

THE PURPOSE OF SUFFERING

Message 2

Date: March 10/2019

Words: 6299

INTRO: The purpose of suffering. It is a huge subject. As I studied this subject again I learned that when you seek to explain how God can be good when He allows suffering or evil to exist it is called a theodicy. And as I think about it more, I think I would differentiate between the reasons for the presence of evil and the reasons for the presence of suffering. But let me give some oversimplified answers. Why is there evil in the world? Satan. Why is there suffering in the world? Sin. And what is the aim of suffering? Salvation.

If the Bible is true, and we believe it is, there is something God treasures above most if not all other things in mankind. It is this: faith! I want to stress faith as we look at this subject of suffering. Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." When one goes to Calvinism's stronghold, Romans 9, and one studies what it is all about it can be answered in one word: faith. When one deals with the atheist, there is one thing he dislikes more than most others. It is the word faith.

And just what is living by faith? "Well", you say, "you can only live by faith when there are things you want and you don't yet have them and you trust God to supply that which you are trusting Him for. For example," you say, "living by faith is living like George Mueller. You have hundreds of orphans to feed, but you don't have any food. And you sit down with the table set and you pray, and you trust God to fill those plates. And then, sure enough. You have just said, 'Amen', and a knock sounds on the door and there is your meal. That is living by faith."

My Calvinist friends say faith is a gift. You can only get saved, they say, if God gives you the gift of faith. But there is no verse in Scripture that says that. Every normal human being has the capacity to believe. Saving faith is not a gift, it is a responsibility God requires of us in order to be saved. There is no gift of 'saving faith'. In all cases where faith is spoken of as a gift, it is a gift given to those who are already

saved. I won't take time to show that. Anyone can find that with a little study.

This is what I would say, George Mueller had the gift of faith. In 1 Corinthians 12:29-30 Paul says:

29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles?

30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

What is the answer the text is looking for in each instance is, "No". No, not all are apostles etc... And here is what I would add, "No, not all have the gift of faith like George Mueller had." I don't have it. Let me add this as well, you cannot choose which gift you will have. Verse 11 says the Holy Spirit distributes the gifts as he wills.

But, to get saved by faith and to live by faith, all reasonable persons can do, and it is required of them or they will be lost. The Scripture says the just shall live by faith. The just get saved by faith and they are to live by faith. And how do you do that? Well, you read the Bible and obey it. When God says, "Don't lie", you obey that and you don't lie. You go to church. You read the Bible. You pray. You trust God's Word and you do what it says.

II. WHY CHRISTIANS SUFFER

A. The Divine Reason For Suffering

1. What it is - To conform us to Christ

So having looked at why the lost experience pain and suffering in life, we want to look at what the divine reason is why Christians suffer. In the first message we saw that trouble and suffering is common to all mankind. And we sought to answer why there is so much trouble and suffering among those who are lost and among those who are on the broad road to destruction. I believe there is one major purpose for this and that is to cause the unbeliever, or the one who professes to be a Christian but is not, to come to Christ in faith. He must be humbled and

brought to repentance, and then brought to put his faith in Jesus Christ and learn to trust Him day by day.

Now you would think, would you not, that when a person becomes a Christian God would lift such a person out of life's trials. But instead it is the beginning of more suffering. Maybe sometimes we, like those the letter of Hebrews, get tired and our hands hang down and we look back and wish for a better path. We do well to remember that neither the path of the worldling or the false believer is a life of ease. Life is difficult no matter what you believe or don't believe. This world is filled with trouble. It is so for those in the city of destruction. It is so for those on the broad road, and it is so for those on the narrow road. So what is one to do? For the Christian there is the added problem of persecution. Paul said all that will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

Well, God's purpose for suffering and all that is allowed into life that we see as bad, is for one major purpose with regard to the lost. It is to bring them to true faith. It is to conduct or crowd them to Christ. And now I want to propose that God allows many of these things into the believer's life, and it is also for one major purpose. It is this: It is to conform the believer to Christ. Romans 8:28 says that all things work together for good to those who love God. Verse 29 says that He predestined the believer to be conformed to the image of Christ. He wants to make us like Christ in life. To do this, the believer who has been justified by faith now needs to be sanctified by faith until he overcomes all sin.

