

TWO THINGS THAT ARE GOOD FOR ME

PSALM 73:28 • TV095B

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Psalm 73:28

“But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works.”

There’s an ancient Proverb which goes something like this: “When a man reaches 40 years of age he is either a fool or a physician.” And they mean by that, when a man reaches 40 years of age he either doesn’t know anything or he knows some things that are good for him personally.

Now, I’m past 40 by many years and I hope that I’m not a fool. I believe that I have learned some things that are good for me, at least I know two things that are good for me and I borrowed them from the writings of David in the **Book of Psalms**.

I know two things that are good for me and the first one is found in **Psalms 119:71**. Would you care to turn over there? Now, the subject this morning is, **“TWO THINGS THAT ARE GOOD FOR ME.”**

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And I hope when I get through you will be able to say, “Amen preacher; those two things are good for me too. I’ve come down through life and I’m able to determine what’s good for me. I believe I know these things are good for me.”

Now, the first one **Psalm 119:71**; now listen to David: *“It’s good for me; (that’s the way he starts it off) it is good for me that I have been afflicted.”* What did he say? He said, *“It’s good for me that I have been afflicted that I might learn thy statutes.”*

Now, I realize that what I’m about to say is quite contrary to most of the preaching that you hear today. We are plagued and we are besieged in this day with what we call a “health and wealth religion; something good is going to happen to you.”

Well, I am saying this; David said; *“It is good for me, (and this is what is good for me. This something good is affliction, trial, tribulation, temptation, sorrow, tears and heartache) it’s good for me that I’ve been afflicted because in that way I was able to learn God’s statutes.”*

Now listen to some Scripture and see what God said. David said, *“It’s good for me that I’ve been afflicted.”* Then the Scripture says, *“It’s given unto you not only to believe on Christ but to suffer for Christ.”*

The Scripture says; *“They who would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”* Our Lord said to His disciples; *“In the world ye shall have tribulation;”* not prosperity, not good health all the time, not total happiness all the time, but tribulation.

Listen to the Word of God: *“If ye be without chastisement you are not sons of God; whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.”*

Now, *“If you be without trial and affliction you are not a son of God.”* That’s what Paul said in Hebrews. And Paul wrote this: *“Most gladly will I glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ might rest upon me.”*

And then again Paul said: *“When I am weak then am I strong, (not when I’m prosperous, not when I’m satisfied, not when I feel like I can whip the world with one hand behind my back) when I’m weak then am I strong.”*

Then he says, *“Let the rich rejoice in that he’s made low.”* Let a man rejoice when God brings him down and strips him and humbles him and breaks him and crushes him.

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“God is nigh unto them of a broken heart. He saveth such as me of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.” This doesn’t sound like “if everybody’s happy; say amen,” does it? It doesn’t sound like that little chorus we use to sing: “Happy all the time, happy all the time.”

I don’t find the apostle Paul talking that way at all. Listen to this, Peter said; *“Count it not strange my brethren when fiery trials come upon you; they are sent of God to try your faith.”*

In other words; no man should be disturbed by afflictions. He better be disturbed if he doesn’t have them. No man should be disturbed by fiery trials. He better be concerned if he doesn’t have them. No man should be concerned by the chastening hand of God. He better be concerned if it’s not there.

For David said; listen to this: *“No man should be disturbed by afflictions for ye know that we were appointed there unto. It’s good for me that I’ve been afflicted.”*

Read that in **Psalm 119:71**. We need to read it over and over again: *“It’s good for me that I’ve been afflicted.”* Now wait a minute; hold on, hold the phone! I’m not saying that trial and affliction are good for everybody. They may not be good for you.

Now listen to me: “I’m not saying that trials and afflictions are good for everybody but they are good for believers.” They are good for God’s people. Trials and afflictions make some people bitter but not God’s people; they make them mellow and sweet.

Trial and affliction make some people sour and mean and rebellious. But affliction is good for a true believer and I can give you several Scriptural reasons why affliction and trials and tribulations are good for me and good for every believer, now not for every man, every believer.

To some of you those trials and afflictions make you bitter. You quit going to church and you quit worshipping God and you quit reading your Bible and you quit praying and you get sour and rebellious against God because God has dealt with you in his good providence in a way that you are not happy about.

Well, you have missed Christ. You are not a true believer because affliction draws a true believer nearer to God (like Job), Job said: *“Though he slay me I’ll trust him.”* Or like Job who said: *“Naked I came out of my mother’s womb and naked I shall return. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; praise the Lord. And he didn’t charge God with foolishness.”*

Now, why is it good for me that I’ve been afflicted? I’ll give you four or five reasons:

First of all: Trial or affliction reveals the reality of my faith!

