

Biblical Faith # 9

In Trials and Suffering

Given August 8, 2001

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Holly Hills Bible Church

2400 South Holly Street
Denver, Colorado 80222

Edition: November 30, 2017

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Biblical Faith – In Trials and Suffering - Biblical Faith # 9 - August 8, 2001

For the last couple of months our study has been on faith. We have laid much of the foundation concerning the subject of faith. Someone said here a month ago, "I could see where faith is an unending study." And they're right; I feel the same way.

The question comes up: Does God test our faith? The answer we found is, yes, He does test our faith. He does it by means of trials and suffering.

The next question is: Well, why does God allow trials and suffering in our lives? What's the purpose of God allowing trials and suffering in our lives?

So, today we are going to take a look at faith and testing.

pieradzo = to test or tempt, to solicit to sin, with a view toward failure

Last week we had an introduction concerning testing. And there were two words; one was "dakemadzo", and the other was "pieradzo". And last week we looked at the word pieradzo, to test. When it is used in the negative sense, "pieradzo", it means to tempt. To solicit one to sin. To test with a view toward failure.

dakemadzo = to test or prove, with a view toward approval

"Dakemadzo", which we will be looking at today, is to test with a view toward approval. That is the way God tests us.

God tests for approval, He never solicits to sin, He never wants us to fail

God never, never, ever tempts us. He never solicits us to sin. He never wants to see us fail. But He tests us with a view toward approval.

God wants us to walk in total dependence on Him

His desire, as we walk the walk, is to put our total dependence, moment by moment, on Him in every circumstance in our lives, in the trials that come into our lives, and the sufferings that we go through, and the unplanned circumstances that arise in our lives.

So the question comes up: what's the purpose of these trials?

He has many purposes, but we're going to look at one purpose today, which I believe is the primary purpose as to why God tests us and allows trials and suffering to come into our lives.

We've seen as we looked at God's eternal purpose, that His purpose is to declare God's glory, to reveal His glory, to share His glory, and then, in turn, to be glorified.

Now, we're going to concentrating on this aspect of God's eternal purpose: to **share** His glory. That's what God wants to do with you and me, it's to share His very glory.

Before the world was ever created back in eternity past, this was God's purpose. This was God's plan: to share His glory with you and me. Even though the first Adam sinned, God did not change His plan. It's just that this aspect of His purpose, to share His glory, is now being fulfilled through the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ.

How does God share His glory with us in the middle of trials, in the middle of suffering, in the middle of these adverse circumstances that come into our life. And I think the best passage of scripture that describes this is found in Romans, chapter five.

Romans 5:1 **Therefore..**

It starts off in verse one with the word "therefore". "Therefore" is a summary word. It summarizes chapters one through four. Chapter five is going to summarize some truths that were laid down in chapters one through four.

Romans chapters 1-3a = Man without faith in Christ and His Work declared unrighteous

Romans chapters 3b-4 = Man with faith in Christ and His Work declared righteous

Romans chapters one through three declare man unrighteous. At the end of chapter three through chapter four, it declares believers absolutely righteous in Christ.

So there is a declaration to those who have not put their trust and faith in the Person and Work of Christ, they're declared unrighteous. Those who have, they are declared righteous.

FROM ETERNITY PAST GOD'S ETERNAL PURPOSE

- 1. TO DECLARE HIS GLORY**
- 2. TO REVEAL HIS GLORY**
- 3. TO SHARE HIS GLORY**
- 4. TO BE GLORIFIED**



It goes on, it says: “Therefore being justified by faith”. Justified is a term which is actually a judicial act. It’s one declaring something. And when it says, “having been justified by faith”, it’s God declaring the believer absolutely righteous in Christ, that we have the very righteousness of Christ.

It’s through faith. It’s through simple trust and faith in the Person and the Work of our Lord Jesus Christ. So, we have a right standing before God.

Romans 5:1 Therefore being **justified by faith**,

How is that? The means is by His grace and through our response of faith. It’s an aorist tense, which says this: It’s an accomplished fact in your life. It is a positional truth. This is your position in Jesus Christ. And a positional truth is an eternal truth.

Not only is it eternal, but it will never change. It is a truth that will never change about you and about me as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are justified. We are declared righteous from the moment we believe for all eternity.

