

Messages From the Gates of Jerusalem
#10 - Valley Gate - Part III
Equipped For the Valley so I Don't Waste the Valley Lesson

Adversity is an inevitable part of life. ALL of us go through valley experiences in life.

Facts Regarding the Valley

1. God allows valleys into our lives to mature us and make us more like the Lord Jesus Christ.
 2. He controls the depth and duration of a valley experience.
 3. Suffering throws us off balance. Losing anything-- a position, a friendship or a marriage, or something else precious--can cause a person to wonder, "*Why did God do this to me?*"
 4. The deeper the valley, the greater the work God will be able to do through it.
 5. God's grace is the strongest in the valley and His lessons are the most powerful.
 6. Resisting Him will typically lengthen a period of suffering.
 7. God is more interested in our character than our comfort.
 8. Every valley is a passageway rather than a destination.
- Eventually, the difficulty will pass. In Ps. 23:4, David wrote, "I walk *through* the valley."

Reasons We Respond to Adversity Incorrectly

1. We don't have a solid belief system that can withstand pressure, pain and heat of valleys; no Broad Wall. We will panic in difficulties if we can't apply Scripture to our life, and we don't understand God's character. If I feel distant from God, the problem lies with me. I can change like shifting sand by allowing circumstances to toss me this way and that. Heb. 13:8 Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday, today, and forever.

2. Our faith is based on emotion rather than the Word of God.

Truth: A spiritual relationship heavy on emotion but light on facts falters in a valley.

3. We have a shaky theological foundation so we don't realize:

a) God upholds us through our difficulty. We don't know His promises of assurance.

James 1:21 Receive with meekness the Implanted Word which is able to save your soul.

Isa. 41:10 Fear not, for I *am* with you; Be not dismayed, for I *am* your God.

I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.

b) The difficulty has purpose. Rom. 8:28-29

c) We must surrender to His work in our life or be set aside—still a believer but useless to the kingdom.

Rom. 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

4. We don't understand the ways of the Lord. Scripture contains many examples of saints who suffered despite their faithfulness to God.

Success in the Valley Requires the Correct Attitude

How do I react in the valleys, trials and tribulations of my life?

Do I "lose heart?" In Greek it means "to act badly", "to give up" or "grow weary."

When I am prepared in facing difficulties, we won't act badly, give up, or grow weary!

Valleys to Test My Faith

The Lord will test your faith levels in Him:

- a. How serious you are about Him
- b. Will you hold fast to Him through the most trying of circumstances

I Peter 1:6-9 In THIS you greatly rejoice, - What is THIS?

I Pet. 1:3-5 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy

1) has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

2) to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away,

3) reserved in heaven for you,

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

I Pet. 1:6-9 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.

I Peter 4:12- Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. Yet if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.

Valleys For My Sanctification - Conforming me to the image of Jesus Christ

James 1:2-4 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Truth: The testing of your faith will help produce greater levels of patience in you.

You must allow the Lord to mold you, transform you and impart to you the fullness of Jesus Christ so you will become "perfect and complete, lacking nothing" in Him.

Rom. 5:3-4 And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.

II Cor. 4:16-18 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward *man* is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which *are* not seen are eternal.

1. My afflictions are momentary, temporary and light.
2. I KNOW that my suffering is producing an eternal, heavy weight of glory that is far beyond all comparison with my current trouble.
3. My present and future glory is increasing as I persevere in trials and tribulations.
4. Rom. 8:18 The HOPE (confident expectation) of this glory makes my suffering much lighter and bearable in comparison.
5. I can only produce this glory and make my trials work for me if I FOCUS on the eternal glory that is being stored up for me in heaven - NOT on the temporary circumstances of this life.
6. "So I will fix my eyes not on what is seen but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary but what is unseen is eternal." We must see beyond the valley.
7. My trials should cause me to look to Jesus. The eternal perspective comes closer as I by faith focus on the eternal world of unseen things. The troubles of this life will dim, as the light of the glory of God shines into my heart and mind. Surely they will pass more quickly and become much lighter when compared to that which is unseen.
8. Do I long to be rich toward God? It's not long now....just a few breaths and I will be with Him for all eternity. I will leave all I have; I will take all I am.

Truth: God desires me to depend upon Him. Paul discovered the secret: Why God allowed trials and afflictions in his life > his sanctification in the Lord; become a vessel of honor.

NOW, he makes extreme statements:

He takes pleasure and boasts in this kind of heavy activity with the Lord.

Paul said in II Cor. 12:7 > "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh..."

Given! The thorn in the flesh was actually a gift from God. Paul sought the Lord in three long, extended times of prayer, asking that the thorn be removed. God's answer:

II Cor. 12:9 "And He [God] said unto me [Paul], 'My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness.'"

