



(For access to all available commentaries and sermons of Charlie's click [HERE](#))

Romans

And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; Romans 5:3

This is a similar thought to what James says in his letter -

"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience." James 1:2, 3

Not only do we rejoice in hope of the glory of God (v.2), but we further glory in tribulations. The word used here is *thlipsis*. It carries the idea of pressure, such as being hemmed in a small tight spot. When we face trials which would otherwise cause us to lose control, we can instead glory in them. As the world around us falls apart due to the external crises which arise, we understand that God is in control and that these types of tribulation only serve us in a positive way; they produce perseverance.

If we feel that the world is out of control, then all sense of hope is lost. When this happens, we will look to the government or some other entity to secure us and keep us safe. However, the Christian should understand that the trials and woes of the world around us are a part of God's plan. Whether He causes them directly or merely allows them, all things are within His providence and therefore we are to look to Him as the Source of our strength.

The difference is wider than the seas. Looking to anything less than God for help in tribulation will not produce patience. Instead, it will only produce greater fear and a loss of freedom. But when we look to God during these trials, we appreciate that He is in complete control and our resolve will only be strengthened.

Life application: In the recent past, more bombers did their evil work. We need to look to the root cause of this and understand that it did not occur apart from God's sovereign knowledge. The perpetrators are no less guilty, but we need to be strengthened in the perseverance of our faith - that God alone can bring peace to this troubled land.

... and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Romans 5:4

The previous verse noted that tribulation produces perseverance. From that point the perseverance produces character. Some translations state here "experience" instead of "character." It is true that experience is gained, but that is not the sense of what's being relayed. Experience can result in admitting defeat as much as it can result in obtaining strength. Experience therefore isn't at all what is intended by this train of thought. Rather, perseverance is the experience and it results in character. When one perseveres, they will be grounded with fortitude and strength.

Once this character is developed, it leads to hope. Hope is that great virtue which says, "What I long for will be realized." When we have hope we have internal surety. The thought from Hebrews 12:2 carries us through this entire process - "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus." When we look unto Him, we can glory in our tribulations thus producing perseverance; our eyes are fixed and our thoughts are steadfast. When we persevere we develop character and our convictions become evident as we continue to look to Him. Once this character is grounded, our eyes look to Him in hope of all that He has promised. Truly, there is no greater assurance than that which comes through an intent and unwavering gaze upon the Lord.

Life application: Either the Bible is true or it isn't. There is no middle ground. If it is, then it is all-sufficient to lead you to an understanding of what is necessary to be reconciled to God. No matter what happens in your life, hold fast to the word, fix your eyes on Jesus, and have faith that your hope will be realized by the God of truth.

Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. Romans 5:5

This verse leads us back to verse 2. Paul has explained, in sequence, how we get to our hope and what causes us to rejoice in it. We are justified by our faith which allows us to actually glory in our tribulations. This in turn produces perseverance, character, and hope. It is this hope and the sequence of how it came about that Paul tells us will keep us from disappointment.

A hope which is falsely directed will only lead to shame or disappointment. If we hope to meet the prom queen at the burger stand in the evening and she doesn't show up, our hope was in vain and we feel the sting of rejection. But Paul says that the hope we have in Christ simply won't fail. We have the surety of God in that what He has promised will come about. Writing to Timothy, Paul tells of his convictions of this, even as he wrote from prison expecting execution -

"For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day." 2 Timothy 1:12

The surety of our salvation and eternal blessing in the presence of God isn't a misdirected fancy or a wasted use of our faith. It is as reliable as the evidence given - "The love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." The term "poured out" is from a word which is used to describe a liquid which is diffused as it's poured. It fills a vessel completely. This is the giving of the Holy Spirit by God. It is, according to Paul, a sealing which is a deposit guaranteeing our future redemption (Ephesians 1:13, 14).

When we are sealed with the Spirit, Paul tells us to be "filled" with the Spirit. We have received Him; now we must allow Him to have more of us. This comes through obedience, fellowship, study of His word, etc. These things lead us to our hope which is properly grounded.

Life application: Be filled with the Spirit. The moment you called on Jesus, you were sealed with Him. Now allow Him to fill you. Read and know your Bible, the word He authored for You to know God. Speak to Him through praise and prayer. Live in Him and rejoice in what He has done and what He has promised to do for you.

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. Romans 5:6

There will be three categories of man noted in the five verses from 5:6 to 5:10, all summed up in the concept of the "ungodly." The first is in 5:6, those who are "without strength." Then "sinners" are noted in 5:8 and this is followed up by "enemies" in 5:10. Paul is showing that all categories, from the top to the bottom, need Christ.

He begins with "for." This is an affirmation of what was stated in 5:1-5:5. 1) We have been justified by faith; 2) We have peace with God; 3) We have access by faith into the grace in which we stand; 3) We hope in the glory of God. This came from the process of tribulations, perseverance, and character; and 4) We have God's love poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

The use of "for" today introduces the affirming reasons why these things are so. The first is that something occurred "when we were still without strength." The word translated as "without strength" indicates one that is feeble. It was, as it were, a disease which afflicted us. It is an apt comparison because sin is a disease which affects our ability to proceed in a right relationship with God. The disease must be treated before we can proceed, and it was. When we were without strength to save ourselves, "Christ died for the ungodly."

The "ungodly" here is a comparison to those who were "without strength." The intent then is that Christ died for the very people we were, weak and unable to accomplish the task. The implication is that He is godly and is making an exchange. Paul will explain this as he continues.