“Therefore having been justified by faith”, what is the result of that? We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The word peace there simply means harmony. It’s the opposite of enmity. We’re no longer enemies with God.

Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have **peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

As you go through scripture, there’s two aspects of peace. There’s this aspect of peace, the peace “with” God, and there is the peace “of” God.

Peace “with” God = face-to-face peace, positional peace of right standing before God

This peace here, “with” God, is the face-to-face peace. It is the fact that we have been declared righteous and we have this right standing before a holy and righteous God. And so we can stand face to face with God.

So, it’s a positional truth; we have peace, face to face, with God. It’s immutable. That truth is immutable about you and about me. It will never, never, ever change.

Peace “of” God = peace in our hearts, conditional peace in our walk by faith in God

The peace “of” God (which this passage is not talking about) is the absence of conflict in our hearts. It’s the moment-by-moment peace as we walk by faith and trust and rest in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, that teaches us His peace, and that peace, the book of Philippians says, surpasses all human understanding. That’s the peace “of” God.

So those are the two aspects of peace, but here, this face-to-face peace is through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:
2 By Whom also we have **access** by faith into this grace . . .

As you go on in the text, there is something else that also comes through the Lord Jesus Christ. In verse two: “by Whom, also, we have access by faith.” So, we have access into His grace.

Access into His grace, has the idea of one leading another; that there is one who can lead another into a position because of the merit of the person who’s leading.

access into . . . = led by one into a position because of the merit of the one leading

So the Lord Jesus Christ has led us into God’s grace because of His merit. He’s the only One that is worthy to lead us into God’s grace.

Then it goes on to say: “in which we stand.” And, it’s another perfect tense. Most of these are perfect tenses, perfect tense, remember, is an action that has been completed in time past, but it has abiding results right up to the present, it has the idea of permanence.

Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:
2 By Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we **stand**, . . .

The completed action is when we responded to God’s grace by faith in the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. At that point we were led into God’s grace and we stand in God’s grace.

Stand = we are entrenched for eternity in God’s grace, led there by Christ on the basis of Who He is

Perfect tense; we are standing, abiding results, in God’s grace for all eternity. It is a positional truth. It will never, ever change.

I need to mention one thing, because in Galatians five verse four, it says that we can fall from grace. Can we really fall from the **position** of grace? Answer: No. We are entrenched in God’s grace, it’s our position.

Galatians 5:4 Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law (attempt to be declared good by law keeping); ye are **fallen** (**condition** not position) from grace.

But in our **walk**, we may not walk according to our position. We may walk according to the flesh, and if we’re walking according to the flesh we’re not walking according to the Spirit and we’re not walking in the sphere of God’s grace. We’re walking in the sphere of some law system, whatever that may be.

First God shares His glory with us by “positioning” us in Christ

Now, Paul explains our position here in the first part of Romans five. He says that we are justified, we have peace, that we have been led, and that we have access into God’s grace. And not only that, we stand; we’re entrenched. It’s a military term; we are entrenched in God’s grace.

Then God shares His glory with us by a “conditioning” process of trials

What I want to do is look at the incredible process of God sharing with us the glory of Christ during trials.

So, the start of the process starts in verse two: by Whom we have access by faith into the grace in which we stand and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. It's a present tense. It's talking about our walk.

Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

1. In His grace, as we walk by faith in Him, we're rejoicing in the hope (confidence) of God, our Lord Jesus Christ

As we walk by faith we are rejoicing in the hope of God. The word “rejoice” could be translated glory; that we are glorying in the hope of God.

The hope is God's

Question: What is this hope? Whose hope is it? Is it our hope? I think the text clearly defines it: it says it's the hope of God. It's not our hope.

When we looked at Hebrews 11:1 and we looked at what the essence of faith was, faith is the substance of things hoped for. And we saw that that word hope was an absolute certainty, an absolute confidence, as to Who God is and Who Jesus Christ is.

Hope = God's absolute confidence in His own glory, Jesus Christ

That's what this word means here, it's that we are rejoicing in Who He is and the absolute certainty, the absolute confidence as to Who He is. And it doesn't come out from us; the hope is His. The absolute certainty comes from Him and not from us.

