

Romans 5.1-8 Purposes of Suffering, Handling Suffering, God's Love in Tribulation 066-068

[Romans 5.1-3 Purposes of Suffering 066]

Here Paul talks about hardship, affliction, tribulation. To use an analogy, as usual, I like to use sports. There are many things one learns, one of them being *endurance*, but also strength, development, teamwork and various interaction principles. Before football was a year-round sport I waited all summer for it to start. I knew that those first two weeks would be probably the hardest two weeks in my life because it was still hot and there were morning and afternoon workouts.

But, you don't wait for those two weeks, rather for the preparation it would be for the season ahead. And, the harder that time is, the better prepared you are for whatever situation arises in the game. That is its purpose. This transfers very easily from the physical realm to the spiritual realm—when God brings affliction and hardship that is designed and has a purpose. Many believers in the 1st Century had to live out that principle all the way to death. Many of them died where the the Colosseum was subsequently built in the 1st Century.

We continue following God's provision for Righteousness, which Paul describes as Justification which includes two aspects, the forgiveness of sin and being declared righteous. We have already seen the Provision, Priority, Pattern and now Profit or benefit gained from Justification—part of that being *Tribulation*.

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In 5.1 he begins with 'having been justified', continuing the discussion from chapter 3 and 4. We could read it: 'Since you have now been justified, this is the condition or situation,' you have peace with God. Before, going all the way back to Genesis 3, there was enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, or, conflict between man and God. But now, justified, we have peace with God.

And, not only that, it is through our Lord Jesus Christ and through whom we have obtained our introduction or access by faith through a second benefit, grace. This grace includes everything else—ministry, spiritual gifts, enablement to live—we are introduced to that as a result of justification. And then, a long-range goal: we hope in the glory of God, even though we are in the present. We have a present hope that looks to the very end—and it is glorious. I think that what is at least hinted at here is that once you are justified, then you can be *assured* (that is hope) of what God has promised. It is a sure expectation—and that is glorification. We will return to that in chapter 8.

In 5.3-5 we have present benefits but also on-going tribulation; we can expect this throughout the Christian life. So those that are justified are not immune to suffering; not everything is going to be easy, but it does have a design. So, we can exult in it. We will look at that word again; Paul has used it several times already. So, 3-5 is on-going exultation. And, as we usually do, I try to give you the entire sentence so we get the context and see how Paul develops the thought:

5.3-5 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

The independent clause includes: 'And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations'. Subject: we. Notice that previously, talking about condemnation, Paul uses the third person, describing those that fit that description—that are unrighteous, have present wrath from God. Then, throughout most of it is describing those that we would describe as 'justified'.

Here, *we*, (the subject of the sentence), *also exult in our tribulations*. So I would say Paul includes himself, as he is justified, and his audience which is a *believing* audience, in this case the Roman audience. And, by extension through inspiration, it includes *anyone* that is justified by faith.

Everything else in the sentence is telling us something about this exultation that he has already been talking about, and now gives the specifics.

5.3-5 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

We exult in tribulation. That is almost the antithesis of the *peace* that he talked about in verse one, but that peace *with* God makes available a peace *of* God or *from* God that we can have in whatever circumstance we find ourselves—and we can find that peace even in the midst of tribulation. In fact, it is one of the main areas that we can sense and feel when everything else is flying apart around us. We can have God's peace because we have a hope.

Why can we exult in our tribulations? Because we *know* certain things which is a participial phrase 'knowing that...' and the object of the participle is the subordinate clause 'that tribulation brings about perseverance.' Then there is a string of things that it produces. 'Knowing these things, that when suffering comes, (which is not a result of our own sin), it produces certain things: perseverance which produces proven character, which produces hope—remember our example Abraham who 'hoped against hope'. And then, verse 5, hope does not disappoint—it is not a wish, not just something that we desire, but it is based on something that God has said; it is assurance and we can expect it—that is why it doesn't disappoint.

Next, another subordinate clause at the end: 'because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.' So the object is 'we' and because of the action—all these things that he develops in the verse—we can exult.

5.3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;

So, starting at the beginning, 'And not only this'. What has he been talking about in verses 1 and 2? The benefits of justification: the *peace*, the introduction or *access to grace* and the *hope* we have that extends beyond this lifetime into the future when we will be rid of the sinful bodies and will be given freedom from them. And the new nature will be purified, glorified.

5.3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;

Not only those benefits, but there is another one: 'And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations.' We will look at some terms to an extent that will help us, the first being 'exult', and the second, more obvious one will be 'tribulation.'

## Terms

1. Exult - καυχάομαι (kau-kháh-o-mah-i)  
It is used in various ways:

normal bragging in men - James 4.16 *But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.* This is a negative sense, a man proud about his situation or something he has done.