Paul responds: II Cor. 12:9-10 "...Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

Paul didn't say, "What can't be cured must be endured," but "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me..." (v. 9). Gladly? Glory? Really, Paul?

- "God, in His love to me, gave me a thorn in the flesh that I might see my weakness..."
- Depend upon Him, and
- Learn His strength.

"What cannot be cured will be *enlisted*, and I will gladly rejoice in my infirmities." Suffering, if we are humble enough and willing to enlist it for His glory, will cause us to have a greater dependence upon God.

Would you choose a valley if you knew it could mean greater dependency — therefore, greater power — in your life? Paul had done nothing wrong. However, he experienced infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions, distresses, and gave God thanks for it... a perfect illustration of "giving thanks always for all things," for, Paul said, "It has caused me to depend upon the Lord."

Truth: Your valley has been designed to cause you to come to the end of yourself. When you get there, you will find your valley has merely brought you to a place of utter dependence upon Almighty God.

We must WALK BY FAITH - not by what I see with my eyes.

Once you are thrown into the middle of a fiery trial, you will either:

1. Lose part or all of your faith in the Lord due to fear - Israel permitted fear to rob them of moving forward and claim their inheritance. Instead, they wandered 40 years in the desert and their bones lay scattered in the wilderness.
 2. Get mad at God for allowing it to happen to you in the first place OR
 3. You will grab hold of the Lord with an intensity that you may have never known.
- You now KNOW the only way you will be able to make it through this trial in one piece is by completely relying on God's grace, power, and guidance.

Result : You will be forced to lean and rely on God with much more intensity than you have experienced before. Consequently, your present faith and confidence in Him will grow stronger beyond what you thought was possible in this life. You will experience how He will personally sustain you through this storm cloud with His peace and victory.

Once you see the supernatural working of God, it will completely blow you away. He will orchestrate a solution that you never dreamed possible.

Truth: My trials and tribulations will reveal the eternal truths about God that energize and strengthen my faith in the Lord.

- a. In the furnace of persecution Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego learned about the God Who controls the depth, extent and violence of the crisis.
- b. Daniel learned about the God Who overrules in the valley.
- c. It was there that Elijah, the poor widow; the disciples, Mary and Martha, and a countless host of others learned that the valley is a place of pain, and heartache. They all learned the priceless lesson that the valley is where you find the "*lily of the valleys*."

My valleys, trials and tribulations can end in eternal victory!

Rom. 8:18 "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Truth: Suffering precedes glory; Being a servant precedes being a ruler

I Pet. 5:10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*.

Truth: God's children are to live on His promises, not explanations.

It is through faith and patience that we will inherit and see the promises fulfilled.

Heb. 6:11-12 we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end,¹² that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Heb. 11:6 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.

Heb. 10:23, 35-36 Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for He who promised *is* faithful.

Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward.³⁶ For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

If we let our faith waver, we will become double-minded and unstable in all of our ways because we will end up being like a wave of the sea being helplessly tossed to and fro from the heavy winds that are coming against it.

Challenge: Don't Waste Your Valley - Search for the Treasures that are Concealed There.

1. *You will waste your valley if you do not believe it was designed for you by God.* It is not enough to say that God merely uses the disruptions of life. We must also acknowledge that He designs them just for us. If He doesn't stop it, then He has a purpose in it for us!
2. *You will waste your valley if you think it is a curse and not a gift.* It is through what some call a curse that the faithful saint experiences the tender mercies and gracious ministries of the Lord.
3. *You will waste your valley if you spend too much time reading about your valley and not enough time reading about Christ.* In the midst of our pain, we need to turn to the Word of God to look into His face for the help we need.
4. *You will waste your valley if you allow it to drive you into solitude instead allowing it to deepen your relationships with others.* It may be that God sent your valley to help someone else. When we cut ourselves off during our valley seasons, we deprive them of the opportunity to minister to us in the love of Christ. (Ill. Epaphroditus - Phil. 2:26.)
5. *You will waste your valley if you grieve as those who have no hope.*
God uses our valleys to teach those around us that there is hopeless should not be a part of our lives, 1 Thes. 4:13. The saint of God must walk with their hope anchored in Jesus, even during the painful valleys of life.
6. *You will waste your valley if you treat sin as casually as you did before.* The valley should be a place of refinement where the saints of God make a definite move away from sin and its influence.
7. *You will waste your valley if you fail to use it as a means of witnessing to the glory and truth of Jesus Christ.* We are never anywhere by accident. God sent us where we are and we are there bring glory to Him. Let us use our time in the valley to call attention to Him, His love, His grace and His glory.

Are you wasting your valley, or are you making it count for Jesus Christ and for yourself? How long will you allow the flesh and the devil to keep you from benefiting from your time in your valley? How long will you wander around in that valley before you come to the place where you acknowledge His hand in your pain?