

Times of Adversity

Proverbs 24:10

If you faint in the day of
adversity, your strength is small.

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Forward

At times you must go through the valley to reach the top of the mountain. The valley is what we call the times of adversity.

These are those times when you may have some questions for your Heavenly Father. The hard times are when you should draw nigh unto God; He wants to hear from you. Hebrews 9:19

The sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

When you have faced adversity, you may have felt that your life had been put on hold, but remember that your adversity will not be greater than the strength God has given up.

Allow the Lord to be praised through your adversity.

Chapter 1



I will trust in the Lord

The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.
(Lamentations 3:22-24)

Adversity as a faith builder

Psalms 91:1-2

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”

God is a shelter, a refuge when we are afraid. The writer’s faith in the Almighty God as Protector would carry him through all the dangers and fears of life.

This should be a picture of our trust—trading all our fears for faith in him, no matter how intense our fears. To do this we must “dwell” and “rest” with him (Psalm 91:1). By entrusting ourselves to his protection and pledging our daily devotion to him, we will be kept safe.

Lean not to your understanding

Proverbs 3:6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Leaning has the sense of putting your whole weight on something, resting on and trusting in that person or thing. When we have an important decision to make, we sometimes feel that we can't trust anyone—not even God. But God knows what is best for us

He is a better judge of what we want than even we are! We must trust him completely in every choice we make. We should not omit careful thinking or belittle our God-given ability to reason; but we should not trust our own ideas to the exclusion of all others.

We must not be wise in our own eyes. We should always be willing to listen to and be corrected by God's Word and wise counselors. Bring your decisions to God in prayer; use the Bible as your guide; and then follow God's leading. He will make your paths straight by both guiding and protecting you.

To receive God's guidance, said Solomon, we must acknowledge God in all our ways.

This means turning every area of life over to him. About a thousand years later, Jesus emphasized this same truth (Matthew 6:33).

Look at your values and priorities. What is important to you? In what areas have you not acknowledged him? What is his advice? In many areas of your life you may already acknowledge God, but it is in the areas where you attempt to restrict or ignore his influence that will cause you grief.

Make him a vital part of everything you do; then he will guide you because you will be working to accomplish his purposes.

Nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Romans 8:38-39

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor whatsoever else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

These words were written to a church that would soon undergo terrible persecution. In just a few years, Paul's hypothetical situations would turn into painful realities. This passage reaffirms God's profound love for his people.

No matter what happens to us, no matter where we are, we can never be lost to his love. Suffering should not drive us away from God, but help us to identify with him further and allow his love to reach us and heal us.

These verses contain one of the most comforting promises in all Scripture. Believers have always had to face hardships in many forms: persecution, illness, and imprisonment, even death. These could cause them to fear that Christ has abandoned them.

But Paul exclaims that it is *impossible* to be separated from Christ. His death for us is proof of his unconquerable love. Nothing can stop Christ's constant presence with us. God tells us how great his love is so that we will feel totally secure in him. If we believe these overwhelming assurances, we will not be afraid.

Powers are unseen forces of evil in the universe, forces like Satan and his fallen angels (see Ephes. 6:12). In Christ we are super-conquerors, and his love will protect us from any such forces

Face trials with joy

James 1:2-4

James doesn't say *if* you face trials, but *whenever* you face them. He assumes that we will have trials and that it is possible to profit from them. The point is not to pretend to be happy when we face pain, but to have a positive outlook ("consider it pure joy") because of what trials can produce in our lives.

James tells us to turn our hardships into times of learning. Tough times can teach us perseverance. For other passages dealing with perseverance (also called patience and steadfastness),

We can't really know the depth of our character until we see how we react under pressure. It is easy to be kind to others when everything is going well, but can we still be kind when others are treating us unfairly?

God wants to make us mature and complete, not to keep us from all pain. Instead of complaining about our struggles, we should see them as opportunities for growth. Thank God for promising to be with you in rough times.

Ask him to help you solve your problems or to give you the strength to endure them. Then be patient. God will not leave you alone with your problems; he will stay close and help you grow.

Trials test faith

1 Peter 1:6-9

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Why were Christians the target of persecution?

1) They refused to worship the emperor as a god and thus were viewed as atheists and traitors.

(2) They refused to worship at pagan temples; so business for these moneymaking enterprises dropped wherever Christianity took hold.

(3) They didn't support the Roman ideals of self, power, and conquest; and the Romans scorned the Christian ideal of self-sacrificing service.

(4) They exposed and rejected the horrible immorality of pagan culture.

Peter mentions suffering several times in this letter: 1 Peter 1:6-7; 1 Peter 3:13-17; 1 Peter 4:12-19; 1 Peter 5:9.

When he speaks of trials, he is not talking about natural disasters or the experience of God's punishments, but the response of an unbelieving world to people of faith.

