM this Saving-Faith that is in us.

Romans 1:17 CLV

... *The Justified ones shall live [from] Faith.*

Galatians 2:20 CLV

... *The Life I now live in the body, I live IN faith in The Son of God ...*

We also saw last week THAT THE FAITH IN US DOESN'T NEED TO GROW ... BUT WE NEED TO GROW IN OUR FAITH.

Abraham's faith didn't grow strong (it was already strong).

Abraham grew strong IN Faith. (Romans 4:20)

SO ... **SLIDE**

- **WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN PERMANENT FAITH**
- **WE ARE TO LIVE EACH DAY IN THIS FAITH**
- **WE SHOULD BEGIN TO GROW IN THIS FAITH**

GOD'S WILL IS FOR US TO GROW & MATURE IN OUR FAITH.

But many Christians never grow strong in their faith.

MATURING IN FAITH MEANS WE BECOME SOLID & ESTABLISHED IN OUR FAITH ... AND HAVE A LIFESTYLE THAT PRIORITISES FAITH.

AS PAUL TESTIFIED TO ...

2 Corinthians 5:7 Literal Standard Version **SLIDE**

For we walk through faith, not through sight [the things we see].

THIS GROWING IN FAITH MAKES US SECURELY ESTABLISHED IN FAITH ON SOLID, SPIRITUAL GROUND ...

SO WE CAN SAY **AS DAVID SAID ...**

Psalm 46:1-2 New American Standard

God is our refuge and strength, a very ready help in trouble.

²Therefore we will not fear, though the earth shakes and the mountains slip into the heart of the sea.

**NB: JESUS BEING THE AUTHOR & FINISHER OF OUR FAITH ...
MEANS JESUS BEGINS FAITH IN US
AND BRINGS US TO MATURITY IN OUR FAITH**

SO HOW DOES JESUS CAUSE US TO MATURE IN FAITH?

James 1:2-4 Amplified **SLIDES x 2**

*Consider it nothing but joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you fall into various **trials**. ³Be assured that the **testing** (proving) of your faith [through experience] produces endurance [**leading to spiritual maturity** and inner peace]. ⁴ And let endurance have its perfect result and do a thorough work, so that **you may be perfect and completely developed [in your faith]** lacking in nothing.*

Notice the two blue, high-lighted words 'Trials & Testing'

**WITH THESE TWO PRINCIPLES THE LORD CAUSES US TO GROW
HE USES TRIALS & TESTING WORKING TOGETHER DOING TWO
DIFFERENT THINGS**

SLIDE

- 1. THE TRIAL BRINGS US TO THE END OF OUR OWN WAYS**
- 2. THE TEST BRINGS OUT THE TRUE-FAITH IN OUR HEARTS**

Verse 2: trials (**peirasmōis**) by implication, any adversity.

*The use of this word 'trials' by James implies **these trials are external** (see **Luke 10:30**, where the same word is used of the man **who fell among thieves**) (Pulpit Commentary)*

NB: MANY & VARIOUS TRIALS ... This covers the plethora of difficulties and hard-times that we go through ... all **physical, emotional, social, financial etc **hardships**.**

*These can be **divorce ... the loss of a loved one ... having to live or work with someone we do not like ... not having enough money ... being unwell ... and many more.***

SLIDE 1. THE TRIAL BRINGS US TO THE END OF OUR OWN WAYS

AS GOD DID WITH NEBUCHADNEZZAR

Daniel 4:30-31 BSB

The king exclaimed, "Is this not Babylon the Great, which I myself have built by the might of my power as a royal residence and for the glory of my majesty?"³¹ While the words were still in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven: "It is decreed to you, King Nebuchadnezzar, that the kingdom has departed from you.

GOD USES ALL THESE MANY & VARIED TRIALS TO CAUSE US TO NOT RELY ON OUR OWN PHYSICAL STRENGTH ... OUR OWN MENTAL ABILITY ... OUR GREAT PERSONALITY ...

THE LORD TAKES US INTO SITUATIONS WHERE WE ARE OUT OF OUR DEPTH ... SITUATIONS BEYOND OUR CONTROL ...

To a place where our self-effort cannot get us out ... where our intellectual ability cannot figure a way through ... *where spiritual principles such as praying, fasting and confessing etc. produce nothing but disappointment ...*

A place where we stop trying to figure it out ... stop trying to pray our way out ... stop trying to buy our way out ...

SLIDE WHEN WE COME TO THE END OF OURSELVES WE CAN FIND OUR FAITH IN GOD HIMSELF

**BUT THE TRIAL IS ONLY ONE HALF OF GOD'S PROCESS OF CAUSING US TO GROW IN FAITH
THERE IS ALSO THE 'TEST OF OUR FAITH'**

SLIDE 2. THE TEST BRINGS OUT THE TRUE-FAITH IN OUR HEARTS

Verse 3: Testing (*dokimion*) A test to show what is genuine or trustworthy

The Literal Standard Version says it right ...

