



## Finding strength in God

copyright@gcromeMay2023

*Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him from them all Psalm 34:19 Berean bible).*

Great! Come to the Lord and you can expect 'many' afflictions (troubles NIV).

The *prosperity gospel* of the 70's and 80's, and even prevalent today, did us no favours when it told us we could avoid afflictions and life should be one big happy fest – and God will give you boundless wealth to boot.

The truth is, we do face many afflictions in this age, and don't we feel it. Only in the age to come will there be no more crying and suffering, etc (Revelation 21).

*I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33)

The truth is also that some of the greatest treasures of life are found in the fire of affliction. There is much in scripture about the refining fire God uses to enrich our lives (1 Peter 1:7). Whoever grows through the pleasure and ease anyway?

Much can come from times of suffering: humility – the revelation that we are not invincible and need help; character – *'suffering produces perseverance, perseverance character, and character hope.'* (confidence for the future in God; confidence that I can get through difficult times by His grace) (Romans 5:4). But to me, the greatest treasure to find is that God really is with me, will help me, and will fulfill His plan for my life. There truly is 'another in the fire' (Daniel 3:25).

Jesus Himself when suffering – more than you and I ever could – found His strength in His loving heavenly Father. Thus,

*When they heaped abuse on Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats, but entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly (1 Peter 2:23).*

We have a saying among ACC staff, especially when things don't seem to go all that well: "Trust in the Lord and do good!"

*Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed (Psalm 37:3 KJV).*

**So, we find our strength in God when we turn to Him.**

David at Ziklag – he lost everything, as did his fighting men – they wanted to take it out on him. But he turned to the Lord and strengthened Himself in God.

*David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God (1 Samuel 30:6 NIV).*

The account tells us everything turned out well in the end.

**We find our strength in God when we pray in faith, believing God will indeed help** (Phil 4:6,7,13; Ephesians 5). In fact, he already gave us the Helper (John 15;17). We are never without His help; never!

*A person who speaks in tongues is strengthened personally, but one who speaks a word of prophecy strengthens the entire church (1 Cor. 14:4 NLT). **Mark 11:22ff.***

**We find our strength in God when we meditate on God's Word**

*Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful (Josh 1:8). Don't ruminate on the problem, meditate on the Word.*

**We find our strength in God when we stand with our brethren.**

*But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it, <sup>25</sup> so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. <sup>26</sup> If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it (1 Cor 12:24-26 NIV).*

Whether it is suffering that is short lived, or living with longer term suffering, such as grief, or illness, we can find strength in God. When faced with trial, God will deliver us quickly, or grant us the grace to endure. He will help us to manage the tension of holding the suffering without being defeated by it. Ultimately, we all will experience the time when all will be set right – no more crying or pain.