But it is also used in a good sense; there are several passages about us boasting in God. It has this idea of exulting or rejoicing, so you might combine the ideas of exultation and joy to brag or boast in it. It is the same word.

boasting in spiritual things - Romans 5.2 *through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.*

11 *And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.*

Boasting in spiritual things is encouraged. We have good reason to boast in God because He is the originator of all good things, also in James. And because we have received this benefit we can rejoice in it as well. That is the idea of exultation. We exult in hope, that is, we *rejoice* because our hope is secure, settled, a hope we are assured of because God has promised it. And it occurs again in verse 11. We can exult in God, boast in God, in a positive, good sense. There are a lot of passages that have God as the object of exultation.

exuberant boasting: We may not find it very pleasant when we experience tribulation, but from a Biblical perspective we can when we focus on the right perspective. Usually our only thought is 'how do I get out of this? How long is this going to last? This is painful; I don't like this. I want to change my circumstance, but if we just stop for a moment and reflect, 'What is going on here? With the right view of tribulation, it can make all the difference in the world. We will experience this over and over and over, and perhaps you will experience this week exactly what as are talking about it.

## Tribulation

1. Term - θλίψις (thlíp-sis)  
It has the idea of a pressing, pressure—in a very literal way, something that boxes you in, like being in the hospital. Also, it may be affliction, something external that is afflicting you.
2. General term for many kinds -  
Stephen refers to **Joseph in prison** as being afflicted, but God rescued him from his afflictions. Acts 7.10 *and rescued him from all his afflictions, and granted him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he made him governor over Egypt and all his household.*

**Paul** was also **in prison**, afflicted: Philippians 1.17 *For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me.*

Israel in **famine** Acts 7.11 *“Now a famine came over all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction with it, and our fathers could find no food.* This example also comes from Stephen’s discourse about how stiff-necked, hardened Israelites suffered, while there was no food and they suffered hunger.

worldly hardships. Paul refers to many external things that came upon him. 2Corinthians 6.4 *but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses,*

**childbirth** was used as an illustration by Jesus in John 16.21 *“Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come;...*

**marriage** 1Corinthians 7.28 *But if you marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Yet such will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you.*

**emotional** 2 Corinthians 2.4 *For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not so that you would be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you.*

**persecution** 2Thessalonians 1.4 *therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.*

**7-year Tribulation** In Matthew 24, this is the word that refers to the Tribulation.

I would put the Romans passage with the external pressure, but it can be a broader term as well, including things that just occur, not as a result *only* of persecution.

The purpose of suffering: We should expect it, anticipate it; the church was encouraged to anticipate persecution. I have a list of five reasons why we might suffer. They are not all in Romans 5.

### Suffering Purpose

1. Consequences - 1Peter 4.15 *Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler;*

Sometimes bring it on ourselves: bad decisions, for example, evil directions we take.

Galatians 6.7 *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.* If you are to blame, no complaining!

2. Discipline - Hebrews 12.3-13 *For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. 4 You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; 5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, “MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; 6 FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.” 7 *It is for discipline that you endure... 11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness...**

If we are going in the wrong direction and God is re-directing us, there is discipline for the member of God’s family.

3. For Righteousness - 1Peter 4.12-14 *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; 13 but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. 14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.*

This is the kind that is mentioned in Romans. It is not strange, unusual or out of the ordinary. Did Christ suffer as a result of His sin? No. Was God disciplining Him? No. He suffered for righteousness sake, in order to bear the penalty of sin. We should not be surprised by suffering—we are sharing in the same suffering that Christ shared. The assumption is that we have not done anything wrong; it is the result of external situations, perhaps, situations that bring us suffering *for righteousness sake*.

Another passage: 2Tim 3.12 *Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.* We should expect it. The United States has been an exception. In almost every other country, in every age, including today, if you become a believer, you are an object of persecution. This passage says that this is the norm, this is what you should expect; it is for those who identify themselves with Jesus Christ. See also 1Peter 2.11-12, 19-25; 3.13-17.

4. Refining - Suffering also has the purpose of refining us. He is simply developing us like an athlete goes through pain to prepare for the battle of competition. Deuteronomy 8.2-6 *“You shall*

*remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you,*

Part of the wilderness wandering was discipline, but also He was developing that second generation to be able to conquer the land.

*to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. 3 “He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD. 4 “Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. 5 “Thus you are to know in your heart that the LORD your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son. 6 “Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him.*

You see a combination of discipline, in the whole wilderness experience, with preparatory and refining.

Hebrews 5.8 *Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.*

Even Jesus experienced development, you might say, in His humanity only, because as God He did not learn or develop.

James 1.2-4 *Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

Some of the same words even in James as in Paul. He talks about this same growth process that tribulation or hardship produces, and, the more you experience, the more refined you become.

Part of the reason we go through certain things is that God is developing us—preparing us for ministry to others who are going to go through the same thing:

*2Corinthians 1.3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. We are experiencing external persecution or just the normal things we experience in a lost, fallen world. God uses it. Romans 8.28 ...God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. So God may be preparing us for future ministry or He may be just simply refining us. By the way, this word θλίψις,*

outside the Bible is used for refining gold—which is done in a fire of a very high temperature until it melts and all the impurities rise to the surface because gold is one of the heaviest elements, and you can skim off that impurity to end up with pure gold. That is the process God is using in the suffering of the believer.

