

Standing on Solid Ground

In this short series of articles we've been looking at Jesus' teaching pertaining to the foundation that we're to build our life on. We've seen two foundations—one of rock and the other of sand—from Matthew 7:24-27. Apart from the rock solid foundation of Jesus Christ, we will have nothing of substance to support us in the storms of life that inevitably affect all mankind in this broken world. I want to conclude this series with some practical application that we're given from the scriptures. We've seen that the trials and suffering that we face come in many ways and may often come from other people. And yet, those who are trusting in Jesus Christ daily can rest secure in his faithfulness.

—We will not respond in kind when we're spoken evil against but continue to place our trust in Jesus. “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.” (Matthew 5:11) Speaking of Jesus as our example in suffering the apostle Peter writes, “When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.” (1 Peter 2:23)

—Those who're trusting in the Rock know that God can use the suffering that we go through as a way to comfort and strengthen others. Paul writes, “If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer.” (2 Corinthians 1:6)

—Suffering teaches us to rely on God. Paul writes, “Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.” (2 Corinthians 1:9-10)

—Those that, by grace, choose to trust in the solid Rock foundation have a different way of thinking about what God is doing in our life circumstances than those who are building on a foundation of sand. During intense trials and suffering those who are trusting God can experience true joy because we know that God is in ultimate control of all things and thereby in the process of bringing us to spiritual maturity through the trials that we face.

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” (James 1:2-4) In Romans 5:3-5 Paul writes, “More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing

that suffering produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."

This is not to say that suffering is ever easy or that intense trials are without a measure of pain and sorrow. What a blessing to know God's love and to find joy in all that he's doing in our lives.

—Suffering is often used of God to further the gospel and to point others to Jesus Christ as we rely on the power of God in our suffering. Paul writes these words to Timothy. "Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God." (2 Tim. 1:8)

If we allow our lives to be mixed and mingled with the teachings and the philosophies of the world rather than trusting God's word in Holy Scripture, we'll not be able to stand during the difficulties of life. But if we're founded on the Solid Rock of Christ and his truth, he gives us the power, not only to keep from falling, but to grow and be strengthened and to be a witness for Christ in the midst of our sufferings. Christians are imperfect people but, by grace, we're resting in the salvation of Jesus Christ. Our rest and peace are not based, ultimately, on what we do. We will fail many times to do what scripture calls us to. But, our rest and peace, rightly understood, are in Jesus Christ alone, by faith.

May God continue to mature his people, by his word and Spirit so that we will increasingly respond to our sufferings and trials in a way that is honoring to him.

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