So, what I'd like to do is look at this in a picture to understand what Romans five says that we're in God's grace. That's our position, in God's grace, and if we walk in God's grace, we're walking by faith.

In God's grace (position) we walk (condition) by faith beholding the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ

And faith has an object and the object is always the Lord Jesus Christ. We are beholding Him. We are gazing upon Him through the Word and the Holy Spirit is revealing the Person of Christ to us. We're rejoicing. We are glorying in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. In His grace, as we walk by faith in Him, we're rejoicing in tribulations also: knowing (facts)

Let's take a look at this walk, verse three: “And not only so” – not only are we rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God, but we glory in, or we rejoice, (it's the same word used up above for rejoice), in tribulations.

Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing (facts)

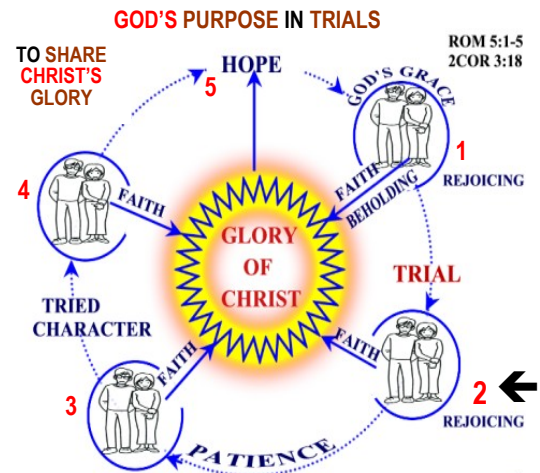
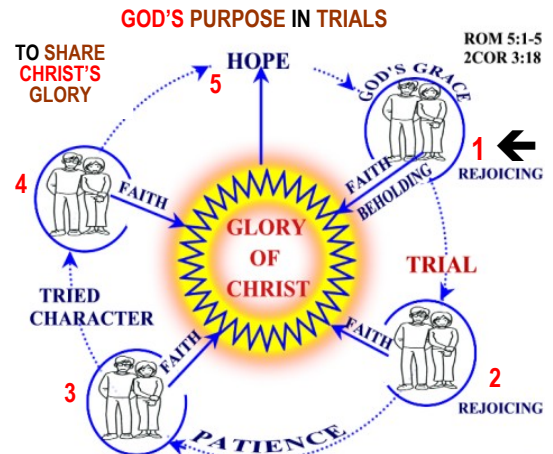
Now, here's my question: When trials come into your life, is this your immediate response? Is it to glory or to rejoice in a trial or suffering, as it comes into your life?

When some circumstance comes into your life which you never were expecting, is that your immediate response to say, “I just am rejoicing in this.” Or is your immediate response something like mine? Feelings of discouragement, anxiety, worry, or disappointment. Or asking a question like, “why is this happening to me?”

Remember we talked about “pieradzo” last week? Temptation. All of those feelings in terms of disappointment, discouragement, anxiety, worry and fear. When they come at us, as a trial comes to us, that's the solicitation to sin.

In tribulations there are solicitations to sin from our sin nature but we can now reckon that we are dead unto our sin nature and alive unto God

It's the source of the sin nature, it solicits us to sin. But we saw that we don't have to sin, that we can by faith, reckon ourselves to be dead unto the sin nature with all of it's desires; desires of disappointment and anger and fear and worry. And we can reckon ourselves alive unto God.



So, in Romans chapter five in these first five verses, this describes a process by which we are going to respond by faith to the trial.

The trial comes along and we, by faith, by just rest and trust in Who and what Christ is, we rejoice because we know that He has a purpose for the trial.

Why should we rejoice in tribulations?

Often the question is, “Well, hold it, Hal. Why should I rejoice? I mean, here comes this trial, and it’s going to be a big impact on my life. Why should I rejoice?”

Let me give you three reasons:

1. Because God allows it.

Reason number one is because God allows it. You know that nothing comes into your life unless God allows it. He is sovereign and allows that trial for a purpose. So it’s there for a purpose.

2. Because we are appointed to trials - We represent Him & our heavenly home

1 Thess. 3:3 . . . we are appointed thereunto . . .

Reason number two is that we are appointed to trials, we are appointed to suffering. In first Thessalonians chapter three verse three, it says we’re appointed unto these things, and it’s an appointment like an ambassador.