The longer I live, the more I study, the more fascinating I find this word *faith*. And so we want to look at suffering in the life of the believer. So our subject is why Christians suffer or experience unpleasant things in life.

So if being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ is the reason for suffering, how should we respond to suffering?

Well, I feel inadequate to answer that question but I can make some observations from my experience in life.

2. How it is accomplished

-By purifying our faith 1 Pet.

How does the Lord use suffering to conform us to Christ. He purifies our faith by suffering. Recently we were studying 1 Peter. Turn there. We begin in verse 3 where Peter points out some of what lies before us.

3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

4 *to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,*

5 *who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

What great and precious promises we have as a Christian. But between us and the celestial city may lie many and various trials, and there is a very good reason for those. So we continue in verse 6:

6 *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,*

7 *that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,*

8 *whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,*

9 *receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.*

It is my view that the genuineness of our faith is more precious than gold, not to us, but to God. This is what He wants. This is what He treasures. And if need be He will allow us to be grieved by many and various trials. And when all is said and done, and we come through victorious, we will receive the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls. In justification we are saved from the penalty of sin. In sanctification we are saved from the power of sin. In glorification, the end of our faith, we will be delivered from the very presence of sin.

-By exposing sin in us

Second, the Lord exposes sin in us to us through suffering. Only when we become Christians have we begun the path to becoming like Christ. Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?" The answer is only God can know it. And it is also only God who can deal with it. And our wicked mind has thousands of hidden corners and myriads of things that have never been awakened yet. As we grow older, more and more is revealed and more and more needs to be changed. So God has to expose sin to us, and one of the major ways God will do that is through suffering or through trials.

Here the chastening of the Lord comes in. Hebrews 12:6 says:

6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.

The word to chasten is *paideuo*. It comes from the word *pais*, meaning a *child*. So *paideuo* has to do with child training. We are God's children, and He chastens us. Chastening is a spiritual spanking and it is to cause us to live right through allowing us to suffer some discipline. Oh how I fear chastening!

Think of David, a man after God's own heart. Consider his life and it was a life of years of pain. Many hardships befell him before he was king. Saul, the king, tried to kill him. He pursued and hunted David like a dog. David lived in caves and in tents. His life

was often in danger. How many times must he not have wished for an easier road.

And then finally life took a turn for the better. He became king and he conquered many enemies, and finally he came to where he kind of had it made. Oh that is a dangerous time. His generals took over and he could live at ease while they fought the wars, and it was then his danger was higher than if he had been in the battle. And he fell into the sin of adultery.

Psalm 119:67 says, "Before I was afflicted I went astray." How many times do we go astray? When is our danger the highest of that happening? And then, because God loves us He allows us to be afflicted. This affliction can come in so many different ways that we are never ready for it. And then we go down into the valley of despair. And we may do all kinds of things like feel sorry for ourselves. Do you know how far from like Christ we are when we feel sorry for ourselves? Maybe we blame others. And then God has to get us to where we have no way out before we admit our failure and we repent.

In a recent Herald of His Coming is an article called, "Hard Places In The Way Of Faith." The writer is A.B. Simpson. And he says, *Hard places are valuable in revealing to us ourselves, and showing us our insufficiencies and failures. They are God's great blasting processes in the work of spiritual excavation, and must precede the higher work of building up life and character. We never know what graces and qualities we possess until the test comes, and then the faith and courage that glowed with such a flame in the moment of enthusiasm and inspiration finds its true level, and the soul is thrown back in its nothingness and helplessness upon Christ alone to find in Him its all in all.*

This was the meaning of Jacob's trials, to bring him to an end of self. This was the purpose of Job's afflictions, to slay his self-righteous confidence. This was the blessing that came from Peter's fall - it broke his pride and self-sufficiency, and sent him to lean

upon his Lord and find strength outside himself in Christ alone.

