

God Uses Life's Bruises
March 7, 2010

Let's look at **Romans 8:24**. **"For we were saved in this hope."** The word "hope" is a Greek word that means "greatly anticipating the best possible outcome." **"For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope."** If you can see it, you're not hoping for it. You already it. **"For why does one still hope for what he sees?"**

Verse 25: "But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance." We have to persevere. We have to press. **Verse 26: "Likewise the Holy Spirit also helps in our weaknesses."** Is anyone glad about that? Be careful when you think you're so strong that you don't need the Holy Spirit. He helps us in our weak areas, and all of us are weak.

"Likewise the Holy Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought." Many times we are in a situation or in a great battle, and we don't know how to pray. **"But the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."**

When you get to the place where you are in such a tremendous battle, the Holy Spirit is working inside of you, and there is a groaning in there. The Holy Spirit takes your groanings and interprets those groanings to the Father.

Verse 27: "Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God." When you're weak and in a battle, the Holy Ghost helps you. He intercedes for you according to the will of God. He searches the heart, and the only One that knows our hearts is the Holy Spirit.

Verse 28: "For we know." The knowledge you have now gained you have gained through the Holy Spirit. It isn't something you have read. Now you have knowledge. What is it? **"For we know that all things work together for good to those that love God."** You can't love God without knowing Jesus. **"To those who are called according to His purpose."**

Verse 29: "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son." God wants us to look like, act like, and talk like Jesus. You say, that's impossible. No, it's possible through Him! **"With Him, all things are possible."** So, God's will for us is that we be conformed to look like His Son Jesus.

In the Book of Acts, the world looked at the church in Antioch, and started calling those people Christians. Why? Because they looked like, acted like, and talked like Jesus. **"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."**

Verse 30: "Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified."

God uses life's bruises, and let me tell you how He uses life's bruises. He uses them to mold us into the image of His Son.

God gave the children of Israel a promise in Egypt. He gave them **the promise of the promised land, Canaan**. Somewhere between where they received the promise and the promised land, they were going to face some **problems and some pressures**. Somewhere between the promise God gives you and the fulfillment of that promise, you are going to deal with some **struggles and some storms**. AMEN?

Is anyone born-again in the house? I didn't ask if you were a church member. I asked if you were born-again. **Somewhere between the new birth and the New Jerusalem**, which is going to come down from Heaven, **we are going to have some tests and some trials**. Can anybody testify that just because you got saved, the tests and trials ended? God doesn't save us, then insulate and isolate us from the trials and the tribulations of life.

Sometimes we will **struggle and go through some suffering** along the way. We'll go through some **sicknesses and sorrows**. Have you faced any of them? Well, between your being born-again and going to Heaven, you're going to face some things. We will **fight some battles**, and we will **carry some burdens**. Why?

Let's go to the Old Testament to **Deuteronomy 8:2** and see the reasoning behind the battles, the trials, and the tribulation that the children of Israel went through. Then we will look at how God is doing the same thing for us today.

"And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years into the wilderness." Most scholars believe they could have made the trip from Egypt to the promised land in 30 days, but they were in the wilderness 40 years. Why? Here is the answer. **"To humble you."**

Some people blame what they do on the devil, but that's not true. The biggest battle

we have is not so much with Satan as it is with ourselves. Pride comes into play, and the bruises of life will humble us. We start realizing that we aren't in control of everything, and that we can't do it all ourselves.

Verse 2 goes on to say that the reason why these things happen is to **test us**. God doesn't tempt you. No, no. You are tempted when you are drawn away because of your lusts. Satan is the tempter, not God, but God will test us.

When you read this material (the Word), if you think you're not going to be tested on what you read, you're crazy. Why do we go through tests? **Deuteronomy 8:2** tells us why. **"To humble you and test you, to know what is in your heart."** When you go through certain situations, you begin to realize you need help in your heart.

If you think you got all of God when you got saved, He is too big for that. After you get saved, God wants to mold us into the image of His Son Jesus. You may think you can't be like Jesus, but God is the potter. We're the clay, and He is going to mold us and make us what He wants us to be. So, God allows certain things to happen so that we will know our hearts, **"whether or not we will keep His commandments."**

Now look at **Romans 15:4 [NIV]**. **"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance."** I don't know if you know this or not, but sometimes you just have to suck up some things and keep going. You can't throw in the towel every time the going gets rough. **"So that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."**

That means, when we're going through some things, we hold onto this hope, this anticipation, this expectation of the best possible outcome. We don't give up. The Word of God gives us many scriptures that prove our God is faithful, because **Satan will use the storms we go through to try and cause us to become discouraged**; and if we don't handle discouragement correctly, it will lead to depression.

