

That the Trial of Your Faith Being Much More Precious Than That of Gold That Perisheth

by Phoebe Palmer

The sermon explores the invaluable role of faith trials in spiritual growth and the importance of surrendering to God's will amidst challenges.

Scripture: Psalm 34:17, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Hebrews 10:36, James 1:2, 1 Peter 1:7

Topics: "Faith Testing", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Phoebe Palmer shares a powerful message on the value of faith being refined through trials, likening it to gold tested by fire, leading to praise, glory, and honor at the return of Jesus Christ. She emphasizes the importance of experiential learning over mere precepts, highlighting how trials deepen our understanding of God's grace and equip us to help others on their spiritual journey. Through a profound moment of surrender and willingness to endure unimaginable trials for the sake of transformation, she experiences a deeper connection with God's love and grace, anchoring her faith securely in Him. Despite being surrounded by religious influences and early teachings, she faces intense spiritual battles, wrestling against unseen forces and enduring deep internal struggles that test her faith and reliance on God's promises.

Transcript

That the trial of your faith being much more precious than that of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found to be unto praise, and glory, and honor, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." -- Peter.

One day, after having given to a friend a narration of the way by which the Lord had brought her, and stated a variety of experience, trials by the way, and the manner in which she had been enabled to overcome them, the friend remarked something expressive of surprise and gratitude in reference to the Lord's instructive dealings. "O," said she, in return, "this is the way the Lord takes to instruct and discipline his children. That which is learned by experience is much more deeply written upon the heart than what is learned by mere precept. By this painful process, the lessons of grace remain written in living characters upon the mind, and we are better able to tell to travelers coming after us, just how and where we met with this and the other difficulty, how we overcame, and the peculiar lessons learned by passing through this and that trial, and thus be not only advantaged in our own experience, but helpful to our fellow-pilgrims."

Scarcely had she finished speaking, when the prayer that she might be made a monument of the extent of saving grace to transform the heart and life was brought by the Spirit to her remembrance, and the inquiry was presented whether she would be willing that the petition should be granted, if in order for its accomplishment, it were needful that she should be called to pass through trials unheard of in magnitude and duration?

An unutterable weight of responsibility rested upon her mind, and she hastened to prostrate herself in solitude before God. She felt that it was an inquiry proposed by the Spirit that searcheth all things, and was assured that the decision of that hour would tell momentously on her eternal destiny.

She thought of the various, complicated, and lengthened trials, transmitted by the inspired page, also those that had met her eye and ear, most formidable in magnitude and duration, and after having weighed the matter, that she might not ask to be baptized with a baptism that she was not able to bear, prostrate on her face before the Sovereign of heaven and earth she said, "O Lord, I now renewedly give myself into thy hands, as clay in the hands of the potter, in order that thy whole will and pleasure may be accomplished in me. Let the petition be answered. Let thy power be manifested to transform and save to the uttermost, though trials of inconceivable magnitude may await me. I rely upon thy faithfulness. Thou hast promised that I shall not be tempted above that which I am able to bear. But if thou seest, at any time, my faith about to fail, remove the trial, or cut short the work in righteousness, and take me home to thyself: suffer me not to live to dishonor thee."

The seal, proclaiming her wholly the Lord's, was now more deeply enstamped, and she realized from that hour that she was taken more closely to the embrace of Infinite Love, and had cast anchor deeper within the veil. Ever afterward, in passing through the most painful, complex trials, she found a blessed satisfaction in referring to this period when she had so fully counted the cost.

In reference to religious associations, and early culture, being taught from a child to know the Scriptures, and made familiar with the writings and experience of those who had, in generations passed away, been lights in the religious firmament, and in more mature life favored with the pious example and precept of a true yoke-fellow in the gospel, with the numerous advantages resulting from being thus favorably circumstanced, it might indeed be said that the lines had fallen to her in pleasant places, yet she proved, notwithstanding all these gracious considerations, that the "servant is not above his Master."

Yes, she was called to endure trials. To the observation of those unacquainted with the Christian warfare such a statement could hardly be understood or accredited. Consequently, the number of those who knew just how to sympathize was not great. Probably for this reason, in part, she seemed seldom called to dwell upon the particulars of those deep mental conflicts which she was permitted to endure, when she was called to wrestle, not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, &c.

These mighty conflicts were repeated yet again and again, and through each succeeding year of her pilgrimage: with each conflict it seemed, while engaged in the contest, as though it had reached the summit of human endurance, yet the succeeding one was found to be proportionate in magnitude to the increase of strength that had been gained by the former trial, and the intermediate interval for growth, and knowledge, and spiritual stature.

These trials, though they sometimes arose from outward causes, were generally inward, and the struggle they caused is indescribable; in the midst of which she was often called to lean so entirely, "with naked faith, upon a naked promise," that nature was sometimes tempted in its shrinkings to say, "My God, why

hast thou forsaken me?" but still holding with an unyielding grasp upon the promise, "I will never leave nor forsake thee." And believing that the Savior was treading "the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with him," when he gave utterance to this expression, she was checked ere she had given words to the thought, and instead of indulging in those words, which none but He who

"Wept that man might smile,"

need use, she said in the language of faith, "My God, thou hast not forsaken me."

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