This is why the Lord still tries you to convince you thoroughly that your estimate of your own strength is utterly false and exaggerated, and to bring you to that place where it will truly be, 'Not I, but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. 2:20).

Trials are a mirror in which we get to see ourselves. Would David ever have known his own heart without this temptation? Would he ever have been cleansed without suffering? It is almost impossible not to think too much of ourselves if we have no trials, if there is no suffering. It is almost impossible for God to bring us to deal with sin unless there is suffering of some kind. It is hardly possible to turn from going astray without affliction. It is hardly likely that we will correct our ways without chastisement.

The article I read from earlier mentioned Job. In my interpretation of that book, a deadly cancer was growing in one of the most godly men that ever lived. And he was totally unaware of it. How do you get a man to see something very dangerous is growing inside when he is about as good as a human being can be. He helps people in need. He does whatever is right. He fears God. He loves God. He says of God, "Though He slays me, yet will I trust Him." How do you show a man like this that something very dangerous is growing inside and if it is left there, it will destroy him? How do you do that? Some cancers grow in us without shooting out signals of pain, so we are unaware of our condition.

Turn to the book of Job. Let me tell you what God allowed. He had a little talk with Satan and said, "Have you considered Job? He is blameless. He is upright. He fears Me and he shuns evil." And maybe Satan said, "Have I considered Job! What an understatement! He is all I can think about. But I can't get at him. You have him covered!" And God said, "Well, I'll let you at him a bit, but you may not take his life." Look at verse 13 of chapter 1:

- 13 Now there was a day when his sons and daughters were eating
and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house;
- 14 and a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing
and the donkeys feeding beside them,
- 15 "when the Sabeans raided them and took them away—indeed they
have killed the servants with the edge of the
sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!"
- 16 While he was still speaking, another also came and said,
"The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the
sheep and the servants, and consumed them; and I
alone have escaped to tell you!"
- 17 While he was still speaking, another also came and said,
"The Chaldeans formed three bands, raided the
camels and took them away, yes, and killed the
servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone
have escaped to tell you!"
- 18 While he was still speaking, another also came and said,
"Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking
wine in their oldest brother's house,
- 19 "and suddenly a great wind came from across the wilderness
and struck the four corners of the house, and it
fell on the young people, and they are dead; and I
alone have escaped to tell you!"
- 20 Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he
fell to the ground and worshiped.
- 21 And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked
shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD
has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD."
- 22 In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.

Well, Job held to his righteousness and then his wife turned
against him. His health went. Then his friends came
and tried to help him. But God could not get
through to Job. It took a long, long time. It took
a lot of suffering. It took a long time of silence

from God. And then one day God saw Job was ready to listen. And God came and spoke with Him. Job had thought, "If ever I get a chance to talk to God, I am going to help Him out a bit. He could use a bit of my advice."

I wonder, do you ever feel like that? Well, the day came that God said, "Job, I have a few questions for you. Stand up like a real man and answer Me please." Question 1, no answer. Question 2, no answer. Question 10, still no answer, question 20, no answer. Question 40, no answer. Question 50, still no answer. What is the conclusion to that for you and me? We do not hold the answers to life, God does.

And in chapter 40 God asks His final question like this:

1 Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said:

2 "Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him? He who rebukes God, let him answer it."

3 Then Job answered the LORD and said:

4 "Behold, I am vile; What shall I answer You? I lay my hand over my mouth.

5 Once I have spoken, but I will not answer; Yes, twice, but I will proceed no further."

Here is what suffering can do. Like a mirror it can show us who we really are. And when we look in the mirror and say, "Behold, look at that vile man in the mirror." Or, "Behold that vile woman in the mirror. I need a real cleanup job. God, I wanted to give you some advice but now I am ready to listen to Yours."

