

Loving Jesus in the Midst of Pressure (Rom. 5:1-11)

I. THE MOST IMPORTANT ASSIGNMENT IN OUR LIFE

- A. The most important assignment in the life of every believer is to love God with all our heart and to spread the fame of Jesus to others, both believers and unbelievers (the Great Commission).
³⁷*You shall love the LORD...with all your heart...*³⁸*This is the first and great commandment. (Mt. 22:37-38)*
- B. One of the most common hindrances to staying diligent is found in having a wrong perspective about what it means to love God with all of our heart. Many have spiritual idealism about this. In Romans 5:1-11, Paul gives us an encouraging perspective that dismantles spiritual idealism. Our small and weak efforts to love God move His heart and are evidences of the glory of God in our life right now. Our love is real even when it is weak. Weak love is not false love.
- C. Some limit their understanding of loving God to only be related to what are traditionally considered “spiritual” activities like worship, healing the sick, evangelism, etc. However, our love is expressed in many areas of our lives. It develops in the weak and imperfect moments that we have right now. The “now” often seems mundane, ordinary, and weak. Jesus revealed how much God values the ordinary and routine aspects of our life by living that way Himself for thirty years. Imagine, Jesus as God embraced the common things of life.

II. WE STAND IN GOD’S GRACE (ROM. 5:1-11)

- A. In Romans 5:1-11, Paul presents a kingdom perspective of life that dismantles spiritual idealism. The word translated *glory* (v. 3) is the same word translated as *rejoice* (v. 2).
²*This grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*³*And not only that, but we also glory [rejoice] in tribulations...*¹¹*And not only that, but we also rejoice in God...*
(Rom. 5:2, 3, 11)
- B. ***Stand in grace:*** Paul’s main exhortation is to call us to stand in grace ***with confidence*** that God accepts and enjoys us (Rom. 5:1-2a), and to stand ***without compromise***, as we seek to walk out the first commandment (Rom. 5:3-11).
- C. Paul makes three surprising statements in instructing us how to stand strong in God’s grace.
1. ***Rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God*** by seeing our small and weak efforts to love God as an expression of God’s glory in our life and therefore, of being successful in God’s eyes (v. 2).
 2. ***Rejoicing in tribulation*** instead of quitting with despair (v. 3-5 as developed in v. 6-10).
 3. ***Rejoicing in God*** by engaging deeply with God (v. 11).

III. REJOICING IN THE HOPE OF THE GLORY OF GOD (ROM. 5:2)

- A. The word *hope* is often interchangeable with *confidence* or *certainty*. To rejoice in the hope of the glory of God speaks of having confidence that our life is anchored in God's glory. We are confident that pursuing to love God is to live successful in His eyes to such a degree that we even receive eternal rewards for it. Our weak love and small acts of obedience are an evidence and expression of the glory of God in our lives now. Paul calls us to rejoice in this glory.

²*We...rejoice in hope [confidence or certainty] of the glory of God. (Rom. 5:2)*

- B. We rejoice that our life is successful according to God's definition of success, regardless of what man says and how many pressures we endure. We see value of our life from God's perspective. We rejoice because our life really matters to Him and is connected to our eternal destiny. We rejoice by understanding how God values our weak obedience and small labors and impact.

¹⁶*Though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.*
¹⁷*For our light affliction...is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*
(2 Cor. 4:16-17)

- C. The challenge is that we do not feel or discern the glory of God in our life in the present. It is indiscernible, even "hidden" from our five senses. We cannot measure it by our emotions or our five senses. Paul referred to our true life in this age, as being "hidden" in Christ.

³*For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. (Col. 3:3-4)*

- D. In order to rejoice in the hope of glory, we must take time to fill our minds with what the Scripture teaches about the way God views our life now as an expression of the glory of God and what it says about our life in the age to come.

IV. WE REJOICE IN TRIBULATION (ROM. 5:3-5): UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS

- A. Paul gave insight into how trials cause us to experience more of God's glory (Rom. 5:3-5). He connected three significant ideas—*perseverance*, *character*, and *hope*—in a way that is not automatically obvious to us. We must see "God's logic" in how these virtues are connected.

³*We also glory [rejoice] in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;*
⁴*and perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit... (Rom. 5:3-5)*

- B. We may ask, "How can we rejoice in God's glory when we have so many tribulations?" Tribulation is not counterproductive to us experiencing God's glory. It is the best soil in which love grows strong. Trials do not have to diminish our success and progress in God.
- C. The Devil lies by telling us that our trials are proof that we do not have God's favor, that we are a failure, and that our relationship with God is deficient.

- D. **Knowing**: We only rejoice in trials by knowing “God’s logic” in how they relate to perseverance, character, and hope. Trials cause despair unless we see a purpose in them. We rejoice only when we see the good that is worked in us. It is essential to understand this in order to maximize the benefit of trials. Transformation is not an automatic result of trials. It occurs as we respond rightly to God. We do this best when we understand the process that is occurring.
- E. The word *tribulation* means pressure and includes many different types of trials or difficulties. James called them *various trials* (Jas. 1:2). We each have many pressures that include pain, boredom, resistance, busyness, frustration, financial lack, fear, misunderstanding, rejection, etc.
- F. There are four sources of pressure: God, Satan, man, and fallen creation.
1. God *loves*, therefore He *disciplines* His people. We must **agree** with Him.
2. Satan *rages*, therefore he *attacks* us. We must **resist** him.
3. Man *sins*, therefore he *hurts* himself and others. We must **repent** of our sin.
4. Creation *groans*, therefore it *troubles* the nations. We must **cleanse** it (Rom. 8:20-23).
- G. Regardless of the source of the pressure, if we respond rightly to God, it will result in our good. We rejoice not in the tribulations themselves, but in their effects. We are to rejoice, in what tribulations produce in us as we respond to the Spirit. A trial does not change us, but our response to continually realign our heart to God and His Word is what produces change in us.
- H. **Perseverance**: This speaks of our commitment to continually reset our heart to love and obey Jesus instead of giving up. Pressure causes us to ***ask questions*** about our relationship to Jesus and why we should persevere instead of quit. It causes us to frequently rehearse the consequence of persevering or quitting. This leads us to ***realign our hearts*** to love and obey Jesus and to ***press into God*** for the breakthrough of His solution to our problems. Pressure causes us to work our “faith muscle.” Resistance training builds muscle strength. A muscle is strengthened when it is exercised beyond its norm by using increased weight that breaks down and builds up the muscle.
- I. **Character**: This speaks of a long term change in our attitudes and actions. There is a deep connection between what we do and how much we see God. Those with godly character have an increased capacity to receive revelation and understand God.
⁸Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (Mt. 5:8)
- J. **Hope** is the confident expectation of fully experiencing God’s glory. None will be disappointed when all the information that God has about us becomes clear on the last day.
⁵Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit... (Rom. 5:5)

V. WE REJOICE IN GOD (ROM. 5:11): THE ULTIMATE PRIVILEGE

¹¹Not only that, but we also rejoice in God. (Rom. 5:10-11)