There is one other category of reasons for suffering: Job’s case illustrates. Job did not have the benefit of chapters 1 and 2, so he didn’t know that there is angelic conflict that exists as well, so he did not have the benefit of knowing what was going on in his suffering. At least at the beginning, he did not know—nor did his three friends who were counseling him. We may not have an answer to some of our suffering, either. But we may be sure that God is using it to refine us, even though we don’t know why at least at that moment. There are a lot of things that we don’t know. In fact in the NT it speaks of doing things because of the angels, that is, they are observing what is going on. We may not have full insight and that includes the whole area of suffering.

5. Unknown - Job 1-2 1.9 ...9 Then Satan answered the LORD, “Does Job fear God for nothing? ...12 Then the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your power, only do not put forth your hand on him.” 6 So the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, he is in your power, only spare his life.” ...7 Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head... 9 Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!” 10 But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips....

So there are at least five categories of reasons, but we don’t want to suffer because of bad decisions or because of our own sinfulness or lack of walking with God. He may bring hardship to correct and we may suffer because we are believers. And, most of the time God can use all of the above to refine us, make us pure gold, so that as we develop in this life He is preparing us to function in the Millennial Kingdom. I think that characteristics that we develop now will be evident in that time. And we may not have total insight on some of that suffering.

- 5.3 *And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;*

And we are going to see what that refining process is all about as we progress through this chain of things that tribulation brings. First it brings about *perseverance*.

**Terms** for tribulation

1. Exult - boast, rejoice
2. Tribulation - affliction, persecution—produces spiritual strength
3. Perseverance - ὑπομονή (hupomóne) endurance, constance

[Romans 5.3-5 Handling Suffering 067]

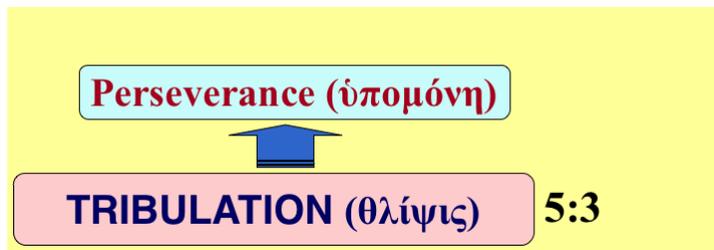
2Thessalonians 1.4 *therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. 5 This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.*

You are suffering for a purpose. It is not simply misfortune, but the emphasis is on your perseverance and faith in the *midst* of all your persecutions and afflictions. If you read the book of Acts, you see examples of the early persecution of the Thessalonians.

2Corinthians 1.6 *But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer;*

Paul is experiencing suffering but it is not simply for him; it has a purpose which is 'effective in the patient enduring'—the same word as in Greek—for their comfort and salvation. Another passage 1 Tim 6.11 *But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness. Pursue perseverance; and suffering certainly stimulates it.*

Here is a chart to illustrate what happens when God brings tribulation—it produces perseverance.



5.3-4 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;

Perseverance, then, produces something else. This is an interesting word; it doesn't occur very frequently in the Bible but it has the idea of something that is *tested*, something that has gone through a testing phase. That is the endurance part of persecution. That is, you are not trying to get out of it but trying to learn from it. You are allowing it to have its work, and when it is completed—it may take time—it develops character. The New American Standard version adds the idea of *proven* character because within the word it has this idea. δοκιμή is the Greek word:

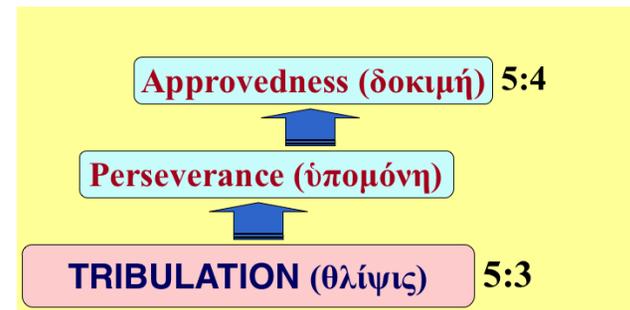
**Terms** for tribulation

1. Exult - boast, rejoice
2. Tribulation - affliction, persecution—produces spiritual strength
3. Perseverance - ὑπομονή (hupomóne) endurance, constance
4. Proven character - δοκιμή (dokimé) proven, character, 'approvedness'

Philippians 2.22 *But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father. He has endured suffering and it has developed character.*

Romans 2.18 (verb δοκιμάζω dokimázo) *and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law, You have approved the things, that is, you have investigated them, checked them out and you have proved them to be true.*

A text sample is representative of the whole. In structural engineering, there is testing of material, especially concrete. You test it by creating cylinders of concrete, samples of the material being used, and after 7 days, the standard in the industry, you expect a tolerance of 4,000 per square inch. And you exceed it until it fails, but if it is good concrete it is proven to be a certain strength. The illustration here is that that concrete is *approved*, is acceptable because it reaches the adequate strength. And, in the same way, tribulation produces spiritual strength.



