

## “Why We Go Through Trials,” Part 4 - 2 Corinthians 12:11-13 – April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017

- Today's teaching will be part four of a series I've titled, "Why We Go Through Trials."
- One of the things that I'm learning in my own walk with the Lord is that I need to stop dreading trials and start embracing trials.
- The reason being is it's in and through the trials that God is able to accomplish that which absent the trial He simply cannot.

### 1. Trials enable us to see what God is showing us (Verses 1-4)

- Paul describes in the third person being caught up to heaven where he heard inexpressible things no one is permitted to tell.

### 2. Trials protect us from pride and arrogance (Verses 5-7)

- He says to keep him from pride due to this great vision God gave him a thorn in his flesh a messenger of Satan, to torment him.

### 3. Trials keep us prayerfully dependent upon the Lord (Verses 8-10)

- Paul says God wouldn't take the thorn from him, because "God's grace is sufficient for His power is made perfect in weakness."

### 4. Trials produce perseverance in us (Verses 11-13)

- v11 Paul says they drove him to make a fool of himself and though he's nothing, for he's behind the "super-apostles" in nothing.
- v12 He then says that he persevered in demonstrating among them the marks of a true apostle, in signs, wonders and miracles.
- v13 He rhetorically asks how were they inferior to other churches except he wasn't a burden then says forgive me for this wrong.

- In order to better understand what Paul is saying here, we first need to see this through the lens of how hurt he was by Corinth.
- It's important to note that Paul had spent a year and a half planting this church and fathering many of them in the Christian faith.
- The truth of the matter is Paul really loved them but was not loved by them because Paul's honesty actually embarrassed them.

- To say he was unappreciated would be a gross understatement and it's evidenced when he says they ought to commend him.
- However, instead of commending and appreciating him they actually believed the accusations and criticisms made against him.
- I feel bad for the Apostle Paul in the sense that he should be on the receiving end of them commending him and defending him.

I like how one commentator explained it, "If Paul thought his 'boasting' was foolish, why did he do it at all? Not for his sake, but for the sake of the Corinthian Christians. They did not defend Paul's character and standing, as an apostle, before the most eminent apostles who criticized and undermined Paul.

- One of the problems that's abundantly clear towards the end of Paul's second epistle is the Corinthians were unduly influenced.
- This because the so-called "super apostles," had convinced the Corinthian Christians that Paul's leadership couldn't be trusted.
- It's for this reason that Paul finds himself in the unenviable position of having to defend himself against criticism and accusation.

- It seems that they were policing Paul and watching his every move and in so doing they were judging the motive of his heart.
- Sadly, Paul was the recipient of false accusations such as financial impropriety, apostolic inferiority, and everything in-between.
- Ironically, these were the very things his accusers themselves were guilty of, in that they were assigning their motives to Paul.

- I would submit this is textbook when it comes to those whose agenda is to demonize and delegitimize the Paul's of this world.
- They do so under the banner of their own jealousy and envy seeking only the self-promotion to a position for others adoration.
- These most eminent apostles were attacking Paul's character because they coveted the success of Paul's apostolic ministry.

James 4:1-3 (NIV) — 1 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? 2 You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. 3 When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

- I'm of the belief that the "super-apostles" influence was harder for Paul than all of the beatings imprisonments and shipwrecks.
- The reason I believe this is that what kept Paul up at night on his knees praying was those, drawing disciples unto themselves.
- Certainly, this is what the "super-apostles" were doing by criticizing and demonizing the apostle Paul who was a true apostle.

One commentator said it best this way, "It wasn't so much that the presence of the most eminent apostles bothered Paul. It was their influence among the Corinthian Christians that bothered the true apostle.

- I'll bring it to a close with what I see as the take-away from today's text, in terms of it's personal application to our own lives.
- Notice what Paul says in verse twelve about how he had persevered in demonstrating among them the marks of a true apostle.
- In other words, instead of attacking his attackers, and accusing his accusers, he is proved to be true vis-à-vis his perseverance.

James 1:2-8 (NIV) — 2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. 6 But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7 That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8 Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.