All believers face such trials when they let their light shine into the darkness. We must accept trials as part of the refining process that burns away impurities and prepares us to meet Christ. Trials teach us patience (Romans 5:3-4; James 1:2-3) and help us grow to be the kind of people God wants.

As gold is heated, impurities float to the top and can be skimmed off. Steel is tempered or strengthened by heating it in fire. Likewise, our trials, struggles, and persecutions refine and strengthen our faith, making us useful to God.

We Have a Promise of Peace and Rest

Psalms 85:8

Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints.

The psalmist was asking God to revive his people, bringing them back to spiritual life. God is capable of reviving both churches and individuals. He can pour out his love on us, renewing our love for him. If you need revival in your church, family, or personal spiritual life, ask God to give you a fresh touch of his love.

Perfect peace comes when the mind is stayed on God

Isaiah 26:3-4

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock.

We can never avoid strife in the world around us, but with God we can know perfect peace even in turmoil. When we are devoted to him, our whole attitude is steady and stable. Supported by God's unchanging love and mighty power, we are not shaken by the surrounding chaos (see Phil. 4:7). Do you want peace? Keep your thoughts on and your trust in God.

God's promise is rest.

Matthew 11:28-30

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Jesus’ words)

A person may be carrying heavy burdens of

- (1) Sin,
- (2) Excessive demands of religious leaders (Matthew 23:4; Acts 15:10),
- (3) Oppression and persecution, or
- (4) Weariness in the search for God.

Jesus frees people from all these burdens. The rest that Jesus promises is love, healing, and peace with God, not the end of all labor. A relationship with God changes meaningless, wearisome toil into spiritual productivity and a yoke is a heavy wooden harness that fits over the shoulders of an ox or oxen. It is attached to a purpose.

God leaves peace with us.

John 14:27

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” (Jesus’ words)

Give request with thanksgiving

Philippians 4:6-7

... Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Adversity is so we see the need for Jesus

Psalms 27:5-6

For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock. And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

The works of Christ must be manifest

John 9:1-3

As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.

Do not despair during affliction

2 Corinthians 1:8-9

For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself.

, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.

Paul does not give details about their hardships in Asia, although his accounts of all three missionary journeys record many difficult trials he faced (Acts 13:2-14:28; Acts 15:40-21:17). He does write that they felt that they were going to die, and realized that they could do nothing to help themselves—they simply had to rely on God.

We often depend on our own skills and abilities when life seems easy, but we turn to God when we feel unable to help ourselves. Depending on God is a realization of our own powerlessness without him and our need for his constant touch in our lives. God is our source of power, and we receive his help by keeping in touch with him. With this attitude of dependence, problems will drive us to God rather than away from him. Learn how to rely on God daily.

He delivers us from deadly peril

2 Corinthians 1:10-11

He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

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Paul requested prayer for himself and his companions as they traveled to spread God's message. Pray for pastors, teachers, missionaries, and others who are spreading the gospel. Satan will challenge anyone making a real difference for God.

Be bold and speak without fear

Philippians 1:12-14

I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much bolder to speak the word without fear.

Paul knew the importance of holiness and sincerity in word and action, especially in a situation as in Corinth, where constructive criticism was

necessary. So Paul did not come with impressive human knowledge (worldly wisdom). God wants us to be real and transparent in all our relationships. If we aren't, we may end up lowering ourselves to spreading rumors, gossiping, and second-guessing.

Chapter 2



Adversity is Temporary

Romans 8:18-21

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

The creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Sin has caused all creation to fall from the perfect state in which God created it. So the world is subject to frustration and bondage to decay so that it cannot fulfill its intended purpose. One day all creation will be liberated and transformed. Until that time it waits in eager expectation for the resurrection of God's children.

Christians see the world as it is—physically decaying and spiritually infected with sin. But Christians do not need to be pessimistic, because

they have hope for future glory. They look forward to the new heaven and new earth that God has promised, and they wait for God's new order that will free the world of sin, sickness, and evil. In the meantime, Christians go with Christ into the world where they heal people's bodies and souls and fight the evil effects of sin in the world.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Paul had faced sufferings, trials, and distress as he preached the Good News. But he knew that they would one day be over, and he would obtain God's rest and rewards.

As we face great troubles, it's easy to focus on the pain rather than on our ultimate goal. Just as athletes concentrate on the finish line and ignore their discomfort, we too must focus on the reward for our faith and the joy that lasts forever.

No matter what happens to us in this life, we have the assurance of eternal life, when all suffering will end and all sorrow will flee away (Isaiah 35:10).