So with our stair-step here we can show that Tribulation produces perseverance or endurance, and once endurance has taken all its effects, then it brings about ‘approvedness’.

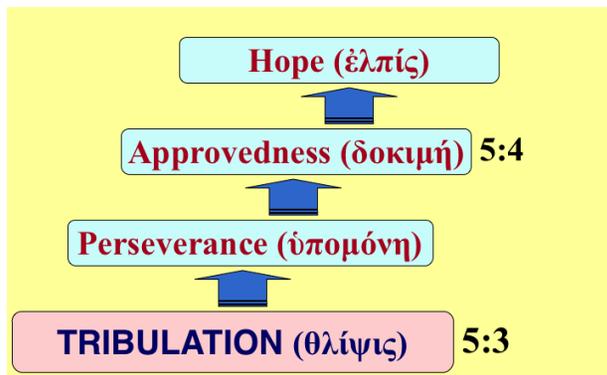
5.3-4 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;

But it doesn’t end there. Proven character brings about hope. It began with *hope* in verse 2, that is, we have a hope of a future glorification and now all of a sudden testing or tribulation enters in. Tribulation produces something in us—*endurance*. What is assumed here is that God has worked a work in us; it is not character that *we* develop, it is something that God has given to us. He gives us an *assurance—hope*—that He is at work and reinforces the idea of *that future goal* that God has in our lives.

#### Terms for tribulation

1. Exult - boast, rejoice
2. Tribulation - affliction, persecution—produces spiritual strength
3. Perseverance - endurance, constance
4. Proven character - proven character, ‘approvedness’
5. Hope - confidence , expectation

Remember, hope, Biblically has the idea a certainty of something that is promised by God. It has the idea of an expectation based on what God has promised. That is Biblical hope. That hope focuses us on the testing, the purpose of the testing and the realization that God is at work. And if He is at work and He has gotten me through this and has developed certain things in me, I look back at Him and everything that He has promised for the future. I know that He is going to complete it. So it gives us assurance of what God is doing within us. We have already looked at the Greek word for hope: ἐλπίς (el-pís) which has the idea of confidence that God has promised, or confident expectation.



It is not a wish or a desire; the Biblical word is *confidence*. It is related to faith; faith is believing what God has said. Hope is almost the next step, that is, faith believes the promise that God has made, and now that produces a hope or an expectation that God is going to *do* what He has promised.

The problem of using the same word, hope, for the two different concepts is from English. That is why we do word studies, because sometimes a meaning in English is not the same as it is in the Greek text.

#### Handling It

##### 1. Need for grounding

Verse 3: we exult in tribulations: why? because we know something: knowing that, the Romans understand this concept of suffering in the sense of God bringing it to refine us. Understanding that principle, I think what we need to do is to continually ground ourselves in God’s word—so now we are aware of Biblical principles like this one. Now we know what God does in the midst of suffering and why it sometimes occurs, and why we may be experiencing suffering.

But if you are are unaware of the Biblical principles, if you are not aware of other principles nor of the promises of God—because you are not grounded in God’s word—then you are almost like the unbeliever when suffering comes: You are thrown off balance, you are trying to get out of it, you compromise your faith, you do things that are unbiblical. So it is so important to *prepare*.

This study is part of preparation. In fact, week after week we go through passages and learn Biblical principles. You build on that, you do your own Bible study, you learn Biblical promises (what God has said) and you understand what He has done in history because you have an outline of what He has done in the past. You know the OT, you are grounded in it. You know the progress of history, what God is going to do in the future—you have that foundation.

2. Tribulations And *now* when tribulation comes you can draw on that foundation. That is Biblical grounding and Paul is alluding to that in this passage. You know what testing produced in you and knowing that if it is a refining process, like the example here, or one of them, now you can have a different perspective on it. Then, when tribulation comes, you are prepared to respond rightly to it.
3. Focus on TRUTH And, we respond to tribulation and handle it by focusing on the truth in the Scripture concerning testing or concerning the circumstance. How do I respond in this situation? I know I can draw on that past Bible understanding that I have and I focus on that truth. Sometimes when we are in the midst of it our

thinking is all wrong, our emotions get engaged and we go down a wrong path and respond wrongly—particularly if it is a persecution situation. Our natural response is to retaliate, or, in some way, give in like kind. Paul says in Romans 12: *don't return evil for evil, but leave room for the wrath of God.* In that context he is talking about *pouring coals of kindness upon people.* That is the right response and you can focus on that 'Oh, I remember what Romans 12 says, and now I can respond differently. I don't need my emotions to get out of control and respond emotionally; I can respond in a godly way because I have the resource of the Biblical understanding.

