

**Church Service at Accra Assembly
'Macedonia' Amasaman**

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Sabbath Message

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Your Deliverance Is In View

Golden Text: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13).

A Bitter Pill to Get Well

Ask any school-going child. School is sweet, but it's not sweet throughout. The games are fun; friends are also fun to be with. But then, there are lessons and questions and exams to write to test knowledge and award marks and grade academic progress. Without examination and pass marks, you will remain stuck academically and only end up as an also-ran.

The same is true of our spiritual life, if not more so. Trials are a kind of spiritual examination which tests our faith, spiritual maturity and knowledge and refines our spiritual life for divine promotion.

For the good it brings us, trials should be seen as something to sweetly endure. It's a bitter pill one must swallow to get well, as it were. The alternative is a terminal disease or death!

Some will term it a 'necessary evil'; but where really is the evil in a process where the joyful outcome more than compensates for all the stress, for which we must be thankful? It was only a hard road to a sweet end! The Elder Ya'akov (James) writes:

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord that promised to them that love Him” (Jam 1:12).

The blessedness is not just in the trial but in the endurance. It is only to the believer who endures temptation – because he considers it a blessing – who has been promised “the crown of life”!

But whatever your view of trials and your response to them, trials are an inevitable part of the believer’s life. So you had better prepare for them; you had better prepare for them; you had better make the most of them! There is a blessing in being tried!

Trials don’t Belong in Outer Space!

Get your perspective right: trials have a definite target. These challenging, trying, stressful situations happen to man. And not just a select few. Every Tom, Dick and Harry will have his share of trials, you and I not excepted.

The subject of trials is cause for sobering thought. Trials are bound to come; they can’t be stopped. But do also keep your faith up: they are not going to swallow you up if you have the loving Father by your side.

Here’s His word of assurance:

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10:13).

You are human. So long as that is true, trials will come to you; it’s part of the human experience. You are no exception. You too will experience temptation, but it will not be in a different category from those that befall all people. Yours will not be one-of-a kind. It will have a precedent which bespeaks the universal reach, in space and time, of trials.

And that is the point the Apostle Paul has been driving at all along. Present-day believers are liable to the same temptations which befall the ancient Israelites, our spiritual “fathers” (v.1). Although they drank “the same spiritual drink” from the “spiritual Rock that followed them”, Christ, “with many of them God was not pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written. The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them

murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. How all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon who the ends of the world (or ages) are come” (1 Cor. 10:4-11).

The problem with the Israelites was that they didn’t study the terrain of temptation well enough and they slipped. They couldn’t curb their lusts; they followed the evil desires of their hearts and run their spiritual lives aground! Hence the warning: “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth [today] take heed lest he fall” (V.12)

But trials come in different forms and shapes, and the Israelites primarily failed to overcome the temptation of the lusts of the flesh (see Jam 1:13-14).

The key to victory over the evil desires of the flesh is life in the Spirit; that’s how we put to death the lusts of the flesh:

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16)

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Rom. 8:13).

Other trials, however, are trials of faith which tests the spiritual integrity of a person. Such was the trial of Job. God asked 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 thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD” (Job 1:8-12).

Having been granted permission by God, Satan put Job through a living hell on earth. But through it all, Job proved the sincerity of his faith, and in the end the devil was put to shame, for “the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning” (Job 42:12).

The story of Job became the byword for patience endurance of trials:

“Take, my brethren, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

“Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy’ (Jam. 5:10-11).

But why endure trials? Why does God allow them in the believer's life?

Trials Make Us More Perfect!

Again, it's a bitter pill we take not only to get well but to stay healthy! So anticipate the joyful end from the beginning and go through the whole process with Joy. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17).

So then even at the bitter beginning, it's all a journey of joy:

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

"Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

"But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (Jam. 1:2-4).

The trial brings perfection – completeness; it ends in spiritual riches – "wanting nothing"! You have no spiritual lack or inadequacy. All spiritual inadequacies have been dealt with, and you are freshly equipped with all godly spiritual resources for continuing growth and impact!

That's why you are to **consider** it all joy when you come under trial. It's not a thing of joy, but **consider it so** because of its happy ending.

And how do you count something as "all joy" when it is, in fact, something unpleasant?

The answer: "Rejoicing in hope; patience in tribulation; **continuing instant** in prayer" (Rom. 12:12).

The sure hope ahead rejoices the heart, while we remain patient in the face of trouble and resist the temptation to act rashly. And the prayer never stops! "Continuing instant in prayer". No let-up! It's a call to constant prayers prayed with zeal.

The hope materializes – there can be no other result:

"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 which is given unto us" (Rom. 5:3-5).

Trials set us off on a spiritual progressive course from one level of maturity to another. With “tribulation” we master “patience”; with patience we gain “experience” (Ps. 46:10; Isa. 30:7, 15); we come to know God and His faithfulness on a personal level; we come to live His truths. At the same time, we become more acquainted with the workings of Satan and how to properly engage him and outsmart him. (See 1 John 2:14; 2 Cor. 2:11). We grow in spiritual stature, and we are better able to manoeuvre our way through the ploys and strategies of the devil. Experience equips us with essential spiritual skills for continual victory and growth in Christ.