It is easy to lose heart and quit. We all have faced problems in our relationships or in our work that have caused us to want to think about laying down the tools and walking away. Rather than giving up when

persecution wore him down, Paul concentrated on experiencing the inner strength from the Holy Spirit (Ephes. 3:16)

Don't let fatigue, pain, or criticism force you off the job. Renew your commitment to serving Christ. Don't forsake your eternal reward because of the intensity of today's pain. Your very weakness allows the resurrection power of Christ to strengthen you moment by moment.

We should realize that there is a purpose in our suffering.

Problems and human limitations have several benefits: (1) they remind us of Christ's suffering for us; (2) they keep us from pride; (3) they cause us to look beyond this brief life; (4) they prove our faith to others; and (5) they give God the opportunity to demonstrate his power. See your troubles as opportunities!

Our ultimate hope when we are experiencing terrible illness, persecution, or pain is the realization that this life is not all there is—there is life after death! Knowing that we will live forever with God in a place without sin and suffering can help us live above the pain that we face in this life.

2 Corinthians 9:8

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

People may hesitate to give generously to God if they worry about having enough money left over to meet their own needs. Paul assured the Corinthians that God was able to meet their needs. The person who gives only a little will receive only a little in return. Don't let a lack of faith keep you from giving freely and generously.

Our attitude when we give is more important than the amount we give. We don't have to be embarrassed if we can give only a small gift. God is concerned about *how* we give from the resources we have (see Mark 12:41-44). According to that standard, the giving of the Macedonian churches would be difficult to match (2 Cor. 8:3).

1 Peter 1:3-5

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Revelation 21:3-4

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

The Purpose of Adversity

2 Samuel 12:9-12

'Why have you despised the word of the LORD by doing evil in His sight?

You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon.

Deuteronomy 8:2

"You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

Hebrews 12:5-11

And you have forgotten the exhortation that is addressed to you as sons,

"MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES."

It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

1 Peter 1:5-8

Who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; read more.

Psalm 94:12

Blessed is the man whom you chasten, O LORD, and whom you teach out of your law;

Isaiah 41:10

'Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.'

Proverbs 18:24

A man of too many friends comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Psalm 55:22

Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.

John 16:33

"These things I have spoken to you, so that in me you may have peace in the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

Isaiah 40:31

Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.

1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

Chapter 3



God's plan is to give you a future

Jeremiah 29:11

'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.'

The inner man is being renewed day by day.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not 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.

It is easy to lose heart and quit. We all have faced problems in our relationships or in our work that have caused us to want to think about laying down the tools and walking away. Rather than giving up when persecution wore him down, Paul concentrated on experiencing the inner strength from the Holy Spirit (Ephes. 3:16).

Don't let fatigue, pain, or criticism force you off the job. Renew your commitment to serving Christ. Don't forsake your eternal reward because of the intensity of today's pain. Your very weakness allows the resurrection power of Christ to strengthen you moment by moment.

Our troubles should not diminish our faith or disillusion us. We should realize that there is a purpose in our suffering. Problems and human limitations have several benefits:

- (1) They remind us of Christ's suffering for us;
- (2) They keep us from pride;
- (3) They cause us to look beyond this brief life;
- (4) They prove our faith to others; and
- (5) They give God the opportunity to demonstrate his power. See your troubles as opportunities!

Our ultimate hope when we are experiencing terrible illness, persecution, or pain is the realization that this life is not all there is—there is life after death! Knowing that we will live forever with God in a place without sin and suffering can help us live above the pain that we face in this life.

Do not fear evil

Psalm 23:4

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Death casts a frightening shadow over us because we are entirely helpless in its presence. We can struggle with other enemies—pain, suffering, disease, injury—but strength and courage cannot overcome death. It has the final word.

Only one person can walk with us through death's dark valley and bring us safely to the other side—the God of life, our shepherd. Because life is uncertain, we should follow this shepherd who offers us eternal comfort.

God strengthens for service

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Paul was content because he could see life from God's point of view. He focused on what he was supposed to *do*, not what he felt he should *have*. Paul had his priorities straight, and he was grateful for everything God had given him.

Paul had detached himself from the nonessentials so that he could concentrate on the eternal. Often the desire for more or better possessions is really a longing to fill an empty place in a person's life.

To what are you drawn when you feel empty inside? How can you find true contentment? The answer lies in your perspective, your priorities, and your source of power.

Can we really do everything? The power we receive in union with Christ is sufficient to do his will and to face the challenges that arise from our commitment to doing it.

He does not grant us superhuman ability to accomplish anything we can imagine without regard to his interests. As we contend for the faith we will face troubles, pressures, and trials. As they come, ask Christ to strengthen you.

God is our refuge

Psalm 46:1

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

The fear of mountains or cities suddenly crumbling into the sea as the result of a nuclear blast haunts many people today. But the psalmist says that even if the world ends, we need not fear. In the face of utter destruction, the writer expressed a quiet confidence in God's ability to save him.