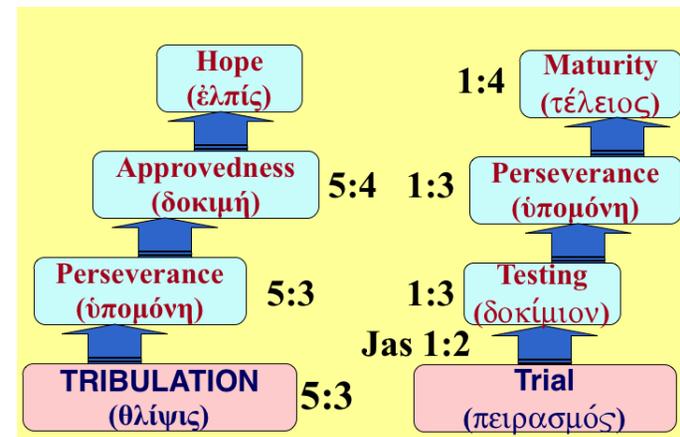
4. Trust our Lord In that midst now we can trust God, claim that promise, and if it is the Romans 12 passage *leave room for the wrath of God* all I have to do is respond rightly and God will take care of that persecutor. I may not see it, it may not happen immediately, but I can be assured that God will deal with it if I leave room for His wrath. I can trust Him. I may not understand all of the 'ins and outs' of what is going on and I don't need to...
5. Perseverance ...but I need to trust in Him and then that perseverance begins and perseverance is developed. That is, 'I am going to let God deal with this and let the thing work itself out. It may take a long time—months, years— but it is developing perseverance in me and God will use it to refine me and conform me to His image.' We study the word, like this lesson which is the 67th in the book of Romans to lay that foundation so that on the occasion when testing comes we are prepared for it.

Romans 8.28 is a promise that we can claim: *we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.* God works all things together for good. In other words, He is producing something that is good to those that love Him.

So when we have tribulation we develop perseverance, which results in being approved, which, in turn, gives us hope—a confidence. And, let's look at James because there is a similar sequence in James 1. This is why James says, *Consider it all joy, my brethren;* he is speaking to brothers and sisters in Christ. *Consider it all joy, brethren.* How can we count it all joy? Not because we are masochists, not because we enjoy it—because we don't. But because, like Paul says, we know certain things. And James says: *...when you encounter various trials, knowing* [calling on that resource of Bible principles] *that the testing of your faith produces endurance (or patience).* So *trials*, a broader word with more of the idea of testing, will bring about this test, this idea of 'approvedness' and he includes *ὑπομονή* = perseverance. Then verse 4: *And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and*

*complete, lacking in nothing.* It is not the idea of absolute *perfection* but of *maturity.*

So testing and the experience of suffering is part of the process of God maturing us. Paul doesn't include the idea of maturing, but I think the implication is that God is going to produce a hope that will get us there—to ultimate glorification. That goes even beyond maturity in this life. You can see the parallel in this James passage with Romans 5.3-4. So the **principle** here is the idea of God using whatever circumstance, including suffering, to bring us to spiritual maturity; it is a process.



*Knowing that,* now we can face trials no matter how severe. And there are a lot of examples: we studied that of Stephen in Acts 7 which illustrates the 5 Principles: It speaks of him being full of the Spirit and being grounded, is a godly man, and now he is tested by the Jewish leaders, and ultimately he will die—he will be a martyr. But he doesn't retaliate, doesn't respond in kind; he focuses on the Lord and in that experience the Lord gave him all the resources to be able to handle everything. He responds in a godly way, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!", almost identical to what Jesus said. And he dies from the stoning. And if you study the lives of the martyrs, of people who have been persecuted, you see the sequence in them as well, all the way unto death.

We will all experience, to some extent, hardship. Now we know how to face it, but we have to be preparing ourselves on an on-going basis so we are not caught off guard and can respond in the right way.

In verse 5 we read that *hope does not disappoint*—because it is the nature of hope, it is assurance that God is going to complete what He began, will do what He promised. Paul will expand on that later and there other passages to look at.

5.3-5 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Hope does not disappoint us because of that Biblical truth that we know—and in the midst of that we experience the love of God. Because of all of that, we can exult in it, glory in it. But back to the idea in verse 3: we can *exult* in tribulation. How can we do that? Look at some of the verses:

### Glory in Suffering

1. Honor to suffer - 1Peter 4.13 *but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. 14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.*

This is part of **knowing**, it is a Biblical principle, Knowing that it is an honor to suffer. It is in the context of suffering for righteousness sake, that is, they are being persecuted for sharing the gospel or standing up for Christ. And, in that context, we are sharing in the sufferings of Christ. It also refers to that hope (...at the revelation of His glory...) And we can **boast** in that, **exult**.

2. Experience power - Philippians 3.8 *More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;*

We will experience **power**; that's what gives us the assurance because God is working. This is another passage that has the same principle: Paul has counted everything as loss for the exchange of knowing Christ, having what Christ has promised, but then also, note the little phrase: experiencing the power in the midst. God, like Stephen, gave him a vision that enabled him to forgive those that were persecuting. God will give us whatever we need in the

midst of testing to face whatever that may be. And, by the way, the more severe the testing, the greater will be the effect of God's growing us. He can 'grow us up' quickly in the midst of severe testing. But there is power available, so that is another promise you can claim. And this is part of **sanctification**:

3. Sanctification - 2Timothy 2.10 *For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory. 11 It is a trustworthy statement: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him; 12 If we endure, we will also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us;*

'I endure all things' that they may obtain the salvation. Is he talking about justification by faith? No. He is talking about on-going growth in the Christian life = on-going salvation from the *power* of sin. This looks long-range. If we suffer or endure with Him, we will *reign* with Him. When is that? In the Millennial Kingdom. So suffering *now* is going to have long-range effects as well. As we grow now in Christ we will experience that future privilege of reigning with Christ as well.

