

TOPIC : More Precious than Gold (Part 2)

SPEAKER : SP Daniel Foo

Date : 22 July 2012

Review of Part 1

How do we build and grow in faith?

1. Faith is a gift from God.
 2. From God's perspective, He has already given us all the faith for all the needs in our lives.
 3. From the believer's perspective, our faith "grows" as we journey in revelation and experience with God.
 4. In reality, we struggle in our faith because of obstacles in our lives:
 - A. The evil one.
 - B. Failure to grow roots of faith.
 - C. Love of the world.
 - D. The sin that so easily entangles.
 - E. The weight / baggage that holds us down.
 5. For faith to manifest in our lives, we must:
 - A. Partake the Word on a regular basis.
 - B. In the partaking, hear the Word of Faith.
 - C. Continue to nurture the Spirit of Faith.
 - D. Starve our doubts and grow our faith.
 6. We will be increasingly wholesome as we grow in faith.
-

Part 2 - The Trial of our Faith

What is more precious than gold? It is **the genuineness** of our faith. In **Luke 22:31**, Jesus said to Peter: "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, **that your faith may not fail.** And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

Satan is always looking to derail us as believers, to cause us to fall. He has come to steal, kill and destroy our lives. But Jesus has come to give us the abundant life. Hence when Peter wrote **1 Peter 1:6**, he truly understood the preciousness of the genuineness of the believer's faith.

1 Peter 1:6 - In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ ...

1. The believer's faith is a mixture.

A. A portion of our faith is aligned to:

- i. The Will of Father-God.
- ii. The Word of the Lord Jesus.
- iii. The Ways of the Holy Spirit.
- iv. The Wisdom of God.

B. However, the other portion of our faith comprises impurities that are not aligned with the Will, Word, Ways and Wisdom of God. These impurities come from our own opinions, the thought patterns of the world and lies from the devil (John 8:44). When we hold onto ungodly beliefs, these impurities will contaminate our faith.

2A. Impurities in gold are purified by fire.

2B. Similarly, trials in our lives, like fire, purifies our faith

1 Peter 1:6 - In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ ...

2C. Trials are for a season. When we go through trials, it would seem to last forever. The dark night of the soul seem long and unbearable. However this season, in the light of eternity, is a little while.

1 Peter 1:6 - In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ ...

2D. Trials are grievous / painful to the person undergoing it.

1 Peter 1:6 - In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ ...

2E. Trials are only as needed, and seem to attract those whose faith are not genuine.

1 Peter 1:6 - In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, **if need be**, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ ...

The phrase “**if need be**” or “**if necessary**” in some bible translation suggests to us not all trials are necessary for everybody. This is what SP has often alluded to as paying tuition fees - We can learn from the mistakes of others and not go through them in our own lives. Trials are only necessary if needed, hence, we need the wisdom and the grace of God to avoid it if we can.

2F. The genuineness of our faith will see us through to the end of our lives when we meet the Lord.

1 Peter 1:6 - In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, **may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ** ...

Many believers will be distracted and weighed down by problems of the world. Only believers with genuine faith will finish well. This is what Jesus is looking for in **Luke 18:8**.

Luke 18:8 - However, when the Son of Man comes, **will he find faith** on the earth?

3A. We do not have absolute knowledge

To have absolute knowledge is to know everything about everything. Only God has absolute knowledge.

3B. There will be situations where we will not completely know and understand on this side of heaven.

1 Corinthians 13:9 - For we **know in part** and we prophesy in part.

1 Corinthians 13:12 - For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I **know in part**, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

There are cases where tragic accidents and sicknesses happen in the lives of godly men and women who serve Him. Why did these things happen? We do not know on this side of heaven. However, while we do not have absolute knowledge, we have sufficient knowledge.

3C. God has given us sufficient knowledge in His Word and Revelation from the Holy Spirit when we seek Him.

In life, we can go to God to ask Him for things, for the needs of our lives. But we also need to ask God about things - of what is on His heart, of people, of situations and circumstances and why they are happening. We need to connect with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of wisdom and revelation.

4A. Sufficient knowledge from God's Word and revelation by the Holy Spirit will help to purify our faith.

The Word of God with revelation will enlighten us and remove the darkness of the impurities. It will remove the lies, the deception, the ungodly beliefs and attitudes, the opinions of man so that we see clearly and understand clearly.

4B. It will help answer such questions:

- i. Why did this accident happen to me?
- ii. Did God send the typhoon-tsunami to judge us?
- iii. Did God give me cancer to punish me or to teach me godliness?
- iv. Why did God not answer my prayer?
- v. Why is it so unfair to me?
- vi. Why? Why? Why?