And so God advised Job. He showed him how huge and ugly pride is. And when God was finally done Job said, "God now I am ready to talk to You." So let me read it from chapter 42:

1 Then Job answered the LORD and said:

2 *"I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.*

3 *You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.*

4 *Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.'*

And here is Job's answer:

5 *"I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You.*

And now that my eye sees You, verse 6:

6 *Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes."*

And my proposition from this account is this. If God could have brought Job to this confession any other, any nicer, any more desirable way, He would have done it. But only suffering could accomplish what was accomplished here.

Do we still say, "If there is a good God, why is there so much suffering?"

Now before we move on let me remind us of one more thing. Satan is out to destroy us. If we live right and deal with sin whenever necessary and we do what the Lord wants of us, Satan will put in greater efforts to destroy us. **

B. The Biblical Response To Suffering

So how can we best respond to a life that is filled with difficulties and suffering?

-Recognize I'm in for life

I think it is helpful to recognize we are in for life. There is no good way to get out of living your life out to the end. So we are best off to settle in for a life of difficulties and to seek to get all out of our trials

for which God allows them into our lives. I shared with you some years ago that life is like a rock polisher. A rock polisher has a tumbler. You could liken that to life. And in the tumbler you have three things. They are water, rocks and grit. And when life starts this tumbler starts to turn. I likened the rocks to ourselves and other people, the water to the Word of God, which the Bible likens it to as well. And the grit to life's trials. And revolution by revolution those rocks tumble against each other and the grit of life's circumstances gets between them and they start to wear away on each other.

This goes on hour by hour, day by day. And when it finally stops and you think it should be done, the water is dumped. All the rough edges that have been worn away make a mucky soup out of the water and it is dumped. And now fresh new water is put in and finer grit and the process starts all over again. Four times this happens before you pull out a beautiful polished gem.

And I said that sometimes in life's difficulties we feel like screaming, "Stop, Stop! Let me off for a while." And here is what we need to recognize: I am in for life. LE. Maxwell would say, "Unpack your bags, this is life." Fox news carried an article in February of this year of a native man who wanted to sue his parents for not asking his consent before they brought him into this world. And now he wants to be paid for life.

Well, we did not have any say in whether we wanted to come into this world or not. And there is no use trying to sue anybody. And there is no use trying to get into such a place where we will experience no more suffering. If we end life early, we enter worse suffering earlier. The sooner I realize I am in this for life, and the sooner I seek to make the best of it, the better off I am. And to make the best of it, I need to seek to find out why I am here. Let me recommend our messages on sermonaudio titled "Answers To Life's Most Basic Questions." These questions are: Who am I? Why am I here? What is wrong with the world? And, how can what is wrong be made right?

You see, what we have to realize is we are in for life. My son listens to Jordan Peterson, who was born in Edmonton and lived at Fairview not far from here, and he is now rather famous psychologist. In the analysis of mankind in the parable of the two gates and two paths he is a man who lives in the city of destruction. And he gives advice to other people who also live in the city of destruction and he seeks to advise them on how to live. And he tells them that life is filled with suffering. That is how life is, no matter if you are in the city of destruction, on the broad road, or on the narrow road. Then he teaches them how to live according to his 12 rules. In one video I watched a part of he says this about a life filled with suffering, "So you think, well, what do you do about that? Well, you accept it. That's what life is like, suffering. That's what the religious people have always said, life is suffering. Yes! Well, who wants to admit that? Well, what do you do about that kind of suffering?"

There is something he said that is helpful for the Christian as well, "Accept it. Life is suffering." Don't always look for the easy life. Accept the fact that much of life is suffering and make the most of it.