That 'denying' part at the end there indicates that there is always the option of responding wrongly, and there is loss as well; I think that is what 1Corinthians 3 talks about in suffering loss—it is not loss of salvation in that context, it's loss of some potential you may have had during the Millennial Kingdom.

4. Examples - Paul: Philippians 4.12 *I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.*

Peter: Luke 22.31 *I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.*

So, in the context of justification by faith, Romans 5, suffering does not affect salvation, but instead it builds upon it. It begins to produce righteousness, the righteousness that we are declared to be.

[Romans 5.5-8 God's Love in Tribulation 068]

I. Introduction	1.1-17
II. Provision of God's Righteousness	1.18-8.39
A. Condemnation	1.18-3.20
B. Justification	3.21-5.21
1. Provision of Justification	3.21-26
2. Priority of Justification	3.27-31
3. Pattern for Justification	4

4. Profit from Justification 5.1-11
  - a. Present Benefits of Justification 5.1-2
  - b. On-going Tribulation Exultation 5.3-5

In the midst of suffering we can experience the *love* of God—not those fuzzy feelings necessarily. Paul is going to expand on the love of God and he is going to speak of different aspects. In the outline I have included some truths concerning God’s love that are sometimes not emphasized but come right out of the passage. So this passage is telling us something about ‘agápe’ love which is a different kind of love than human emotional love.

**God’s love:**

**1] Related to hope**

**2] Experienced in tribulation**

**3] Lavishly poured out**

c. The Past Divine Accomplishment 5:6-8

1) The Death of Christ for Ungodly 5:6

- a) The Depravity of Ungodly
- b) The Death Timing
- c) The Death for Ungodly

**4] Given by grace**

2) The Death for Others by Men 5:7

- a) The Death for Righteous Man
- b) The Death for Good Man

**5] Infinitely greater than human love**

3) The Demonstration of God’s Love 5:8

- a) The Demonstration of Love
- b) The Death for Sinners
- c) The Death of Christ

So the love of God ‘has been poured out’, the concept is of God pouring something out.

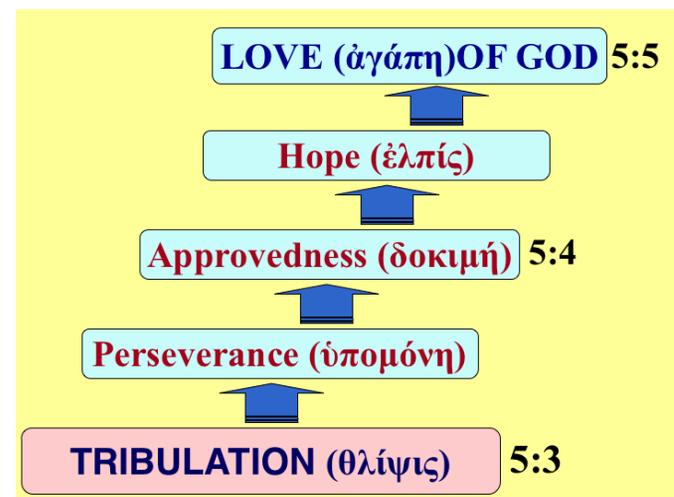
5.3-5 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

**Terms** for tribulation that we have considered

1. Exult - boast, rejoice
2. Tribulation - affliction, persecution—produces spiritual strength
3. Perseverance - endurance, constance
4. Proven character - proven, character, ‘approvedness’
5. Hope - an expectation and assurance of a promise
6. Poured out - *literal (Matthew 9.17), of any liquid in that culture, a common, everyday word and also used in a metaphorical sense*

The word is used of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which is an image that gives the idea of an abundance pouring out of a glass. (Acts 2.17-18) So we have this flooding of the Holy Spirit upon us and I think that to the extent that we are suffering, if we are trusting the Lord, we can experience this ‘flooding’ of the Holy Spirit, and through that, the love of God. There are several passages that emphasize the Holy Spirit being poured out. Paul has been emphasizing the out-pouring of wrath but we can experience the alternative of that, the out-pouring of His love.

So, tribulation produces perseverance and perseverance ‘approvedness’ (being approved) which produces hope and that hope is because we experience the love of God. And now that he has mentioned the love of God, that is going to be on the topic of the next few verses, through verse eight.