James 1:3 Literal Standard Version

*Knowing that **the proof** of your faith works endurance.*

1 Peter 1:6-7 BSB **SLIDES x 2**

... Though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in various trials ⁷so that **the proven character of your faith**—more precious than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

THE PROOF OF OUR FAITH

**Proof that faith is there / Proof that it is real / Proof that it is strong.
WE START TO EMBRACE FAITH & BECOME STRONG IN IT.**

Peter likens Faith to Pure Gold ... which when we are tried in the fiery furnace and all the fake-faith and futile effort is burned away ... comes forth shining as pure gold.

*The purging of the futile effort and fake faith is in the fire-trial
Where True Faith Shines as Pure as Gold.*

True faith cannot be burned off by the trial of fire. (Spurgeon)

NB: THIS IS NOT GOD TESTING US TO SEE WHETHER WE HAVE FAITH OR NOT IN THE TRIAL

This tells us that God is bringing us to a point of realising we have True-Faith within us and proves that this faith cannot be destroyed and that this True-Faith is powerful and strong and able to take us through.

*You can now tell how much was solid, and how much was sham; for if the faith you thought you had has failed you ... **IT WAS NOT REAL FAITH.** If it were real faith then it would not have been consumed by any trial through which it has passed. You have lost the froth from the top of the cup, but all that was really worth having is still there. It must be so, **for as faith is not born of earthly things, neither can earthly things kill it, nor even take from it one true particle.** - Spurgeon*

**THIS IS TELLING US IN OUR TRIALS, FAITH WILL PROVE ITSELF TO YOU AS STRONG, STABLE AND CERTAIN ... SO MUCH SO THAT WHEN YOU HAVE EXHAUSTED EVERY OTHER AVENUE OF TRYING TO FIX, IMPROVE OR GET OUT OF THE TRIAL, YOUR FAITH REMAINS STRONG & CERTAIN ... SO MUCH SO THAT WE NOW COME TO GROW IN THAT FAITH.
LOOK UP & TRUST GOD.**

WHEN I HAD CANCER I REALISED WHAT TRUE FAITH WAS.
I came to the end of myself ... the end of my religious achievements ... the end of my self-righteous success ...

All the religious efforts were burned up and there I was with no strength of my own ... no ability to 'Believe for healing' by myself ...

BUT SOMETHING ROSE IN MY HEART THAT CARRIED ME ... SOMETHING THAT HAD BEEN THERE BELOW THE SURFACE OF RELIGIOUS EFFORT ... OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS ... SINCE I WAS BORN AGAIN ...

THAT THING WAS FAITH & IT CARRIED ME.

FAITH NOT TO CHANGE ANYTHING OR MAKE SOMETHING HAPPEN.

I HAD FAITH IN GOD HIMSELF ... & THAT I WAS IN HIS HAND NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENED.

**THERE IS NO SUCH VERSE THAT TELLS US TO 'BELIEVE FOR SOMETHING'.
FAITH IS IN GOD HIMSELF.**

Jesus rebuked the disciples in the boat calling them 'Little-Faith', not because they should have had Faith to stop the storm and still the waves ... but they should have had FAITH IN JESUS BEING WITH THEM ...

FAITH IS IN GOD HIMSELF & WHATEVER HE SAYS OR PROMISES.

SLIDE 3. GOD HAS DESIGNED SEVERAL STAGES OF GROWTH IN OUR LIFE ... THROUGH A SERIES OF TRIALS

I WANT TO SUGGEST THAT JESUS DOESN'T JUST HAVE ONE LIFETIME TRIAL TO BRING US TO MATURE FAITH ... BUT STAGES OF GROWTH & MATURING THAT HE AUTHORS & FINISHES. THESE ARE DESIGNATED FAITH-TRIALS.

Jesus organises a scenario where you begin young in Faith. In it He walks with you, teaching you to think in Faith ... to live in Faith ... as you walk through ... until that stage is finished and you have grown and matured.

SO OUR LIFE BECOMES A SERIES OF 'STAGES OF FAITH' THAT GOD HAS ORGANISED ... SO THAT WE CAN GROW IN FAITH AND BECOME ESTABLISHED & MATURE.

YES ... GOD USES THEM ALL TO BRING US TO A SOLID PLACE OF FAITH IN HIM ... TO CAUSE US TO MATURE IN OUR FAITH.

WHEN WE GROW IN FAITH THE TRIAL WILL COME TO AN END

James 1:4 BSB **SLIDE**

Allow perseverance to finish its work, so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

NOTICE THAT THERE IS A TIME WHEN THE TRIAL WILL END

Perseverance in us allows us to come to the end of the trial.