

Speaker for Today
Thank you again, Randall Jarrell

“Consider it all joy” when trials come??

It is one thing to stand firm in our convictions when everything is going well, and our faith remains untested. But how do we react when God seems silent, when everything is falling apart, when our hearts are broken, and our dreams are shattered? It’s then that the trials of this life truly test our faith and provide an opportunity to produce perseverance—a steadfast endurance that develops spiritual wholeness and maturity in us. When our confidence in Christ is proven unshakable through the fires of adversity, we can face any situation with joy, determination, and ever-increasing hope. We can trust God to uphold us through it all and reward us in the end.

July Birthdays

19 Sal Contino

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

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*“Trust in the Lord with all
your heart and do not lean on
your own understanding.”*
Proverb 3:5

- *“Fight the good fight”*
- *“Keep the faith”*
- *“Finish the course”*



Fiery Trials of Life

By Bruce Evans

It has been five months since fire ravaged the Palisades and Alta Dena. However, the burn-scarred ravaged landscape is undergoing an amazing transformation. Yes, there is the physical rebuilding of homes, business and such like, but upon closer inspection vegetation is cropping up. Sprouts of one sort or another are coming back to life, wildlife is slowly working its way back into the areas. Life finds a way.

It is said that the caterpillar needs to struggle in order to go through the process of change. It needs to fight in order to break free from the cocoon and enjoy the full metamorphous: having become a beautiful butterfly. The

refining fire so to speak. Peter, writing in his first epistle addresses such with respect to the child of God. *“In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ”*(1 Peter 1:6-7).

In the Old Testament book of Zechariah, chapter thirteen and verse nine the following is found. *“I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, ‘This is My people’; and each one will say, ‘The Lord is my God’.*” Various times throughout the Scriptures the fiery trials of refinement are noted. One of which is James, chapter one and verses two through four. *“Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”* Bear in mind that those to whom James was writing, had been scattered far afield from their homeland, simply because they were following Christ. *“Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.”*(Isaiah 48:10)

It is during the period of difficulty that one often awakens in a spiritual sense. Thereby becoming aware of what God expects and a firm resolve to grow in respect to spiritual maturity. In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, he challenged them to grow, *“to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ”* (Ephesians 4:13). Whereupon the author of the book of Hebrews noted, *“...let us press on to maturity...”* (6:1) It should be noted that this growth brings about one’s ability to more accurately reflect what Paul speaks about in Galatians 2:20. *“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered*

Himself up for me.” A more Christ-like life, which should be our aspiration inasmuch as He is our example (see 1Peter 2:21-25).

The fiery trials of life can be used to help shape us, provided we lean on God. *“For Thou hast tried us, O God; Thou hast refined us as silver is refined. Thou didst bring us into the net; Thou didst lay an oppressive burden upon our loins. Thou didst make men rule over our heads; we went through fire and through water; yet Thou didst bring us out into a place of abundance.”* (Psalms 66:10-12). Looking back it can be seen how God did indeed bring His children through life’s difficulties (Romans 15:4). Let us learn to lean into God and find the strength to endure difficulties and to be refined as if by fire.

Obstacles

By James C. Guy

In ancient times, a king had a boulder placed on a roadway. Then he hid himself and watched to see if anyone would remove the huge rock. Some of the king's wealthiest merchants and courtiers came by and simply walked around it. Many loudly blamed the king for not keeping the roads clear, but none did anything about getting the big stone out of the way.

Then a peasant came along carrying a load of vegetables. On approaching the boulder, the peasant laid down his burden and tried to move the stone to the side of the road. After much pushing and straining, he finally succeeded.

As the peasant picked up his load of vegetables, he noticed a purse lying in the road where the boulder had been. The purse contained many gold coins and a note from the king indicating that the gold was for the person who removed the boulder from the roadway.

The peasant learned what many others never understand. Every obstacle presents an opportunity to improve one's condition.