

# Praise Through Pain

**Matthew 5:13** You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

Christians bring flavor to the world. Do you know that? But once in a while . . . salt loses its taste. There are many reasons this can happen. I'll give you one: suffering. Suffering do to sin, environment, sickness, and death. Suffering in the form of depression, anxiety, and loneliness. You you ever got to the point where you can't be salt to the earth because life has lost its flavor. You've lost your saltiness.

**Acts 5:39b–42** So they took his advice, and when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name. And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus."

You read a passage like this and your appreciation of the disciples deepens. There's also a bit of excitement. The soul is stirred when considering such conviction. Something worthy of pain. It takes something great to make you run to the very thing we flee from at every cost. Pain. It's an experience we're being offered. The experience of rejoicing amid pain. Of, dare I say, smiling through the tears. An experience that leaves you turning to God and leaves His name on your lips. An experience that deepens a genuine belief that God is present, a help, and good and faithful. An experience that results in God being a proud Father. A moment that can't be taken away. A moment that doesn't seek one's own well-being. A moment to look outside oneself to reassure the Father, "I am yours. I will not leave your side. I do not weaken in faith. I believe that you are still more than good in this moment no matter what comes."

**Habakkuk 3:16-19** "I hear, and my body trembles; my lips quiver at the sound; rottenness enters into my bones; my legs tremble beneath me. Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble to come upon people who invade us. Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. God, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places. To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments."

- All of us have been troubled by sin in our country. We consider present and future consequences, which troubles all to some degree, some more than others. What will the future hold for our grandchildren? What are the natural consequences? Will God intervene and punish a people? Either way - it didn't change the truth about God to Habakkuk. He reminded himself who it is that strengthens Him. He knew the real Savior.

**2 Corinthians 12:7–10** So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- Our prayers need to have a Paul-like "therefore" in them. Our prayers need to be those of strong soldiers of Christ. It doesn't change the harsh realities of life. That's precisely the beauty I'm speaking of this morning. It's not always about praising God because He delivered us. It's praising God when we aren't delivered.

### **Psalm 51 - Sin**

- Yes, then there are sins committed by God. The shame, fear, embarrassment, chatter, etc. Brethren, we run to God during these dark moments, not from Him. When comparing ourselves to God, we should exalt Him and His goodness during such times. It's during these times that we accept consequences while praising God.
- And God is good and faithful towards our sins. There was no offering we could give to reconcile us to God. Jesus took that upon Himself. He was the ultimate sacrifice for those with a broken and contrite heart.

### **Psalm 22 - Savior**

- Jesus was anxious. Jesus was sad. Jesus felt abandoned, yet He knew that wasn't true. He quoted Psalm 22 for a reason. His message to the multitude wasn't meant to end with "God has forsaken Me." I believe He wanted the audience to get the full picture. God hadn't abandoned Him. God is to be praised even in the midst of the greatest pain. Some even point out how Jesus' words "It is finished" correlate to the end of Psalm 22:31 "that He has done it" can be translate "it is finished." One cannot make a dogmatic claim that Jesus quoted the last passage, but it would explain Jesus' time on the cross and the use of the Psalm. Jesus clearly said that God would be with Him during His crucifixion, did He not (John 8:28-29; 16:32)
- Jesus, our Savior, is our ultimate sacrifice. Can we praise God through pain? And what will our suffering teach the world? And what will we gain from the ability to do so?