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Now, how can I know that I have faith if my faith is never tested? How do you know that boat will float if you never put it in the water? How do you know your roof won't leak if it never rains?

How do you know you have faith in God if that faith in God is never tested? Every true believer in the Bible in the Old Testament was put to severe tests. As God said to Abraham after he took Isaac up on top of that mountain and would have sacrificed him upon the commandment of God,

He said: "Abraham; now I know that you love me." God knew it all the time but He was showing it to Abraham. He was proving it to Abraham; he was proving what's really of value in this life, faith in God and not just love for his children.

Job was tried and Job came through it. David was tried, Peter was tried and Paul was tried. All of God's people in the Bible were tried, severely tried by God to prove their faith.

Now wait a minute! When you think of the word trial you usually think of sadness or sorrow or sickness. Trial is not always unpleasant to the flesh; sometimes it is.

I'll tell you this, sometimes prosperity is a trial. Now listen to me, more people have fallen away from God because of prosperity than ever have fallen away from God because of poverty.

The wise man wrote this in **Proverbs 30:8**: "*God give me neither poverty nor riches. Give me not riches lest I be full and deny thee and do not give me poverty lest I be poor and steal and take God's name in vain.*"

Sometimes people prosper and prosperity is the worst trial they possibly could have had because it leads their minds and thoughts away from God. But I will guarantee you this; every believer, every man who has faith will be tried. He will be tried through temptations, tribulations, afflictions, and infirmities to prove his faith. And we ought to be glad for it.

Secondly: Trial enables me to see the frailty of human flesh!

I need to see this. The Bible tells me over and over again: "*Put no confidence in the flesh.*" Trust not the arm of the flesh. Lean not on the arm of the flesh. Trust in the Lord God; long for His return.

Solomon said, "I've tried it all. I've made the rounds of all that the world has to offer and I've come to the conclusion that it is all vanity, vanity of vanities, all is vanity. I've come to this conclusion that there's nothing here for me."

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Now, the only way that I can come to that conclusion is to experience it. God's got to teach me the frailty of human flesh. You can't read about it and learn it. Nobody can tell you about it in order that you can learn it. You've got to experience it.

A few trips to the cemetery will reveal to you that *"it's appointed unto men once to die."* A few trips to the hospital will reveal to you *"that all flesh is grass; the grass whitereth and the flower fadeth."*

A few trips to the altar of confession will reveal to you *"that in my flesh dwelleth no good thing."* And a few trips to the valley of disappointment and the valley of depression and doubt will reveal to you how much you need God.

So, these trips are good for us. *"It's good for me that I've been afflicted."* It's good for me that I had that night of weeping, that night of mourning because I won't turn loose of these things that I hold in my fleshly hand until God shows me that they are not worth holding, they are not worth holding.

And I'm not going to give my life in the labor of love for God's glory until I see that what I'm laboring for down here is not worth it when I get it. It's not worth the effort. God is going to destroy it all anyway.

Thirdly: Trials and afflictions lead me looking to the grace of God for my strength and my help!

Paul; God blessed Paul with some mighty revelations. He took him on one occasion to the third heaven. And then Paul said: *"There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a real affliction, a real trial."*

And Paul said: "I went to God three times and I prayed, Lord; take this thorn out, take this thorn away; deliver me from this affliction." And God said to him, "Paul; I'm not going to take that thorn away from you; I'm going to teach you two things with that thorn.

"I'm going to teach you first of all that you are still a man. No matter how much you know, you are still a man. No matter how much you've seen, you are still a man. No matter where you have been, you are still a man. No matter if you are a son of God; you are still a man. You are still a frail, finite, fallible, foolish creature, made of flesh, and don't you forget it.

I'm going to teach you secondly that your dependence and hope is in me; *"my grace is sufficient."* I can take care of your needs. I can take care of your afflictions and I can take care of your trials but you are going to learn those two things.

And that's what affliction teaches, you're nobody and I'm nobody, you're nothing, I'm nothing, and we are just flesh. And the sooner we learn that the better.

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And we don't have anything that God didn't give us. We don't know anything that God didn't teach us. We will never be anything that God didn't make us. And we need to remember that and trial teaches you that. You can't learn it any other way.

God has to knock the stool out from under you and strip you and knock all your foundations out from under you and leave you hanging by the thread of His grace and nothing else. Then you will praise God. You will thank Him for that affliction that shuts your mouth and thank Him for that affliction that let you see who He is and who you are.

Fourthly: Trials and afflictions enable me to sympathize with others in the same condition, enable me to sympathize, pray for, pity, and understand the weakness and burdens of others!

No man can weep with others if he's never wept himself. That's right; nobody can forgive others unless he's experienced forgiveness himself. *"To whom much is given; he will love much."*

No man is going to show mercy until he sees he's the recipient of mercy. God prepares his vessels to minister to others. He prepared Peter for Pentecost and he prepared him by letting him deny his Lord.