It seems impossible to consider the end of the world without becoming consumed by fear, but the Bible is clear—God is our refuge even in the face of total destruction. He is not merely a temporary retreat; he is our eternal refuge and can provide strength in any circumstance.

Refuge in God brings blessings

Psalm 34:8

O taste and see that the LORD is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!

“Taste and see” does not mean, “Check out God’s credentials.” Instead it is a warm invitation: “Try this; I know you’ll like it.” When we take that first step of obedience in following God, we cannot help discovering that he is good and kind. When we begin the Christian life, our knowledge of God is partial and incomplete. As we trust him daily, we experience how good he is.

Nothing can separate you from the love of God

Romans 8:35

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Proverbs 12:26

The righteous is a guide to his neighbor, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.

The diligent make wise use of their possessions and resources; the lazy waste them. Waste has become a way of life for many who live in a land of plenty. Waste is poor stewardship. Make good use of everything God has given you, and prize it.

God will rescue you in time of trouble

Psalm 50:15

Call upon me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor me."

Some people glibly recite God's laws but are filled with deceit and evil. They claim his promises but refuse to obey him. This is sin, and God will judge people for it. We too are hypocrites when we are not what we claim to be. To let this inconsistency remain shows that we are not true followers of God.

At times God seems silent. By his silence he is not condoning sin, nor is he indifferent to it. Instead, he is withholding deserved punishment, giving time for people to repent (2 Peter 3:9). God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked and wants them to turn from evil (Ezekiel 33:11). But his silence does not last forever—a time of punishment will surely come.

The Lord sustains all who fall

Psalm 145:14

The LORD sustains all who fall and raises up all who are bowed down.

Sometimes our burdens seem more than we can bear, and we wonder how we can go on.

David stands at this bleak intersection of life's road and points toward the Lord, the great burden-bearer. God is able to lift us up because

- (1) His greatness is unfathomable (Psalm 145:3);
- (2) He does mighty acts across many generations (Psalm 145:4);
- (3) He is full of glorious splendor and majesty (Psalm 145:5);
- (4) He does wonderful and awesome works (Psalm 145:5-6);
- (5) He is righteous (Psalm 145:7);
- (6) He is gracious, compassionate, patient, and loving (Psalm 145:8-9);
- (7) He rules over an everlasting kingdom (Psalm 145:13);
- (8) He is our source of all our daily needs (Psalm 145:15-16);
- (9) He is righteous and loving in all his dealings (Psalm 145:17);
He remains near to those who call on him (Psalm 145:18);

He hears our cries and saves us (Psalm 145:19-20). If you are bending under a burden and feel that you are about to fall, turn to God for help. He is ready to lift you up and bear your burden.

The Lord delivers those who cry to him.

Psalm 34:17

The righteous cry, and the LORD hears
And delivers them out of all their troubles.

The Bible often connects the fear of the Lord (love and reverence for him) with obedience. “Fear God and keep his commandments” (Eccles. 12:13);

“If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching” (John 14:23). David said that a person who fears the Lord doesn’t lie, turns from evil, does good, and promotes peace. Reverence is much more than sitting quietly in church. It includes obeying God in the way we speak and the way we treat others.

Somehow we think that peace should come to us with no effort. But David explained that we are to seek and pursue peace. Paul echoed this thought in Romans 12:18.

A person who wants peace cannot be argumentative and contentious. Because peaceful relationships come from our efforts at peacemaking, work hard at living in peace with others each day.

God gives rest to the weary

Matthew 11:28

"Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.

A yoke is a heavy wooden harness that fits over the shoulders of an ox or oxen. It is attached to a piece of equipment the oxen are to pull. A person may be carrying heavy burdens of (1) sin, (2) excessive demands of religious leaders (Matthew 23:4; Acts 15:10), (3) oppression and persecution, or (4) weariness in the search for God.

Jesus frees people from all these burdens. The rest that Jesus promises is love, healing, and peace with God, not the end of all labor. A relationship with God changes meaningless, wearisome toil into spiritual productivity and purpose

God is for us

Romans 8:31

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

Do you ever think that because you aren't good enough for God, he will not save you? Do you ever feel as if salvation is for everyone else but you? Then these verses are especially for you.

If God gave his Son for you, he isn't going to hold back the gift of salvation! If Christ gave his life for you, he isn't going to turn around and condemn you! He will not withhold anything you need to live for him. The book of Romans is more than a theological explanation of God's redeeming grace—it is a letter of comfort and confidence addressed to you.

A promise to the overcomer

Revelation 3:21

'He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

At the end of each letter to these churches, the believers were urged to listen and take to heart what was written to them.

Although a different message was addressed to each church, all the messages contain warnings and principles for everyone. Which letter speaks most directly to your church? Which has the greatest bearing on your own spiritual condition at this time? How will you respond?