As an ambassador we represent our sovereign in the trial, and our sovereign is the Lord Jesus Christ.

We represent not only the sovereign of our country, but we represent the county itself where we come from. And it’s not the good old USA. We’re heavenly citizens. Our citizenship is in heaven. So that’s the country we represent in the trial.

3. Because God’s eternal purpose is to share His glory through the trial

Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing (facts) . . .

Third reason: look in the text in verse three; “not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing” .. look at the verb “knowing” there. This particular word for knowing is “oida”. And it means; to know factually.

Knowing the fact that God’s eternal purpose of sharing His glory with us is being accomplished through the trial, through the suffering. That’s the “knowing” here. That God’s eternal purpose of sharing His glory with us, is being accomplished through the trial or through the suffering, as we walk by faith.

This is how God shares His glory our Lord Jesus Christ through trials

How does He share the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ with us in the trial or the circumstances that come to us?

Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing (facts) that **tribulation works patience**;

Look at the second part of verse three: also knowing that tribulation works patience, or, that trials work patience. The word there for tribulation or trial is a word which literally means like someone were to put you in a vice, and started to turn. You’d feel very pressed, you’d feel very squeezed. It’s that kind of physical pressure that you would be feeling.

tribulation = pressure on the mind

This is used in a metaphorical sense, where trials and suffering and adverse circumstances come at us in life and there’s this pressing on the mind. It’s that kind of pressing that’s talked about here.

works = to bring to a result, means there is a reason for the trial because there is a goal, a result

Trials work patience. The word work here means that there is a goal, there’s a reason for the trial. The word works means to achieve something, or to bring about a result. So, what’s the result?

patience = to abide under, to be at home under the trial

Trials bring about a result, and the result is patience. Patience is a compound word in the Greek: “hupomonae”. It’s hupo, under, and meno, to abide; it means to abide under.

Patience is an “at-home” word. It’s being at home under the trial, under the suffering. Here’s my question: when these trials and sufferings and circumstances come into your life, do you feel at home? Do you feel like this is home?

I’m losing all my money and they’re going to take my house and my car. I’m just at home with that. Is that your response, feeling at home, under the trial and under the circumstances?

The patience is our Lord Jesus Christ’s

Let me tell you that it’s not me! But I can also tell you that it’s not my patience. This is talking about the patience of our Lord Jesus Christ. It’s His patience. He is at home under trials. He is at home under suffering.

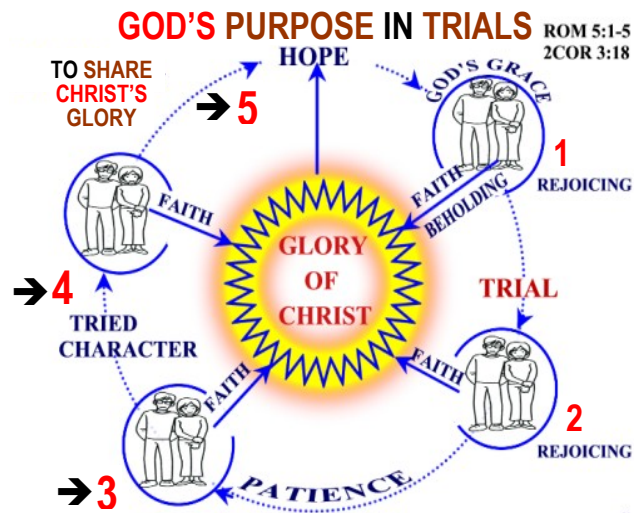
3. In His grace, as we walk by faith in Him, we learn that Christ our life, is at home in trials, the result is His patience is revealed

And as we abide with Him, we are at home. He shares that very glory of His patience with us in the trial. That's the wonderful part. That is the wonderful, wonderful part.

Not only does He share that, but He manifests that through us as a vessel. He manifests His very life through us as we walk by faith.

Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
 3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing (facts) that tribulation works patience;
 4 and **patience, (works) experience;**

Now, let's look at the next aspect of God's sharing Christ's glory with us. Verse four: and patience works experience. The word "works" isn't there, but it is understood. Patience - His patience manifesting itself in us, through us, brings out the result as we walk by faith. And the result is experience: proven character, tried character.



experience = tried or proven character

The word proven is "dakemadzo", to test with a view toward approval. And so as we walk by faith, the result is proven character. Character that has been tested, that has been tried through the fiery trial and it's come out pure.

Is it our character being talked about, that's proven? That's not the way I'd come out, but I know Who does come out that way, and that's the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. In His grace, as we walk by faith in Him, we learn that Christ our life, is proven pure by trials, the result is His approved character is revealed

Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
 3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing (facts) that tribulation works patience; 4 and patience,(works) experience; and **experience, (works) hope:**

As we walk by faith and as we understand that He is our life. That His life comes through and it's proven, it's tried, that's His very character. And you know what? He shares that with us and He manifests that in us.

Then it goes on to say that the tried or proven character works hope. And we come right back to hope. Notice that we've come full circle. We're back to hope; we're back to this absolute confidence and absolute certainty of Who and what Christ is.

5. In His grace, as we walk by faith in Him, we learn that God's confidence is in Christ our life, the result is His confidence in Christ is revealed

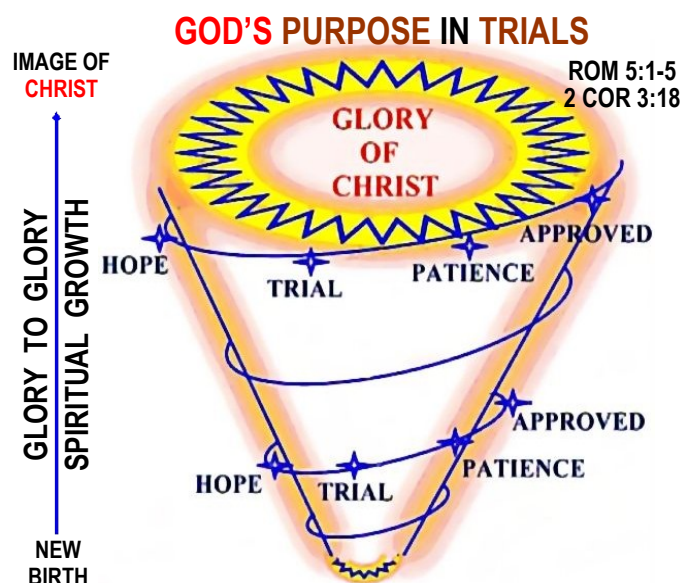
Does God have us going around in this circle all of our lives? Because you know in your life, and I know in mine, that there's trial after trial after trial. There's suffering after suffering. So, are we just spinning our wheels, just going around in circles?

Look at what He does and look what happens. We start out here, as newborn babes, and we don't have a clue as to the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. We don't have a clue as to Who He is.

I can tell you this: in young believers, God doesn't put us through the trials. He grows us up, by the milk of the Word, and He is so gracious to us, but then when once formed, the Lord Jesus Christ in us, then come the trials.

And we're rejoicing in the hope, we know Who Christ is, and we're rejoicing in that hope, in His love, in His grace, in His mercy.

And the trial comes, and initially, oftentimes our response is a negative response. But then we know that the negative response is coming out from the old man, and we are to reckon ourselves dead and to walk by faith and by resting, and focusing and beholding our Lord Jesus Christ.



As we do, that trial works patience, the abiding under, and the staying power under the trial, being at home under the trial. And then comes the tried, or approved character. And there's the approval. So there's this testing with a view of approval.

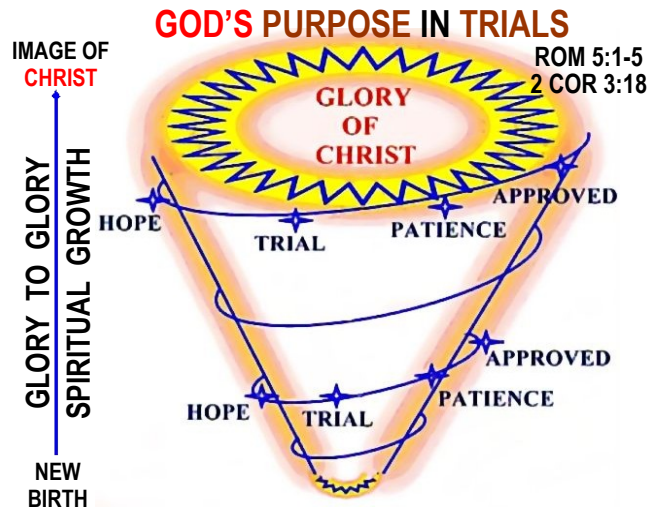
**God's purpose is accomplished by this process,
He is sharing the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ**