4C. Sufficient knowledge from God's Word require us to always base a principle or truth on the entire weight of Scriptures instead of some portion that seems to say otherwise.

Psalm 119:160 - the entirety / sum of the scriptures is truth.

An example would be in **Exodus 4**, where God commanded Moses to confront Pharaoh to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. **Verse 11** may be stumbling if taken on its own: The Lord said to him, "Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Some may misunderstand that God caused the infirmities. However we need to understand that Hebraic writing style (of which Exodus is written) always attributes the ultimate sovereignty to God. It does not mean that God created the deaf, mute and blind. Rather, this verse needs to be submitted under the entire weight of Scripture where we know that God is good and that His mercy endures forever (**James 1:17**, **2 Peter 3:9**, and many other Scriptures in OT and NT)

Another example is found in **1 Samuel 16** where we read that God sent an evil spirit to torment Saul. Did God actually send the evil spirit? No, rather it was Saul who gave the evil spirit a ground or foothold. This is the principle of a foothold/doorway (**Ephesians 2:26-27**) without which, the evil one cannot harm us (**1 John 5:18**).

Hence we need to know our Scriptures and understand the following principle.

4D. Understand that while God will not allow a trial beyond our ability to overcome, it does not mean God caused it.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NKJV) No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (AMP) - For no temptation (no trial regarded as enticing to sin), [no matter how it comes or where it leads] has overtaken you and laid hold on you that is not common to man [that is, no temptation or trial has come to you that is beyond human resistance and that is not adjusted and adapted and belonging to human experience, and such as man can bear]. But God is faithful [to His Word and to His compassionate nature], and He [can be trusted] not to let you be tempted and tried and assayed beyond your ability and strength of resistance and power to endure, but with the temptation He will [always] also provide the way out (the means of escape to a landing place), that you may be capable and strong and powerful to bear up under it patiently.

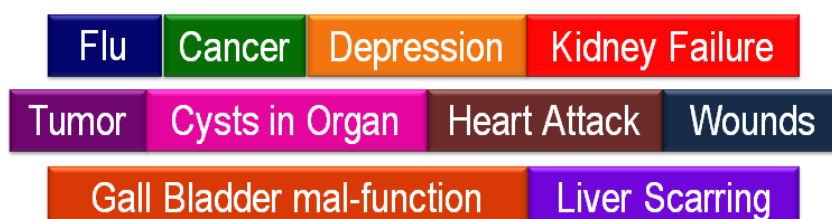
SP gives the analogy of God as the Commanding Officer whose aim is to train his men to be fighting fit soldiers. He has trainers who will train and stretch the endurance and limits of his men. However he will not allow his trainers to physically abuse his men. Likewise God is sovereign and he knows the trials and sufferings we go through in this fallen world with its consequences of sin. He is watching over us and will not allow any trials that we cannot bear or overcome.

5. Common trials that cause us grief and pain:

A. Natural Calamities



B. Sickness and Diseases



C. Financial Difficulties

Economic Downturn Retrenched from Job Drought in Sales
Cash Flow Problems Financially Tight Being Cheated by a Client Investment Turning Sour
Losing a Business Deal Financial Losses Savings Running Out

D. Relational Conflicts

Separation	Divorce	Emotional Abuse	Quarrels	Hurts
Afflictions	Fights	Persecution	Being Bullied	War
Mis-understandings	Envy	Disappointments	Offenses	
Physical Abuse	Jealousy	Being Taken Advantage of		
Verbal Murder	Hatred	Arguments	Unforgiveness	

E. Accidents and Situations Beyond our Control

6. Our faith is purified when we know the source of the pain and trials in our lives:

A. Due to the Fallen-ness of Man.

Romans 3:23 - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

The glory of God is perfection. When we fall short, it results in relational conflicts between men on the individual level and wars on the national level. Sickness and diseases is the result of the natural deterioration of the human body and the environment. Financial difficulties are caused by covetousness and greed of men which has led to systemic poverty on one hand and excessive indulgence and wastage on the other. All these have nothing to do with God.

Because the fallen-ness of man, the result is trials and pain in this world. This will apply to both the believer and the non-believer.

John 16:33 - These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

B. Due to our own faults.

1 Peter 2:20 - For what credit is it if, when you **are beaten for your faults**, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.

Many of the pain we go through are a result of our own undoing. We sometimes have sicknesses due to a lack of sufficient rest or when we have not been eating or exercising well. Financial difficulty can be due to spending beyond our means or as a result of laziness. Relational conflicts can be the result of the lack of self-awareness or social skills.

C. Due to the works of the evil one.

John 10:10a - The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy ...

