

Surviving trials and tribulations

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By Joseph Kabaragu



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“We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted but not abandoned; struck down but not destroyed.” 2 Corinthians 4:8-9

As part of Christ’s army, we march in the ranks of gallant spirits. Every one of us is a fellow soldier and a child of the mighty King. Some, just like you, are in the midst of a hot battle, besieged on every side of their lives by afflictions and temptations. Others, after many assaults, repulses, name callings and rallying of their faith, are already standing upon the wall of heaven as conquerors. From up there, they look down and urge you, their comrades on earth, to march up the hill after them. This is their pinnacle cry.

“Fight to the bitter end and the city is all yours, as it is now ours!”

Apostle Paul penned the words in 2nd Corinthians 4:7-18 from his own personal experience. He had had his share of suffering over the years for the sake of Jesus Christ. He had been thrown in to prison, shipwrecked, abandoned by all his former friends, pelted with stones and left for dead, but his faith remained firm and he continued to praise his God and share his faith in Christ. Why? He learned to draw his comfort from the Lord in times of trials and tribulations.

When faced with trials in our lives we do either of two things; 1) We are self absorbed with our

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problems and say 'look how tough things are!' or 2)Keep our eyes on Jesus and say "This is just temporary!"

Apostle Paul was able to focus on temporary nature of his problems and afflictions because he accepted the following important facts:-

Our bodies are weak and God's power is displayed in our weakness

Paul was not the type to be caught up in his bodily aches and pains. He didn't strive for the perfect body or the perfect image because he knew his body was just a 'perishable container'. If we become overly obsessed with ourselves and what we can do, we will never give God the chance to work through our lives. A Dutch Christian who survived the dark horrors of Hitler's concentration camps during second world War often said, ***"Look within and you'll be depressed. Look at Jesus and be at rest"***.

Paul recognized that God's glory shines through our weakness. For that is when we affirm God's strength. The lord says,

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness"
(2nd Corinthians 12:9 NIV).

Trials can be witnessing opportunities.

In Acts 16:16-36 we read that when Paul and Silas were put in prison, whipped, had their legs clamped in chains in a damp, dark dungeon, they began to pray and worship the Lord in a song. There was an earthquake, the prison doors flew open every prisoner's chains came loose. In the unusual turn of events, the jailer and his entire family were led to Christ. When people see the inner strength we have in Christ, they take notice. Paul's and Silas's Godly attitude, which enabled them to rejoice in a time of trouble, prepared the soul of the jailer's heart, opening him up to the Gospel they preached.

God never abandons us

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Even though we may be crushed we have hope that God will protect and strengthen us through all these trials. We move from strength to another. Going by Apostle Paul's words, we don't need to fear trials in our lives. No matter how great the hardship we face, we should realize that Jesus will comfort and strengthen us and in turn we will be better equipped to comfort all those around us who may suffer the same hardships. These trials are only a momentary blink in time compared to the eternal joys and blessings of heaven awaiting us. ***"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed: perplexed, but not in despair: persecuted but not abandoned: struck down but not destroyed."***

2 Corinthians 4:8-9.(NIV)

'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.' 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 (NKJV)

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