

**Seven truths to fortify your faith in suffering**

- I. You have no reason to be discouraged today because, whatever your condition, God is your God still.
  - A. Your current condition may indeed be near unbearable and heartbreaking, but, whatever its nature, it cannot break the promises God's made to you, to be your God and to never leave you, Heb 13.5-6; Gen 26.24; 28.15
  - B. So even if your troubles darken the light of God's face for a time, they can never put that light out. They can never snuff out the fire that burns in His heart for you. So don't let your condition question this: that God is your God still, Ps 100
- II. You have no reason to be discouraged today because, whatever your condition, God knows of it.
  - A. Just think of Christ's words in Rev 2.9. Christ knows your suffering. He knows the burdens you're under—and surely that's no small comfort, for He is the Almighty God. His knowing always leads to helping, because His knowing is always mingled with compassion and love, Ex 2.23-25
- III. You have no reason to be discouraged today because, whatever your condition, God's made provisions for you not to be discouraged.
  - A. What do you think all the promises of Scripture are? They're fortifications against your discouragement, heavenly cordials full of sweetness for your hearts and minds. Scripture is flooded with promises of comfort, help, and relief suitable to all suffering conditions, 2Cor 1.3
- IV. You have no reason to be discouraged today because, whatever your condition, there are more reasons to be encouraged by it than there are to be discouraged by it.
  - A. God comes near to you with more grace in suffering times than He does in comforting times, cf. Gen 28, 32. Our sorest afflictions are prime seasons for God to bring us His sweetest comforts.
  - B. So we can encourage ourselves that if God's brought us into a suffering condition, then He's most certainly on His way with encouragement proportional to it.
- V. You have no reason to be discouraged today because, whatever your condition, discouragements bring encouragements.
  - A. In God's economy, it's the bitter that gives way to sweet, hardship to strength, loss to gain, death to life, cross to crown, suffering to glory. And if this is God's way with His people then we can both glory in suffering and trust Him to bring us encouragements out of our very discouragements, 2Cor 4.16-17. See Hos 2.14-15 where the Valley of Achor (trouble) itself becomes the door of hope.

- VI. You have no reason to be discouraged today because, whatever your condition, you have the ear of God. Troubles may take a lot of things away from us, but they can't take away our God, who hears our cries
  - A. No condition need discourage us as long as we have the ear of God, for whatever our condition, we can always say with David in Ps 18.6; 40.1-4, the Lord heard my cry.
- VII. You have no reason to be discouraged today because, whatever your condition, it's a cloud that'll pass over.
  - A. Whatever our darkness, it's the darkness of night and not of hell, which means the morning will come, Ps 30.5. It's the darkness of discipline and not of judgment, which means it'll yield to us the peaceful fruit of righteousness, Heb 12.10-11
  - B. All our troubles have a limit, a bottom, an end, which means they will all very soon give way, ultimately, to glory, Rom 13.11

**Five directions to guide your faith towards encouragement in suffering**

- I. To keep you from being discouraged, see that you never seek your comforts in or fix your heart upon any condition, because conditions go out and come in like the tide. Instead, fix your heart on God, our everlasting Rock, Isa 26.4, 3
- II. To keep you from being discouraged, be sure that you look on Christ in relation to your condition, because there's no trouble you could be in but God's given you an attribute in Christ for it, cf. 1Jn 2.1-2; Jn 6.35; 7.37; 2Cor 5.21
- III. To keep you from being discouraged, be sure you don't fret over your condition, because worry only makes it worse, Mt 6.27. Instead, take this as a golden rule: the way to have an affliction removed is to be content that it should stay—if the Lord wills.
- IV. To keep you from being discouraged, be sure that you call things as God calls them, because that will cultivate faith, hope, love, and patience.
  - A. When we call our troubles what Satan calls them, we easily find ourselves justifying anger, complaints, murmurs, despair, etc.
- V. To keep you from being discouraged, be sure that you die to self, because, so often, it's not the suffering itself that we find so painful, it's the fact that we're not getting our own way. So instead, put your whole self into God's hand and let Him do what He knows best, and you'll find yourself content with His every providence, Phil 4.11-13.
  - A. For as long as our reference point for what's right or good is either ourselves or our condition, we'll never be happy. Let God be that reference point and joy floods the soul—in every condition.