And experience teaches us that “hope” is not some starry-eyed, spiritual palliative we clutch at to dull the pain or make us feel better; a mere psychological balm! Godly hope is real. It materializes; it attains tangible reality in due time. It does not disappoint because it rests on love, and love does no wrong. *No true love builds up your hope only to dash it!*

And here, we are talking about the purest kind of love, love of the highest order! “The love of God” – the love that set Him sending His only begotten Son to die a cruel, humiliating death in our place (John 3:16). “God is love” (1 John 4:8) – the personification thereof. That is what the Holy Spirit living within us assures our hearts in His own inexplicable, inimitable way. There can be no mistaking the hope we have; it’s an assurance welling from deep inside us – where the love of God is poured out by the Holy Ghost! It’s an assurance that the God who loves us beyond all understanding will not fail us. We will not look to Him in vain!

And we know from experience that this hope in God will be vindicated. He did it the last time and several times in the past. So why will He disappoint this time round? (See 1Th. 5:24).

It’s an undying hope because His love is an undying love!

Truly, “It is good to wait patiently for the saving help of ADONAI” (Likha [Lam.] 3:26 CJB).

In the absence of prayer and patient reliance of God, the trial will get to you. It will badly affect you. Worry will take over. Your mind will wander off to unimportant things as it feeds itself on the fears and terrors of the imagination. And it will be a diminishing of hope and spirit. Anxiety will eat away at the spirit, and it will not do you a scintilla of good! As the Master pointed out in the **Sermon on the Mount**, “Can any of you by worrying add a single hour to his life” (Matt. 6:27 CJB).

Again, the right approach to trials is to persevere and pray, *fervently and unceasingly in a state of joyful expectancy*, and the rest will follow – guaranteed by the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost: hope will not disappoint!

But how will it all unfold? How will your experience of trial be like?

The Raging Storm is under Control!

We refer back to 1 Cor. 10:13 ... “but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able [to bear]”.

The trials which God’s people experience do not run their course in an out-of-control fashion with unremitting destructive power! Your worst night-mere will not happen. Your worst-case scenario which you have imagined will evaporate like a bad dream which never was!

You are not alone. God is in the picture. And He is “faithful”. He is on your side, for He keeps faith with all those with whom He has established a covenant (Deut. 7:9). He cares for you. He will not abandon you. He has His promises to fulfill in your life. And He knows you look to Him for consolation, hope, guidance and salvation. He will not forsake you at this critical time of trial. The prophet Nahum spoke of Him:

“The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him” (Nah 1:7).

Yea, He knows the limits of your strength and endurance – and you can trust Him not to allow you to be tried beyond what you are able to endure but “with the temptation He will also make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear. He has not promised you a life without trials, but with the trial a way of escape! He will cushion you; He will provide an escape route so that you may be able to endure it. The miraculous escape route God will provide will make the trial ‘manageable’! The trial will not disappear overnight; you will pass through it, but the faithful God will be there with you according to His promise:

“He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him: **I will be with him in trouble**; I will deliver him, and honour him” (Ps 91:15).

Can you imagine that? God with you in your trouble – as He was with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace!

When you haven’t gone past the trial stage you feel the heat somewhat, but the heat will not be so unbearable as to destroy you. There will be “a way of escape also”.

Trial and a way of escape – that only happen to the righteous. All other men do not have this privilege of trial and a divinely charted way of escape!

So your escape route is sure. You are about to escape, and it will set you apart from the unrighteous:

“You have spoken strongly against Me”, say ADONAI.

“Yet you say, ‘How have we spoken against you?’

“By saying, ‘There is no point in serving God. What good is it to obey His orders or to walk about as mourners before ADONAI – Tza’ot?

“We consider the arrogant happy; also evildoers prosper; they put God to the test; nevertheless they escape”.

“Then those who feared ADONAI spoke together; and ADONAI listened and heard. A record was written in His presence for those who feared ADONAI and had respect for His name. “‘They will be Mine’, says ADONAI – Tza’ot, on the day when I compose My own special treasure. I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him.

“Then once again you will see the difference between the righteous and the wicked, between the person who serves God and one that doesn’t serve Him” (Mal. 3:13-18 CJB).

“So the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and how to hold the wicked until the Day of Judgment while continuing to punish them” (2 Kefa [Peter] 2:9 CJB).

“The Lord knows how to rescue”. The rescue plan is in the hands of the Lord who is faithfully with you in your moment of trial. You can’t imprison God’s man in the pit of trouble because you can’t imprison him and His God! (See Jer. 33:1-3).

When the children of Israel were stranded by the Red Sea effectively entrapped on all sides with the army of Pharaoh closing in on them, all hope was lost, humanly speaking. But all along, the escape plan was in the hands of God Almighty – a pathway through the sea. And all Israel had to do was to wait for the Lord in the face of certain annihilation by a whisker!

“Stand still and see the salvation of Yahweh”, Moses thundered in the hearing of all Israel when the natural tendency would have been to make frantic efforts to escape!

And the wait was worth it. The LORD made a way in the sea for Israel to escape but turned the same into a burial ground for Pharaoh and his hosts!

“...the LORD hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet” (Nah. 1:3). He will “come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; He will come and save you” (Isa. 35:4). The weapons He has given us for warfare are mighty through Him to the pulling down of satanic strongholds. (2 Cor. 10:3-4).

The escape hatch has been opened. The trial is over! The faithfulness of God has delivered you! Glory to His name. He has put rescue plan into effect. HalleluYAH!