Now that sounds strange to human ears; I know that. But the people whose ears have been anointed by the Spirit of God, they know what I'm talking about. God always brings a man down before He takes him up. He always strips him before He clothes him. He always slays him before He raises him, always. He always humbles him before He exalts him.

Paul said: *"I know how to be abased and I know how to abound."* But you don't know how to abound unless you know how to be abased and that's what trial does, it brings you down. Thank God for it: *"In everything give thanks; this is the will of God concerning you."*

Fifthly: Trials and afflictions allow me to see the sinfulness of my heart and enable me to rejoice in the righteousness of Jesus Christ!

The apostle Paul in **Romans chapter 7** talked about his weakness; he said: *"The things I would do I do them not. The things that I would not do I do. When I would do good evil is present with me. I find the law that when I would do good, evil is present with me. O wretched man that I am. Who is going to deliver me from this body this death (of sin)? I thank God that I have that deliverance in Jesus Christ my Lord."*

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Do you see what trial does? It turns your eyes upward instead of inward. It turns your eyes upward instead of down here to the things of this earth. It makes you say, it makes you able to say, *“For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.”*

It makes you able to say: *“I’m in a strait betwixt the two. I have a desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better.”* There is nothing here for me. I’m just a stranger. I’m just a pilgrim. I’m just a sojourner and I’m just passing through.

I’m like Abraham; *“I’m looking for a city whose builder and maker is God.”* I’m looking for a new body. I’m looking for a day *“when I shall be conformed to the image of God’s Son.”* It was David who said this, and what man was ever afflicted like David? *“I shall be satisfied when I awake with his likeness.”*

David was tired of it all. Do you know his last words, the last words of David? It will do you good; look them up in the book of **2 Samuel**, I believe it’s **chapter 23**, somewhere thereabout; he said: *“Although it be not so with my house; God has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure and this is all my desire and this is all my salvation.”* This is it!

Here was a man who had been the most powerful man on earth. Here was a man who had the greatest kingdom on earth. Here was a man who had legions at his disposal. Here was a man who had anything he wanted and here he is 70 years of age and about to die and he said: *“I’ll tell you; I’ll sum it all up, God has made with me a covenant, eternal and sure, and that’s all my desire and all my salvation.”*

The second thing that I’ve learned that’s good for me; *“It’s good for me that I’ve been afflicted that I might learn God’s statutes,”* God’s Word, God’s ways, God’s will, God’s purpose and God’s providence.

Then, in the book of **Psalms chapter 73:28** David said again: *“It’s good for me to draw near to God. I’ll put my trust in the Lord God.”*

Now, you must read **Psalm 73** and while you read it remember, remember what David is saying. In **Psalm 73** David watched the wicked prosper. He watched the rebels prosper. They didn’t have any afflictions. They didn’t have any trials and they didn’t have any sickness.

Their eyes stood out in fatness. There were no bands in their death. Listen to David; he said: *“Behold, verses 12 and 13 of Psalm 73, behold; these are the ungodly who prosper in the world. They increase in riches. Have I cleansed my heart in vain? All day long I’ve been chastened.”*

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“What is this God, what is this? I’m a believer. I’m a righteous man. I’m a man of integrity and holiness. I try to walk your way and keep your law. Here are these folks out here, rebels. They curse you; they take your name in vain. They have no use for God and yet they prosper. And they’re not sick; I’m sick. They’re not poor; I’m poor. They’re fat and I’m starving. What’s going on here?”

And I’ll tell you this, some of the most startling discoveries that a new Christian will make, will discover when he’s saved; he’s going to find out some things. Let me give you about five or six:

First of all: It will startle him to find out that all men do not rejoice over his faith in Christ and his love for God and his desire to give God the glory!

That’s right! Everybody is not going to welcome you as a believer. They will welcome you as a drunk. They will welcome you as a thief or a crook, as a pretty good feller or a politician but they won’t welcome you as a believer.

Christ said, *“Even a man’s enemies shall be even those of his own household.”* They will put you out of the synagogue. They will put you out of the Cathedrals. They will put you out of the churches, they will put you out of the Temples and they will think they are doing God a service.

And it’s going to surprise you. When you start talking about Christ and His blood and His death and salvation and eternal life; you are going to be surprised at who will say; “Well I would just rather not listen to that. I liked you better the way you were.”

And then I’ll tell you something else you will find out!

Secondly: You will find out that your sinful appetites and your fleshly appetites aren’t all together curved; they are still there to a great degree sometimes!