A crown of life is offered

James 1:12-15

Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

1 Peter 5:7

God cares for you

Casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

Peter mentions suffering several times in this letter: 1 Peter 1:6-7; 1 Peter 3:13-17; 1 Peter 4:12-19; 1 Peter 5:9. When he speaks of trials, he is not talking about natural disasters or the experience of God's punishments, but the response of an unbelieving world to people of faith. All believers face such trials when they let their light shine into the darkness. We must accept trials as part of the refining process that burns away impurities and prepares us to meet Christ. Trials teach us patience (Romans 5:3-4; James 1:2-3) and help us grow to be the kind of people God wants.

As gold is heated, impurities float to the top and can be skimmed off. Steel is tempered or strengthened by heating it in fire. Likewise, our trials, struggles, and persecutions refine and strengthen our faith, making us useful to God.

Do not be surprised at times of testing

1 Peter 4:12-13

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

The devil seeks to devour

1 Peter 5:8

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Lions attack sick, young, or stragglers; they choose victims who are alone or not alert. Peter warns us to watch out for Satan when we are suffering or being persecuted.

Feeling alone, weak, helpless, and cut off from other believers, so focused on our troubles that we forget to watch for danger, we are especially vulnerable to Satan's attacks. During times of suffering, seek other Christians for support. Keep your eyes on Christ, and resist the devil.

Jesus laid down his life

John 15:13

"Greater love has no one than this that one lay down his life for his friends.

We are to love each other as Jesus loved us, and he loved us enough to give his life for us. We may not have to die for someone, but there are other ways to practice sacrificial love: listening, helping, encouraging, giving. Think of someone in particular who needs this kind of love today. Give all the love you can, and then try to give a little more.

We hear and see God

Job 42:5

"I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees you;

Job was quoting the Lord's earlier questions to him (Job 38:2-3). He openly and honestly faced God and admitted that he was the one who had been foolish. Are you using what you can't understand as an excuse for your lack of trust? Admit to God that you don't even have enough faith to trust him. True faith begins in such humility.

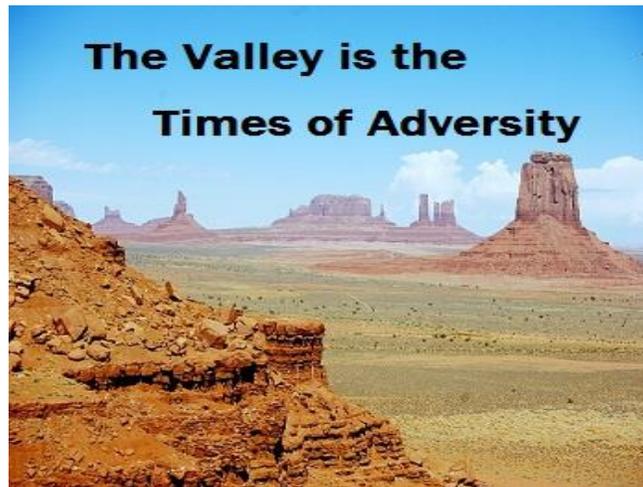
Love others as you love yourself

1 Samuel 18:1-3

Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself. Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father's house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.

When David and Jonathan met, they became close friends at once. Their friendship is one of the deepest and closest recorded in the Bible: (1) they based their friendship on commitment to God, not just each other; (2) they let nothing come between them, not even career or family problems; (3) they drew closer together when their friendship was tested; (4) they remained friends to the end.

Chapter 4



The valley is the time of adversity

Proverbs 22:24-25

Do not associate with a man given to anger; or go with a hot-tempered man, or you will learn his ways and find a snare for yourself.

People tend to become like those with whom they spend a lot of time. Even the negative characteristics sometimes rub off. The Bible exhorts us to be cautious in our choice of companions. Choose people with characteristics you would like to develop in your own life.

Faithful are the wounds of a friend

Proverbs 27:5-6

Better is open rebuke than love that is concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.

At times you must go through the valley to reach the top of the mountain. The valley is what we call the times of adversity.

These are those times when you may have some questions for your Heavenly Father. The hard times are when you should draw nigh unto God; He wants to hear from you (Hebrews 9:19).

The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. (Lamentations 3:22-24)

Adversity as a faith builders

Psalms 91:1-2

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”

During the Thanksgiving holiday, we focus on our blessings and express our gratitude to God for them. But thanks should be on our lips every day. We can never say thank you enough to parents, friends, leaders, and especially to God. When thanksgiving becomes an integral part of your life, you will find that your attitude toward life will change. You will become more positive, gracious, loving, and humble.

Do not lean to your own understanding

Proverbs 3:6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Leaning has the sense of putting your whole weight on something, resting on and trusting in that person or thing. When we have an important decision to make, we sometimes feel that we can't trust anyone—not even God. But God knows what is best for us.