To understand this, we need to understand spiritual warfare. There are 2 major areas where the evil one will have a heightened awareness of you. The first is when you have a change in your spiritual status, when you come to know God or when you decide to take God seriously and walk with Him. The demons previously at rest in your life are being disturbed (**Matthew 12:43-45**) as they are no longer in harmony with your life. When this happens, you need not fear – simply come under the blood of the Lamb and resist them in the name of Jesus Christ and they will flee.

The second major area when demons are activated is when we move away from routine areas of our lives especially in ministry. For example, SP will be going to Togo and Benin in Africa next month for a preaching assignment. This is non-routine and he will be extra vigilant and will need the congregation to pray for Him.

D. For righteousness sake.

1 Peter 3:14 - But even if you should **suffer for righteousness' sake**, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."

1 Peter 3:17 - For it is better, if it is the **will of God**, to suffer for **doing good** than for doing evil.

This is the only form of suffering that pleases God. This happens when you choose to do things that maintain your integrity or when you choose not do things that displeases God. An example is found in many Christians being the sole care-giver of their ageing parents despite having many siblings. If in the will of God, you have chosen to do good, God will not forget what you have done and will reward you in due time (Heb 6:10). As you suffer for His sake, God is glorified.

1 Peter 4:14 - If you are **reproached for the name of Christ**, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.

2 Timothy 3:12 - Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer **persecution**.

All suffering by a believer is a trial of his faith. However, **God is not glorified in all our sufferings but only when we suffer for Christ and Righteousness' sake.**

- i. Suffering in a fallen world - No choice
- ii. Suffering due to our own "faults" - Wrong choice
- iii. Suffering for righteousness sake - Right choice

7. The trial of the believer's faith may result in 2 broad outcomes:

A. Turning away from God in disappointment.

All of us probably know some Christian friends who have backsliden or have left church because they were disappointed or angry with God.

B. Turning to God to seek His grace for the trial. The grace needed for the trial maybe:



2 Corinthians 12:9 - And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My **strength is made perfect in weakness**." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

This is about coming to the throne of grace to find help in the time of need (**Hebrews 4:16**). This is where the strength of God comes to us in our weakness.

Hebrews 12:2 - Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the **author and perfecter of our faith**, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

We also need Jesus to perfect our faith. None of us have perfect faith or complete faith in every situation. Look to Jesus when you lack faith.

8. When the believer connects with God during the trial.

Romans 8:28 - And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

Genesis 50:20 - But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive

For every trial that we go through, we know that God can work all things for good. But He can only do so when we connect with Him – Then heaven can come down on earth. When we don't pray, everything in life reverts to their natural laws. When we pray, we create the ladder that links our earth to heaven.

A. He will develop strength in perseverance.

Romans 5:3 - And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance ...

James 1:3 - knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience - perseverance.

B. He will develop the character of Christ.

- i. Faith focuses on God, not our problems.
- ii. Faith trust in God's timing, not our own.
- iii. Faith grows by believing God in spite of our circumstances.
- iii. Faith obeys God one step at a time.

C. He will have hope.

Romans 5:4b ... and character, hope.

D. He will experience the deep assurance of the love of God.

Romans 5:5 - 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.

E. He will be victorious i.e. an overcomer.

James 1:4 - But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be **perfect and complete, lacking nothing.**

F. He can now minister to others the Grace of God.

2 Corinthians 1:3 - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

Conclusion

Malachi 3:3 - He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness.

God is refining us. In **Malachi 3:3**, He is the refiner who is purifying the sons of Levi, the priests. We are the priests and God is refining our faith so that we can offer to God an offering in righteousness that is unblemished. God needs to do so as our faith is a mixture and as a result our offering is blemished. **1 Peter 2:5** reminds us to come to God with acceptable sacrifices. When our faith is mixed with impurities such as the opinions of men, the thought patterns of the world and the lies of the devil, our sacrifices become unacceptable. **Jude 1:3** reminds us to earnestly contend for our faith, that our faith can be genuine, rooted in the relationship with our Father God, established in Scriptures in the Word of Christ and continually led by the Holy Spirit.

End

Questions for Discussion

1. A portion of our faith comprises impurities that are not aligned with the Will, Word, Ways and Wisdom of God. Share what are some impurities in your faith that is not aligned to God.

2. Reflect on a trial in your life.
 - A) Do you know the cause / source of this trial? Was it the result of the fallen world, the result of our own fault or for righteousness sake?

 - B) What lesson did you learn from this trial?

 - C) How has it strengthened / purified your faith?

3. “We do not have absolute knowledge .. But, God has given us sufficient knowledge in His Word and Revelation from the Holy Spirit when we seek Him.” – SP

What in your opinion is the sufficient knowledge we need during trials in our life? Give an example from your experiences if you can.