There are at least three things that we can say from verse 5. Biblical love, ‘agápe’ love, which finds its source in God Himself—a supernatural love, God’s love—first of all is related to hope:

### God’s Love (ἀγάπη) agápe

1. Related to hope. Hope and God’s love are tied together: when we have that hope it is on the basis of what God has said concerning what He is going to do and what He is going to complete. So it is part of the hope that we can experience that love.
2. Experienced in tribulation. Again, it is not fuzzy feelings though they can sometimes come as a result of the reality of Biblical love. This passage doesn’t stress it, but if you read 1Corinthians 13, you find out that love is described in terms of actions, not feelings. There are no feelings in 1Corinthians 13. ‘Love is kind’; that is, you can see it in kindness....not envious...tangible, real things that we do with reference to other people, having little to do with those feelings of emotional love. The Bible actually uses a different word to describe that kind of love. So it is experienced; you can sense it and even feel it, but you can certainly experience it in tribulation.
3. Lavishly poured out. Thirdly, I believe that love is ‘poured out’ because that is what the text says, so it is *lavishly* poured out. And I think it is in proportion to the severity of the tribulation that we experience it. So those that are martyred I think have a greater outpouring and sense that they belong to the Lord.

Those are things that are not often emphasized, especially the love experienced during tribulation.

5.3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

And, it is within our hearts, so everything *outside* of us may be seemingly falling apart, may be pure evil imposed upon us, is going totally against a sense of peace, contentment and love, but yet within our hearts—that’s why people like martyrs, godly people with the right perspective can experience contentment and joy—because it is within, it is internal. This is why the unbeliever can’t understand it. The unbeliever is pouring out persecution and all this person does is ‘pour coals of kindness on my head’. How does that happen? It comes from inside, from the innermost being.

5.3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Obviously this outpouring of love is ‘through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.’ Notice the past tense, also. That is the Perfect Tense again. In other words, at the moment of salvation we received the Holy Spirit and that continues to produce ongoing effects—one of which is this out-pouring of love.

Now, beginning in the next verse, verse 6, this theme of love continues.

6 For (γὰρ) while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

*For*, now I am going to emphasize that because there are several ‘for’s’, two of them here. You have to keep track because there are several words that are translated the same in English. It is good to keep them in mind because they have a different sense. The first one is the common ‘gar’ in Greek, oftentimes translated ‘for’ and it can have a variety of usages. Oftentimes it is a transitional word from one idea, to the next idea or a reinforcing of the next idea; in fact ‘gar’ can give you the *cause* of something, so it is even translated ‘because’ and it will give you the cause. Or, sometimes it will give you the *reason* for something, and again it can be translated ‘that this happened because of this’. In some cases it is the basis of some prior action. I think in this context it could be the basis of some action but I think it is more an inference from what he said previously. For example, he is talking about love, (and he is going to expand on it), or an inference of love is because of the things that are true about it.

### Terms

1. For (γὰρ) - cause, reason, basis for some action or *inference from previous*

5.6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

For ‘while we were still helpless’... If you do a word study on that you see two major categories. You see a normal, everyday usage of the word, a literal usage and in its literal context it has the idea of some sickness (in fact it is translated as sickness) and in the gospels

sometimes it refers to physical ailments of some kind, or disability like blindness or crippling.

Then there is a combination of words in that word group. This is an adjective; sometimes it is used with a verb—to be sick. The adjective and the verb are the same concept as well as the noun which is ‘helplessness’.

Then this adjective ‘helpless’ is used very commonly in terms of spiritual weakness.

### Terms

1. For (γὰρ) - cause, reason, basis for some action or *inference from previous*
2. Helpless - spiritual weakness ‘The spirit is willing but the flesh (body) is weak’

Sometimes we don’t have the spiritual power to do what we desire to do. So the word can be used in a variety of contexts. Here it probably refers to our *depravity*. It doesn’t mean the worst case scenario but it has the idea of even our best selves cannot accomplish anything of eternal significance, especially in pleasing God. So we are spiritually *unable* and the word ‘helpless’ is a good translation. We are helpless to change our spiritual—lost—condition and it is because of depravity.

6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7... 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 ... 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son,

Paul uses another word: Christ died for the *ungodly*. That word is almost always used for the unbeliever, the person without God. Then, in verse 8: while we were yet *sinner*s. We fall short, missing the mark of God’s glory in perfection and therefore condemned. Then, in verse 10: ...while we were (notice all these verbs are in the past tense) *enemies*. That’s why this passage is about reconciliation where we have peace—in the past we were enemies. So we were *helpless, ungodly, sinner*s (actively in rebellion against God, doing specific things violating God’s standard, all of them falling short), and as a result of all that we were at war, *enemies* of God. So He is stressing that past aspect in order to bring out the vividness; we were in that condition when God expressed His love.

5.6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

And, another theme here is *Christ dying*, when we had no way to change our condition; we were helpless. So, ‘at the right time’. Very interesting, and I think what is referred to here is what we have in several passages, especially Galatians 4:4. God has a plan and in it He had certain things He was going to accomplish at the right time: *But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law*. Then he expands in the next verse: He redeemed, that is, came to die. The emphasis is ‘at the right time’. The Scripture seems to emphasize that it is not only what Christ did in the 1st Century, not only this great plan, but everything God in His sovereign control has been working to accomplish. I think that Paul is referring to the same thing in this passage. At the right time, as God was orchestrating His plan...