He is a better judge of what we want than even we are! We must trust him completely in every choice we make. We should not omit careful thinking or belittle our God-given ability to reason; but we should not trust our own ideas to the exclusion of all others. We must not be wise in our own eyes.

We should always be willing to listen to and be corrected by God's Word and wise counselors. Bring your decisions to God in prayer; use the Bible as your guide; and then follow God's leading. He will make your paths straight by both guiding and protecting you.

To receive God's guidance, said Solomon, we must acknowledge God in all our ways. This means turning every area of life over to him. About a thousand years later, Jesus emphasized this same truth (Matthew 6:33). Look at your values and priorities. What is important to you? In what areas have you not acknowledged him? What is his advice? In many areas of your life you may already acknowledge God, but it is in the areas where you attempt to restrict or ignore his influence that will cause you grief.

Make him a vital part of everything you do; then he will guide you because you will be working to accomplish his purposes.

Let steadfastness have its full effect

James 1:2-4

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

We can't really know the depth of our character until we see how we react under pressure. It is easy to be kind to others when everything is going well, but can we still be kind when others are treating us unfairly? God wants to make us mature and complete, not to keep us from all pain. Instead of complaining about our struggles, we should see them as opportunities for growth. Thank God for promising to be with you in rough times.

Ask him to help you solve your problems or to give you the strength to endure them. Then be patient. God will not leave you alone with your problems; he will stay close and help you grow.

The testing of your faith is more precious than gold

1 Peter 1:6-9

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and

filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

All believers face such trials when they let their light shine into the darkness. We must accept trials as part of the refining process that burns away impurities and prepares us to meet Christ. Trials teach us patience (Romans 5:3-4; James 1:2-3) and help us grow to be the kind of people God wants.

As gold is heated, impurities float to the top and can be skimmed off. Steel is tempered or strengthened by heating it in fire. Likewise, our trials, struggles, and persecutions refine and strengthen our faith, making us useful to God.

We Have a Promise of Peace and Rest

Psalms 85:8

Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints

Isaiah 26:3-4

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD GOD is an everlasting rock.

Matthew 11:28-30

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Jesus’ words)

John 14:27

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” (Jesus’ words)

Philippians 4:6-7

... Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Adversity so we See God and the Need for Jesus

Psalms 27:5-6

For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock. And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

The works of God must be displayed

John 9:1-3

As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.

In John 9, we see four different reactions to Jesus. The neighbors revealed surprise and skepticism; the Pharisees showed disbelief and prejudice; the parents believed but kept quiet for fear of excommunication; and the healed man showed consistent, growing faith.

A common belief in Jewish culture was that calamity or suffering was the result of some great sin.

But Christ used this man’s suffering to teach about faith and to glorify God. We live in a fallen world where good behavior is not always rewarded and bad behavior not always punished. Therefore, innocent people sometimes suffer.

If God took suffering away whenever we asked, we would follow him for comfort and convenience, not out of love and devotion. Regardless of the reasons for our suffering, Jesus has the power to help us deal with it. When you suffer from a disease, tragedy, or disability, try not to ask, “Why did this happen to me?” or “What did I do wrong?”

Instead, ask God to give you strength for the trial and a clearer perspective on what is happening.

2 Corinthians 1:8-9

For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.

Paul does not give details about their hardships in Asia, although his accounts of all three missionary journeys record many difficult trials he faced (Acts 13:2-14:28; Acts 15:40-21:17). He does write that they felt that they were going to die, and realized that they could do nothing to help themselves—they simply had to rely on God.

We often depend on our own skills and abilities when life seems easy, but we turn to God when we feel unable to help ourselves. Depending on God is a realization of our own powerlessness without him and our need for his constant touch in our lives. God is our source of power, and we receive his help by keeping in touch with him. With this attitude of dependence, problems will drive us to God rather than away from him. Learn how to rely on God daily.

He delivers from deadly peril

2 Corinthians 1:10-11

He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

Paul requested prayer for himself and his companions as they traveled to spread God's message. Pray for pastors, teachers, missionaries, and others who are spreading the gospel. Satan will challenge anyone making a real difference for God.

Paul's imprisonment was for Christ.

Philippians 1:12-14

I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much bolder to speak the word without fear.

Being imprisoned would cause many people to become bitter or to give up, but Paul saw it as one more opportunity to spread the Good News of Christ. Paul realized that his current circumstances weren't as important as what he did with them. Turning a bad situation into a good one, he reached out to the Roman soldiers who made up the palace guard and encouraged those Christians who were afraid of persecution

Chapter 5



God's glory will be revealed in us

Romans 8:18-21

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Sin has caused all creation to fall from the perfect state in which God created it. So the world is subject to frustration and bondage to decay so that it cannot fulfill its intended purpose. One day all creation will be liberated and transformed. Until that time it waits in eager expectation for the resurrection of God's children.