Amy Carmichael lost one of her most cherished workers. It was then she wrote this poem that says some things you just have to learn to accept:

He said, "I will forget the dying faces:
The empty places-
They shall be filled again:
O voices mourning deep within me, cease."
Vain, vain the word; vain, vain:
Not in forgetting lieth peace.

He said, "I will crowd action upon action,
The strife of faction
Shall stir me and sustain;
O tears that drown the fire of manhood, cease."
Vain, vain the word; vain, vain:
Not in endeavor lieth peace.

He said, "I will withdraw me and be quiet,
Why meddle in life's riot?"

Shut be my door to pain.
Desire, thou dost befool me, thou shalt cease."
Vain, vain the word; vain, vain:
Not in aloofness lieth peace.

He said, "I will submit; I am defeated;
God hath depleted
My life of its rich gain.
O futile murmurings; why will ye not cease?"
Vain, vain the word; vain, vain:
Not in submission lieth peace.

He said, "I will accept the breaking sorrow
Which God to-morrow
Will to His son explain."
Then did the turmoil deep within him cease.
Not vain the word, not vain;
For in acceptance lieth peace.

May I ask you, do you have something you cannot accept? Some things I have to learn to accept, not in bitterness or in defeat, but by overcoming. That is no small thing. You see, I need to recognize I am in this thing for life and there will be suffering.

--Recognize why I am here

Second, it is helpful for us to realize when we undergo difficult circumstances why we are here or why God made us. He made me for His glory, not mine. If I realize my life is not about me but about Him, that is helpful. One cannot have a greater goal in life than to bring glory to God. And what pleases Him most about my life is if I learn to live by faith. If I learn to trust Him in the midst of trying circumstances, now God is pleased with my life.

I have spoken numerous times on Psalm 37:5. It says, "Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him and He will bring it to pass." I outline the verse based on the three verbs and give it like this; transfer, trust, and triumph. The first verb is 'commit'. Oh how hard it is for us to commit, or transfer some problem to the Lord. You see, when I have a trying circumstance, some difficulty, I am to give it to the Lord. Here is the

picture I get from the original words. You have some difficult matter. It is too big for you to handle and He invites us, since it is too heavy to pick it up, to just roll it onto Him.

And how do you know when you have rolled your burden on Him?

Well, when you don't have it any more. When it is not your weight, but His. Oh how hard that is. As long as we can see how we might handle something, we have no trouble committing it, because if He can't do it, maybe we can. But when we are helpless and hopeless, then we begin to get ready to roll the burden of our life's problem onto Him. **

But that is sometimes not yet the most difficult part. Once we have been able to transfer our burden to Him, now we are to leave it there. It says, "Commit your way to the Lord", and then it says, "trust also in Him". Now though it may take years, I am to trust Him with it. And by and by He will bring it to pass. Sometimes it does not take long. Some may have to wait until we get to glory. But if we trust, somewhere there will be triumph.

God did not make me for me, He made me for Himself. It is an amazing thing in life that if I seek my own glory, it is an elusive thing. Many who finally become rich, end their lives prematurely. If I seek my own enjoyment in immorality, it will end up in horror. On the other hand, when I seek to bring glory to God by doing what He wants me to do, it is fulfilling. You don't need much. All we need is what He wants for us. If we seek to glorify Him we can be rich and fulfilled or we can be poor and fulfilled. And here is the truly rich person; the one who is fulfilled in doing that which God wants him or her to do.

So Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things (all the things we need for a fulfilling life) will be added to you." Solomon, after trying about everything a rich man can try to find happiness and a fulfilled life by satisfying his own desires says at the end of the book of Ecclesiastes, a book that lists what he tried, ends his book with these two verses:

13 *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all.*

14 *For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.*

You can't sum it all up better than that. Live right! If I recognize why I am here, and live for that, that is important to living a victorious life that has suffering with it.