Life application: It is easy to forget the state we were in after being saved for a time. We begin to develop in our walk and eventually we look at those around us as ungodly sinners who deserve God's wrath. While this is true, we need to remember that this was once us. Instead of feeling superior to the sinner, we need to remember that we were in the same boat. We were given the lifeline and now we need to pass it on, not hold it out of reach.

For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. Romans 5:7

The thought now presented is given to show us a contrast between how we as humans are normally expected to act in comparison to how our Lord in fact did act. We were just presented with the truth that, "...when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." In continuation of that thought, we have a repetition of "for." It is introduced to offset what we have just seen concerning Christ.

Christ died for the ungodly, but what is the normal and expected action of fallen man? In him we see the truth that it would be an extreme exception (scarcely) "for a righteous man will one die." A righteous man is someone we see who is upright and obedient to the laws he encounters. A righteous man, if any, is the one who expects that he will "walk on the golden streets." Everyone looks to him as the model and example of what we should also obtain. What would be the point of dying for such a man? We have no intimacy with him. We merely see his act and conduct and may wish to emulate it, but the giving of our life for his would be self-defeating. If he will somehow miss the mark and not walk on that golden avenue, then how much less of a chance would we have? Rather, he will die and I will do my best to emulate him before I do so as well.

Paul continues - "Yes perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die." We look around us at those we love, those we care for, and those we live our lives with in a close and personal manner. Among these people are what we might term "really good guys." They are amicable, friendly, loving of others, honest, without pretence, etc. They are the people who lead as the example for others to be the best they can be. Their loss would make the world a less-better place and we would always regret it if we could have interceded for them and didn't.

Perhaps from time to time someone would dare to die for one such as this. And so we have the contrast set and which will be explained in the coming verse. Christ died for the ungodly when we would fail to die for the righteous and most probably fail to do so even for the good. What manner of beings are we? And more so, what manner of Lord do we serve? How could there be such a contrast between the two?

Life application: If you are a saved believer in Jesus Christ, would you "jump on a grenade" for a group of criminals who were intent on killing you? Each of them bears God's image and without another chance to hear the good news they will be eternally condemned. You, on the other hand, are on the highway to heaven already. Which death actually makes more sense from God's perspective?

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

The wonderful word "but" is introduced now. But -

- 1) In contrast to those who are without strength.
- 2) In contrast those who are ungodly.
- 3) In contrast to those who would scarcely die for a righteous man.
- 4) In contrast to those who might dare to die for a good man.

But God... The action is taken by the Creator. He is the One above those low and base souls represented in categories 1 through 4.

- 1) He is the Source of all strength.
- 2) He is God and therefore the wellspring of all godliness.
- 3) He is the Standard of all righteousness.
- 4) "Goodness" is defined by how closely it reflects His infinite goodness.

He is the great God who spoke the universe into existence and who could speak it out of existence with the same authority - this infinitely wise and splendid God! He "demonstrates His own love toward us..." While we rebel, reject, mock, and curse Him, He imparts an eternal stream of love in our direction. The verb "demonstrates" is written in the present/indicative/active. It is right now, it is a fact, and it is on-going. The explanation of the word is as relative today as it was the moment the ink flowed from the scribe's pen.

He demonstrates this action "toward us." What is coming is available to whoever the statement applies. In Paul's mind, it applies to all human beings descended from Adam. It is the get-well card from a loving Creator to His sick children. And it tells us the remedy which will cure our ills - "In that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Scarcely will one die for a righteous man and for a good man someone might consider dying. O but God sent His own beloved Son to die for a world full of sinners. Christ Jesus - the only human being born without sin and the only person ever to meet the righteous requirements of God's holy law, this Christ Jesus - died for us while we were still sinners. The remedy is given and the choice is now ours.

Life application: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. The deed is complete when we accept it and its effects are final and eternal. But the memory shouldn't be final - forgiven yes, but forgotten no. We need to remember that we were lost so that we can empathize with those who still are. Let us not think so

highly of ourselves that we forget that One - much, much higher than us - died not just for us, but for those who come after us as well.

Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. Romans 5:9

"Much more...." This phrase will be given by Paul five times throughout chapter five. It will demonstrate that what was lost is insignificant to what is gained through Christ for those who are redeemed. What Adam had cannot compare to what we have; what Adam lost is regained and added to because of Jesus.

The "much more" of verse nine directly explains the previous statement of verse eight - "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." When this happened, we were "justified by His blood." We were declared not guilty because of His substitutionary death. In essence, a pardon is offered and by faith the pardon is granted. Because of this wonderful act which occurred while we were still sinners, how much more then shall we "be saved from wrath through Him."

If God reconciled us to Himself while we were sinners, then what happens after that time must be based on a sinless relationship. In other words, justification isn't something that happens and then can be lost. It is something that happens once forever. It is simply impossible to consider the writings of Arminius and Wesley who taught that one can "lose" their salvation. What kind of "much more" is that? It demonstrates a flawed theology and a lack of understanding the efficacy of the work of Christ.

As Albert Barnes notes: He "bestows a value on us proportionate to the worth of the price of our redemption; and is a pledge that he will keep what has been so dearly bought." The price of our redemption is the life of Christ - the God/Man. No higher price could be paid and therefore no higher value could ever be placed upon our redemption. The work of Christ doesn't just potentially justify us. Rather His work actually justifies us.

Because we are pardoned we are also justified, and so we shall be spared from His wrath. There can be no punishment for crimes which have been pardoned; the payment has been made. The only thing our deeds after salvation will bring is rewards and loss of rewards, not a retrial for condemnation or salvation.

Life application: In Christ, we can truly say - "No fear here!"