Christians see the world as it is—physically decaying and spiritually infected with sin. But Christians do not need to be pessimistic, because

they have hope for future glory. They look forward to the new heaven and new earth that God has promised, and they wait for God's new order that will free the world of sin, sickness, and evil. In the meantime, Christians go with Christ into the world where they heal people's bodies and souls and fight the evil effects of sin in the world.

Our inner self is renewed day by day.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Christians are brand-new people on the *inside*. The Holy Spirit gives them new life, and they are not the same anymore.

We are not reformed, rehabilitated, or reeducated—we are re-created (new creations), living in vital union with Christ (Col. 2:6-7).

At conversion we are not merely turning over a new leaf; we are beginning a new life under a new Master.

God brings us back to himself (reconciles us) by blotting out our sins (see also Ephes. 2:13-18) and making us righteous. We are no longer God's enemies, or strangers or foreigners to him, when we trust in Christ.

Because we have been reconciled to God, we have the privilege of encouraging others to do the same, and thus we are those who have the “ministry of reconciliation.”

God will make his grace abound to you.

2 Corinthians 9:8

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

People may hesitate to give generously to God if they worry about having enough money left over to meet their own needs. Paul assured the Corinthians that God was able to meet their needs. The person who gives only a little will receive only a little in return. Don't let a lack of faith keep you from giving freely and generously.

We are born again to a living hope

1 Peter 1:3-5

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

The term *new birth* refers to spiritual birth (regeneration)—the Holy Spirit's act of bringing believers into God's family.

Jesus used this concept of new birth when he explained salvation to Nicodemus (see John 3).

times of trouble, and he bases his confidence on what God has done for us in Christ Jesus. We're called into a *living* hope of eternal life (1 Peter 1:3). Our hope is not only for the future; eternal life begins when we trust Christ and join God's family. No matter what pain or trial we face in this life, we know that it is not our final experience. Eventually we will live with Christ forever.

The Jews had looked forward to an inheritance in the promised land of Canaan (Numbers 32:19; Deut. 2:12; Deut. 19:9). Christians now look forward to a family inheritance in the eternal city of God. God has reserved the inheritance; it will never fade or decay; it will be unstained by sin. The best part is that *you* have an inheritance if you have trusted Christ as your Savior.

God will help us remain true to our faith through whatever difficult times we must face. The "last time" is the judgment day of Christ described in Romans 14:10 and Rev. 20:11-15. We may have to endure trials, persecution, or violent death, but our souls cannot be harmed if we have accepted Christ's gift of salvation. We know we will receive the promised rewards.

God will dwell with his people

Revelation 21:3-4

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

Have you ever wondered what eternity will be like? The “Holy City, the new Jerusalem” is described as the place where God will “wipe every tear from their eyes.”

Forevermore, there will be no death, pain, sorrow, or crying. What a wonderful truth! No matter what you are going through, it’s not the last word—God has written the final chapter, and it is about true fulfillment and eternal joy for those who love him.

We do not know as much as we would like, but it is enough to know that eternity with God will be more wonderful than we could ever imagine.

The Purpose of Adversity

2 Samuel 12:9-12

'Why have you despised the word of the LORD by doing evil in His sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon.

The predictions in these verses came true. Because David murdered Uriah and stole his wife, (1) murder was a constant threat in his family (2 Samuel 13:26-30; 2 Samuel 18:14-15; 1 Kings 2:23-25); (2) his household rebelled against him (2 Samuel 15:13); (3) his wives were given to another in public view (2 Samuel 16:20-23);

(4) his first child by Bathsheba died (2 Samuel 12:18). If David had known the painful consequences of his sin, he might not have pursued the pleasures of the moment.

During this incident, David wrote Psalm 51, giving valuable insight into his character and offering hope for us as well. No matter how miserable guilt makes you feel or how terribly you have sinned, you can pour out your heart to God and seek his forgiveness as David did. There is forgiveness for us when we sin. David also wrote Psalm 32 to express the joy he felt after he was forgiven.

God led he children of Israel in the wilderness.

Deuteronomy 8:2

"You shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

Deut. 8:1-2

"Be careful to obey all the commands I am giving you today. Then you will live and multiply, and you will enter and occupy the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors. Remember how the Lord your God led you through the wilderness for forty years, humbling you and testing you to prove your character, and to find out whether or not you would really obey his commands.

Jesus quoted this verse when the devil tempted him to turn stones into bread (Matthew 4:4). Many people think that life is based on satisfying their appetites. If they can earn enough money to dress, eat, and play in high style, they think they are living “the good life.”

But such things do not satisfy our deepest longings. In the end they leave us empty and dissatisfied. Real life, according to Moses, comes from total commitment to God, the one who created life itself. It requires discipline, sacrifice, and hard work, and that’s why most people never find it.