5.6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for (ὕπέρ) the ungodly.

Here we have a different ‘for’; it is not the ‘gar’. In English we do not have the precise idea. The idea of ὕπέρ (hupér), even though it is only a preposition, Biblically this word is used very, very often in the context of something taking the place of something else. So what we have is *substitutionary death*. And that is the concept in many passages. For example, 2 Corinthians 5.15 *and He died for* [ὕπέρ] *all* [in other words, in the place of all humanity, in their place as a substitute], *so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf*.

### Terms

1. For (γὰρ) - cause, reason, basis for some action or *inference from previous*
2. Helpless - spiritual weakness
3. For (ὕπέρ) - substitution

Teológicamente, this concept of a substitutionary sacrifice starts in the Garden, after the very first sin. God substituted a lamb for Adam and Eve. The penalty of sin is *death*. Adam and Eve deserved to die, (and they did die); they deserved to pay the full penalty of it. But in Genesis 3, we also have salvation; an animal took the spiritual consequences so that Adam and Eve, in *believing*, would have their sin placed on the animal. So you see the concept of substitutionary death. The animal died instead of Adam and Eve. They died spiritually, but they didn’t die eternally, so they were given life. And Adam’s faith is expressed in the naming of his wife: ‘Eve’ means ‘life’. The whole sacrificial system in Israel is conveying the idea that this animal takes the place of my sin. I should be on that altar; I should have bled all my

blood out, I should be burnt up because I am the sinner and this animal is taking my place. We are helpless and ὑπέρ (hupér) is just to show it runs throughout the passage, all the way through verse 8; we have ‘for’, an inference to what he said in verse 5, ... ‘Christ died *for* (ὑπέρ) the ungodly’. Then, in verse 7, he begins with ‘gar’ (though) and he gives an example: ‘for one will hardly die in the place of (ὑπέρ) ‘someone else’. Then, ‘While we were yet sinners, Christ died for (ὑπέρ) us. In English it is the same word, but in Greek a totally different word.

5.6-8 For (γαρ) while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for (ὑπέρ) the ungodly. 7 For (γαρ) one will hardly die for (ὑπέρ) a righteous man; though (γαρ) perhaps for (ὑπέρ) the good man someone would dare even to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for (ὑπέρ) us.

5.6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

We have already noted that in almost every context, ‘ungodly’ refers to the unbeliever. There is a passage where it speaks of the believer *acting* like the unbeliever; so even there it is referring to an unbeliever.

#### Terms

1. For (γαρ) - cause, reason, basis for some action or *inference from previous*
2. Helpless - spiritual weakness
3. For (ὑπέρ) - substitution
4. Ungodly - unbeliever

So, what can we say about God’s love? It is related to hope, it is experienced in tribulation (especially), thirdly it is *lavishly* poured out and here you could say it is given by grace. We deserve the penalty, but that love has a substitute that is substituted for us. That out-pouring of love is by grace; we do not deserve it, but we receive it, because we are justified, also by grace, and receive that love by grace as well. We can’t appreciate that love of God unless we know what we deserve: wrath, punishment, condemnation, all of those negative aspects that are sometimes neglected in the church so we don’t get an accurate picture of reality. We get more the sense that God’s love is this emotional welling up within us which is not necessarily the case even in terms of the specific word that is chosen, but otherwise everything else that he is talking about. If we understand wrath, we appreciate grace.

#### God’s Love (ἀγάπη) agápe

1. Related to hope

2. Experienced in tribulation
3. Lavishly poured out
4. Given by grace

5.7 For (γαρ) one will hardly die for (ὑπέρ) a righteous man; though (γαρ) perhaps for (ὑπέρ) the good man someone would dare even to die.

So we look at the illustration: someone will hardly die for someone who, in the Jewish mind, meets all the standards of the Law and has a right relationship to God.

There are different views of the commentators: some say that Paul is just changing stylistically between ‘righteous’ and ‘good’ man, so there is no distinction. But I think there is a distinction made; a ‘righteous’ man is someone who may have a right standing before God, but has not developed character such that he expresses it to others—he is like a new believer. But a ‘good’ man is one that is expressing it; the whole community sees his good life in his actions. He is not only full of integrity, but he expresses it and the whole community benefits, and I have received good gifts from him, etc.

5.7 For (γαρ) one will hardly die for (ὑπέρ) a righteous man; though (γαρ) perhaps for (ὑπέρ) the good man someone would dare even to die.

One will hardly die for a person who has right standing and meets all the stipulations of the Law. Though for a good man—one that is even beyond righteous—someone would even dare to die for him because maybe they have benefited from the goodness of this man. But then in verse 8:

5.8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for (ὑπέρ) us.

God demonstrates His own love toward us, sacrificially giving Christ to die in our place.

#### God’s Love (ἀγάπη) agápe

1. Related to hope
2. Experienced in tribulation
3. Lavishly poured out
4. Given by grace
5. Infinitely greater than human love (7)
6. Is sacrificial, substitutionary, at great cost (8)

The next time you are suffering or under persecution, look for God’s love in the midst of Tribulations.