

## Steadfastness in Troubling Times

**Text:** 1 Peter 1:1-9

1. As we continue to live in a time that is very troubling and will become more troubling, we must, as Christians, remember that we are not alone, because:
  - a. Others have encountered the same trials and persecutions in generations past because of their beliefs and trust in the Great God Almighty. – (example -- the great faith chapter of **Hebrews 11**, Christians during the beginning of the church and those throughout history)
  - b. We have One who sees what is happening to us and He cares for us. – 1 Peter 5:6-9
  - c. We will encounter more and more trials of our faith. – 2 Timothy 3:12-15
  - d. We will encounter more and more persecution because of who we are.
2. Yes, we are in troubled times, but we must not (*faint or give up*) lose heart. – **Luke 18:1**
3. The Christians that are mentioned in our text this morning were living in troubling times.
  - a. They were suffering persecution, not only in the hands of the Romans, but also of the Jews.
  - b. Their sufferings were necessary to test, refine, and improve their faith; that their tested and proven faith would be of greater value to themselves and to the world than the finest gold – *the same is for us today*.
  - c. They had strong convictions and their total trust and faith in God is what helped them through their sufferings – *so must we*.
4. This morning we are going to look at how the trials of our faith and how our standing up under persecution will help us in these troubled times.

### I. Trials Of Our Faith

- A. During troubled times our faith is on trial. – 1 Peter 1:7
  1. Some will lose heart because they cannot bare it.
  2. Some will lose heart because they want to drop out of the race because they say that it is neither worth the time nor the sufferings.
    - a. We must remember that the world, this society is not our home – for we are just as ‘*strangers*’ in a foreign country. – 1 Peter 1:1
    - b. Realizing that we just want to go home – **that is heaven** – because it is heaven that is what **we do not want to miss out on** -- 1 Peter 1:4; Romans 8:18
  3. During troubled times is when we, as a Christian, must keep ‘*our head above water*’ so to speak and realize that the testing of our faith in troubled times makes us stronger – 1 Peter 1:7
    - a. A faith which has come through trial, still intact, is worth more than all the gold in the world. If you have a faith that cannot be shaken—then you are one of the wealthiest individuals in the world!
- B. Realizing that our faith is based upon the life giving gospel, we must go about our Father's business, by spreading this life saving gospel to the world. – **Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-2**
  1. Because there are many who are searching for an answer to their daily problems, and yes, our Great God has the answer. – **Acts 17:24-28**

2. It may seem as if it is an uphill battle, but we must go on and plant the seeds of salvation that is only found in Jesus Christ. – Galatians 6:9; Isaiah 40:30, 31
- C. As we encounter trials, we can rely upon our Great God for strength.
1. We find that we cannot do it on our own, but must put our full trust in God. – 2 Samuel 22:3, 31; Psalm 34:22
  2. We can become conquerors – Romans 8:37-39

## II. Persecution For Our Faith

- A. This is ***nothing new*** – for Godly people, who believed in the True God have been persecuted since the beginning. – 2 Timothy 3:12; Acts 14:22; John 15:18-20
1. An example is Cain and Abel -- Cain was infuriated over the fact that Abel was obeying God, that Abel was obedient and refused to cut any corners when it came to what God expected. – 1 John 3:12, 13
    - a. This is why the world often tries to get us to compromise or tone down our preaching.
    - b. This is why we have so much wishy-washy preaching that **WILL NOT SAVE** but is used to tickle ears of the hearer – the attitude that you are okay and I am okay.
  2. The world wants its heroes to have some deep dark secret, so that we don't feel like failures when we stand in their shadow.
    - a. This is why the world hates the man or woman of principle – John 3:20
    - b. The world likes everything to be gray and it hates the person who believes that there a good number of things which aren't gray -- Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11
    - c. This is why a number of people will defend what they know is outright moral filth, because they fear that their favorite sin will be the next one exposed.
    - d. The world also hates "*shame or embarrassment*".
    - e. The world also hates to have its motives and behavior analyzed by an absolute standard.
      - a) The more a society is becoming increasingly wicked, the more you will hear people argue that **other people shouldn't judge them.**
      - b) Here is one of God's snapshots of what a culture looks like when it is about ready to hit bottom: "*Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.*" – Jeremiah 8:12
      - c) Paul in Galatians 4:29 pointed out that as Ishmael persecuted Isaac, so Christians find themselves persecuted by unbelievers. **Nothing has changed.**
- B. Typically today when we, as Christians, experience some form of persecution because of our faith, we become *discouraged*, are really *hurt*, and we wonder if preaching and teaching the gospel is really worth it.

1. We must look at what the Christians in the early church did and their thoughts on the persecution that they had received.
  - a. These Christians **were convinced** that they were doing what was **eternally right**.
  - b. They **were convinced** that they had the **truth** and **that without that truth the world didn't have any hope**.
  - c. They **knew** that their **preaching would save souls** (1 Timothy 4:16).
  - d. These **Christians knew** that they were **the only ones** who had a **real message of salvation** (Romans 1:16), and that the **non-Christian religions surrounding them were devoid of salvation** (1 Corinthians 10:20).
  - e. In like manner, we face the same thing today and if not more. Not only are we **surrounded by paganism**, but the **world is also filled with many "Christian" counterfeits**.
- C. Being persecuted is **evidence** that I am doing **something right!** I am **making an impact**, my **light is shining** and my **salt is** having a definite **affect** on **the people around me** (Matthew 5:13-16; 1 Peter 4:4).

#### **Conclusion:**

1. *Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our life.* If God allowed us to go through our life without obstacles, it would cripple us. We would not be as strong as we could have been.
2. *We are the ones who benefit from the trials of life.*
  - a. We may claim a firm belief in Christ, our Savior.
  - b. We may think we would follow Him no matter where the road may lead.
  - c. But until we have to stand with Him in the face of severe trials, we cannot be fully sure of ourselves.
3. We must **never get downhearted**, because our Great God is Supreme and Sovereign. – Daniel 4:17
4. But, we must **never give up**, because of the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled that fades not away that is promised for us eternally in heaven. – 1 Peter 1:4
5. Never lose heart – be steadfast in the Lord Jesus Christ and He will guide you through these troubled times.