There is another thing that is helpful for us. It is to:

-Realize that all things work together for good to those that love God. Romans 8:28 says:

28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

That is not just some nice saying to help us get over a tough spot. That is how it is for those who truly love Him. So when it says 'all things', does that include suffering? Go back to verses 16-18. Here he says:

16 *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,*

17 *and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

18 *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

So beyond all doubt it includes suffering. It is not hard for us to understand how all things in life actually work out together for good to us if we love God. It is impossible for us to understand that. We cannot figure out how God makes it all works together for our good, but we can trust His Word that it is so.

Paul says, "For I consider..." The KJV says, "For I reckon..." The word translated to *reckon* or to *consider* is the word *logizomai*. Sometimes it is translated to count or to account. Somewhere I have read it is an accountants term. Vine says it is used to calculate numbers, and other things as well. You see, sometimes we say, "Well, do the math." Figure it out. If Christ suffered and we are children of God, and joint heirs with Christ, I reckon we can do the math. We will suffer. And Paul said, "I reckon, I have done the math, and if you put the sufferings on one side of the ledger, and the glory that shall be revealed in us on the other, I have done the math; its not worth comparing the two."

So we do well sometimes to stop and do the math when life becomes difficult. It is very hard to see far when you are in the valley. Sometimes it is so dark there and the mountains around us so high, that we cannot see well in the valley. All is dark. And then it is worth to stop and sit down and put our troubles on one side of the page and the glories that shall be revealed in us on the other, and do the math.

Do you know what Paul has in view here in this section in Romans 8? Look at verses 19-21. It says:

19 *For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.*

20 *For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;*

21 *because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

Tell me what glories Paul is calculating here? The millennium. We haven't even gotten to the new Jerusalem and eternity yet, and already the glories are staggering. Already they are so great that we need not compare any further. The lion will eat straw like the ox and a child will put his hand in a cobra's nest.

But between now and then it is different. He describes the time in between in verses 22-23:

22 *For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.*

23 *Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.*

We are waiting with outstretched necks for this time to begin. Oh what glories lie before us! We do well to consider this from time to time. This adoption, this redemption of the body, it is the rapture. It is the resurrection of the body. It will be to be lifted right out of this world of sin and sorrow and suffering, and to enter glory. And then it will be to come back down with Christ to rule in the millennium with Him. And then it will be the new heavens and the new earth! And this will begin eternity!

CONCL: The problem of suffering! It is a big subject. If I should reduce it to its basic core, I would reduce it as the purpose for the unsaved and the saved. For the unsaved, it is to bring them to salvation. And I am fully convinced of this, that without suffering all mankind would go to hell. And for the saved, suffering is there to bring about full sanctification or to conform us to the image of Christ.

God made man for His own glory. That is not selfish. Here is what it is. Only when man brings glory to God is his or her life truly fulfilled. You see, one can sell everything and be a missionary, and do it all for oneself. No doubt that is why many leave the mission field. They were never truly there for the glory of God. They were never truly called by God. One can be a preacher, own next to nothing, and be in it for oneself. No doubt that is true in many, many cases.

One can be in business and make a lot of money, and claim one is doing it for the Lord, and be fully in it for oneself. But then one can humbly seek God's face and ask Him what He wants. And one can be a janitor and be fulfilled.

When we are doing what one believes God has for us, and we live by His Word, and we deal with sin when it takes place one is living by faith. And living by faith is what glorifies God.

In the Harald of His Coming paper I mentioned earlier is a short message by Spurgeon. He said, "The invaluable blessing gained from trials is that our faith is tried and proved. The way of trying whether you are a good soldier is to go down to the battle. The way to try whether a ship is well built is, not merely to order the surveyor to examine her, but to send her to sea. A storm will be the best test of her staunchness. Sanctified tribulations work the proof of our faith, and this is more precious than that of gold which perishes, though it is tried by fire" end quote.

So go down to battle. Maybe you are already there. Put your ship out to sea. And when the battle gets tough, and when the storms continue for days on end and you get to see neither the sun or the moon, only blackness and rain and huge waves, then live by that faith that overcomes.