Do not faint when you are reprovved

Hebrews 12:5-11

And you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons,

My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reprovved by him, for those whom the Lord loves, he disciplines, and he scourges every one whom he receives.

It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

You are protected by the power of God

1 Peter 1:5-8

Who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last times.

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; read more.

God will help us remain true to our faith through whatever difficult times we must face. The “last time” is the judgment day of Christ described in Romans 14:10 and Rev. 20:11-15. We may have to endure trials, persecution, or violent death, but our souls cannot be harmed if we have accepted Christ’s gift of salvation. We know we will receive the promised rewards.

Blessed in the man to whom the Lord chastens

Psalm 94:12

Blessed is the man whom you chasten, O LORD, and whom you teach out of your law.

At times, God must discipline us to help us. This is similar to a loving parent’s disciplining his child. The discipline is not very enjoyable to the child, but it is essential to teach him right from wrong.

The Bible says that “no discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful.

Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it” (Hebrews 12:11). When you feel God’s hand of correction, accept it as proof of his love. Realize that God is urging you to follow his paths instead of stubbornly going your own way.

God will uphold you with his right hand

Isaiah 41:10

'Do not fear, for I am with you; do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.'

God chose Israel through Abraham because he wanted to, not because the people deserved it (Deut. 7:6-8; Deut. 9:4-6).

Although God chose the Israelites to represent him to the world, they failed to do this; so God punished them and sent them into captivity. Now all believers are God's chosen people, and all share the responsibility of representing him to the world.

One day God will bring all his faithful people together. We need not fear because (1) God is with us ("I am with you"), (2) God has established a relationship with us ("I am your God"), and (3) God gives us assurance of his strength, help, and victory over sin and death.

Have you realized all the ways God has helped you?

The Lord is a friend that sticks closer than a brother

Proverbs 18:24

A man of too many friends comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

Loneliness is everywhere—many people feel cut off and alienated from others. Being in a crowd just makes people more aware of their isolation. We all need friends who will stick close, listen, care, and offer help when it is needed—in good times and bad. It is better to have one such friend than dozens of superficial acquaintances.

Instead of wishing you could find a true friend, seek to become one. There are people who need your friendship. Ask God to reveal them to you, and then take on the challenge of being a true friend.

Cast your burdens on the Lord.

Psalm 55:22

Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.

God wants us to cast our cares on him, but often we continue to bear them ourselves even when we say we are trusting in him. Trust the same strength that sustains you to carry your cares also.

Jesus has overcome the world

John 16:33

"These things I have spoken to you, so that in me you may have peace in the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

Jesus summed up all he had told them this night, tying together themes from John 14:27-29; John 16:1-4; and John 16:9-11. With these words he told his disciples to take courage.

Believers will mount up with wings like eagles

Isaiah 40:31

Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.

Jesus summed up all he had told them this night, tying together themes from John 14:27-29; John 16:1-4; and John 16:9-11. With these words he told his disciples to take courage. In spite of the inevitable struggles they would face, they would not be alone. Jesus does not abandon us to our struggles either. If we remember that the ultimate victory has already been won, we can claim the peace of Christ in the most troublesome times.

Chapter 6



Temptation is limited.

1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

Paul criticized the false teachers who were trying to prove their goodness by comparing themselves with others rather than with God's standards. When we compare ourselves with others, we may feel pride because we think we're better.

But when we measure ourselves against God's standards, it becomes obvious that we have no basis for pride. Don't worry about other people's accomplishments. Instead, continually ask:

No plans for calamity

Jeremiah 29:11

'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.'

We're all encouraged by a leader who stirs us to move ahead, someone who believes we can do the task he has given and who will be with us all the way. God is that kind of leader.

He knows the future, and his plans for us are good and full of hope. As long as God, who knows the future, provides our agenda and goes with us as we fulfill his mission, we can have boundless hope. This does not mean that we will be spared pain, suffering, or hardship, but that God will see us through to a glorious conclusion.

Your rod and staff comfort me

Psalm 23:4

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Death casts a frightening shadow over us because we are entirely helpless in its presence. We can struggle with other enemies—pain,

suffering, disease, injury—but strength and courage cannot overcome death. It has the final word.

Only one person can walk with us through death’s dark valley and bring us safely to the other side—the God of life, our shepherd. Because life is uncertain, we should follow this shepherd who offers us eternal comfort

The righteous is a guide to his neighbor

Proverbs 12:26

The righteous is a guide to his neighbor, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.

The diligent make wise use of their possessions and resources; the lazy waste them. Waste has become a way of life for many who live in a land of plenty. Waste is poor stewardship. Make good use of everything God has given you, and prize it.

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Holy Bible: New Living Bible translation.

Additional comments and charts are taken from:

Life Application Study Bible. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print