God has accomplished his purpose, but look what happens, we come to the next trial. But because we have been through this trial, we've come to know a little bit more about the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Who He is and who we are in Him.

Isn't this a picture of second Corinthians three verse eighteen, beholding as in a mirror the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are transformed into the very same image, from glory unto glory, even by the Spirit?

2 Corinthians 3:18 But **we all**, with open face **beholding** as in a glass the **glory** of the **Lord**, are **changed** into the **same image** from **glory to glory**, *even as by the Spirit of the Lord*.

As we go through these trials, God is sharing His very glory of our Lord Jesus Christ with us. We are coming to know Him and the power of His resurrection. That's what this whole process of trials is doing.



**God uses this process to share His glory with us
because His character is approved and revealed through each trial**

In His grace (position), our walk of faith in Him (condition), reveals His life in us

Here is a question: If this is God's purpose in our trials, that is, to share Christ's glory with us, will you now rejoice in trials and in suffering?

2 Corinthians 3:3 ... *ye are manifestly declared* to be the **epistle of Christ** ministered by us, **written** not with ink, but **with the Spirit of the living God**; not in tables of stone, but in **fleshy tables of the heart**.

God's test for approval gives the option to rejoice in trials

Here's the test. Are you going to rejoice when the trial comes along? Are you going to glory in the trial in your life?

When we do respond by faith, and we walk in faith in the trial, think of how God uses us as **epistles** of Christ.

God's glory, our Lord Jesus Christ's proven character, is seen by the world through us

The glory of our Lord Jesus Christ is manifested through us, it's seen by the world through us. And they're going to ask us, because they're going to see something that they've never seen before, about the wonderful hope that's within us.

And we're to be ready to give an answer.

Romans 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing (facts) that tribulation works patience; 4 and patience, (works) experience; and experience, (works) hope: 5 and **hope maketh not ashamed**; because the **love of God is shed abroad (gushed forth)** in our **hearts** by the **Holy Spirit Who** is given unto us.

In closing, I want us to see something very special.

Romans chapter five and verse five: "and hope maketh not ashamed". Simply put, this is His hope, the absolute certainty that comes out from the Lord Jesus Christ, will never disappoint us; will never let us down. That's what it's saying. The reason why is given in the rest of verse five: "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit Who is given unto us".

**His absolute certainty never disappoints us
because the Holy Spirit is revealing His love in our hearts**

The love of God is gushed forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, so that when you go through this trial, and I go through this trial, we even know more about the love of God, about the love of Christ.

He's brought us through the trial, and His love gushes forth from us by the Holy Spirit.

Then, do you know what happens, as we experience the love of the Lord Jesus Christ in our hearts?

Turn over to Galatians chapter five and verse six: “for in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which works by love”.

Galatians 5:6 For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.
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**Our faith is energized by His love
which is gushing from our hearts
by the Holy Spirit**

What it's saying is this: only your personal faith avails. Only your personal faith is capable of producing results. Those results are produced by the Spirit of God that is in us. See where it says in verse six: “but faith which works by love”. What it says there is that our personal faith is energized, our faith is energized, by His love.

So, at the end of this trial, the love of God is gushed forth out from us, and we sense the love of God that is being gushed out from us. It energizes our faith so that we can go through the next trial, because our faith has been energized.

**God uses this process
to share His glory with us**

When the trial comes you will always find Him waiting there.

When the trial comes you will always find Him faithful.

When the trial comes you will always find that He will never leave you nor forsake you.

When the trial comes you will always find that He loves you.

And, when the trial comes you will always find that He purposes to share the very glory of the Lord Jesus Christ with you.

Amen? Amen.