The battle goes on and on and on. Yea you have a new nature but you have an old nature. Don’t deny it; you would be lying. *“If any man say that he hath no sins, he’s a liar and the truth is not in him.”*

You will find out your fleshly appetites are still there and they will still give you problems and that will surprise you. You thought when you came to the Lord and you were born again and saved that everything would be no problem anymore, no trouble. But you’ve still got troubles.

Thirdly: And here’s something that shocks a lot of believers: your seemingly reasonable prayers are not always answered the way you think they ought to be answered!

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You want this person saved and that person saved. You pray for them and pray for them God doesn't save them. And you want this person to be made well and pray for them and pray for them and they are not well.

You want this person to live and he dies and you think what's going on here? *"God told me if I asked anything he would grant it, anything according to his will."* We've got to find the will of God.

Prayers got something to do with the will of God. Somebody said, "Prayer, changes things; yes, it changes me and brings me into subjection and submission to the will of God." That's just about what prayer changes; God's will shall be done; His determinate will and His permissive will are going to be done.

Sometimes we are shocked when we pray about a matter, seriously and sincerely and reasonably when it's not answered like we think it ought to be.

Fourthly: Our spiritual growth is so slow!

We want to grow, we want to learn, we want to come to knowledge, we want to master the Bible, and we want to know the secret things and the hidden things and the mysterious things. And we search and seek and study and we grow so slowly.

Our faith, love, joy and humility; they just don't grow as fast as we think they ought to grow. *"Our spirit's willing but our flesh is weak."* We will grow in God's time according to God's will.

Fifthly: We are so often disappointed in ourselves and disappointed in others!

You are going to find this as a believer. You'll be disappointed in yourself. It's sad that we are more disappointed in others than we are ourselves. That's because we are so proud and so self-righteous. And this is to teach us: *"Put no confidence in the flesh."*

And then I'll tell you another surprise that the believer has!

Sixthly: Like David; he sees the wicked prosper!

He sees the rebel get great gain. He sees the blasphemer live free from trouble while he's walking a path of sacrifice, suffering, trial and agony. He's like David, he said: *"What's going on here?"*

Well, God took him down to the house of the Lord. He said: *"David; let's go down to the house of the Lord."* And he went down to the house of the Lord and God showed him something. God showed him

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to quit looking upon things as they appear in this life, in this world, to our flesh and start looking at things as they will appear in eternity, death and the judgment.

And God showed him not to believe about the rebels prosperity but he showed him his suffering. He showed him his eternal condemnation. He showed him their end. He showed him the believer's glory and the unbeliever's misery.

He showed him the believers "*being conformed to the image of Christ*" and he showed him the unbeliever, the rebel being committed to eternal condemnation.

David went on saying, "*Lord I'm sorry; I sure have sinned. I've sinned with my lips. I said things I shouldn't have said. It's good for me.*" Then he goes on to this verse: "*It's sure been good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord God.*"

When I have my problems and my struggles and my afflictions it's good for me right then to draw near to God. Now, how do I draw near to God? Here are three things and I will close:

First of all: I draw near to God in faith!

"Without faith it's impossible to please God. He that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he's the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." This is clear; this is the clearest thing in the Bible: *"Without faith it's impossible to please God."*

Israel could not enter the Promise Land because of unbelief. "*Take heed brethren lest there be found in you an evil heart of unbelief.*" Sinners approach God by faith, no other way, not by works, not by law, not by church membership, not by baptism, not by any ordinance, not by human merit, but by faith in Christ.

Christ is our Mediator. There is only one way to God and that's through Jesus Christ who said: "*I'm the way, the truth, and the life.*" We believe He loved us, we believe He died for us; we believe He was buried and rose again. We believe "*he intercedes for us at the right hand of God*" and He's the only Saviour, Substitute, and Redeemer.

Now, ask the well-known religionist how to be saved. Ask the Muslim, "How are you saved?"

Well this is what he said (and I repeat his words): "There is no god but Allah and Mohamed is his prophet. I read the Koran, pray five times a day, and make a pilgrimage to Mecca. Do you mean that's the way I'm saved? That's the way."

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Well, let's go and ask the Hindu: "How are we saved?" And the Hindu says: "Observe the rules of the cast, worship the cow, and crawl through the dust to the temple. Erect a shrine to one of a million deities and then you might escape reincarnation as a snake, a beast, or perhaps a woman. Do you mean that's the way I'm saved?"

Let's run and ask the Buddhist: "Buddhist; how are we saved?" You sit with your arms folded. Forget that you have a body. Become indifferent to pain or pleasure." That's it? That's it.

Well, let's run ask the Confucius and the Confucius says: "Study the sacred classics. Learn the rules of holiness. Confucius will show you the path to duty. You must save yourself." That's it? That's it.

Let's go to Christ. Let's go to the Bible. And our Lord says: "*Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I'll give you rest.*" That's the way to God. "*It's good for me to draw near to God!*"