Then you forsake the Word, forsake the church, forsake your Christian friends, and Satan tries to use what we go through in this life to **stop our progress**. I have seen many people give up. Satan will also will try to **sink our dreams**. I don't care how old you are, you ought to be a dreamer. A dream is a vision God has placed in our lives that He wants us to accomplish while on this planet. The devil will also try and use the hard times in our lives to **sabotage our destiny**.

Did you see in Romans 8:28 where it says, "to those who are the called according to His

purpose?" That is your destiny. It isn't what YOU want. It's what HE wants. Satan will try and tell us that God doesn't love us anymore. Listen, the Bible says, "It rains on the just and the unjust."

We are all under construction. God is trying to mold and make us into what He wants us to be. The devil will use the things we go through, but we have to **refuse to give into panic**, and you can't allow things you go through to make you bitter. If God is using things to mold us and make us into His Son's image, then what happens to us ought to cause us to be better. **Things you go through should not cripple you. They should help complete you!**

I want to use an illustration that I used in one of my books. A parable is told of a farmer who owned an old mule. The mule fell into the farmer's well. The farmer heard the mule braying. After carefully assessing the situation, the farmer sympathized with the mule but decided that neither the mule nor the well was worth the trouble of saving. So he called his neighbors together and told them what had happened and enlisted them to help haul dirt to bury the old mule in the well and put him out of his misery.

Initially, the old mule was hysterical; but as the farmer and his neighbors continued shoveling and the dirt hit his back, a thought struck him. The old mule decided he wasn't going to give into it, and he decided that if he would shake the dirt off he could step up. The farmers kept throwing dirt down on him, and every time they threw dirt down on him, he would shake it off and step up.

He couldn't do it once or twice. He had to keep doing it. So every time a pile of dirt would hit his back, he would shake it off and step up. After hours and hours of shaking the dirt off and stepping up, he finally stepped out of the well. **What seemed like the very thing that was going to bury him actually blessed him, all because of the manner in which he handled his adversity.**

The adversities that come along to bury us usually have within them the potential to benefit and bless us. If anything comes our way that causes us to be more like Jesus, always remember. **When you are in a storm, you are in miracle territory.** You don't need a miracle when the sea is calm. You need a miracle when you are in a storm; and when you're in a battle or in a storm, you're in miracle territory. Hallelujah! We all want the miracles, but we don't want the storms.

There are two facts about storms that I want you to remember. **(1) Storms come into**

our lives for a reason. Hebrews 5:8 tells us that Jesus learned obedience. The Son of God, the Savior of the world, learned obedience from the things He suffered. **"Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered."**

I heard Jimmy Swaggert years ago make this statement. "You don't learn anything from suffering." I guarantee you that, right now, he has changed his belief. Jesus learned obedience, and if I am following in His footsteps, do you not think God is going to teach me some of the lessons in life? The only place where there will be no more battles and burdens is in Heaven!

God is shaking up America, because prosperity and pleasure have become our gods. There is greed on every level.

J. R. Miller, a great man of God, said these words. Let them soak into your spirit. "Whole, unbruised, unbroken men (and women) are of little use to God."

When I was growing up, you could always tell the good guys. They wore a white hat and rode a white horse. My daddy wouldn't buy me a horse, so my horse was a stick horse. I drilled a hole in his head and put a little rope in there so I could guide him, but let me tell you something about stick horses. You have to break them! They will buck on you. Now, if I got off him and let him go, he would calm down. If God is going to break you, He has to stay on you!

Church, an unbroken man or woman is of little use to God. That's why the Bible says that you should never put a novice or a beginner in your pulpit to be your pastor because they have never gone through very much. But what happens in the church with our elderly people, who could teach us a lot, is that we put them out to pasture! Paul never retired until he put his head on the chopping block and they cut it off!

Church, if Romans 8:28 is true, **there is a purpose behind everything you are going through.** Has anybody heard of Job? Look at **Job 38:1**. **"Then the Lord answered Job out of the storm,"** but we like to jump from the first chapter to the last chapter where Job gets back everything he lost. In between that, he was in the storm of his life, and that is where God spoke to him.

Let me tell you when you're closest to God. It's when you are going through something, and thank God for that word "through!"

God uses life's bruises **to purge us.** He uses life's bruises **to purify us.** He uses life's

bruises to **prepare us for His service**. We want someone's anointing, but we don't want to go through what they went through to get that anointing. You need to hang around great men and women of God, but to be prepared for God's service you are going to get some bruises.

God uses life's bruises to **provoke us to seek more of Jesus**. I'm hungry for more. God uses life's bruises to **provide us a new and fresh focus**. Do you know that sometimes when you go through some things God is trying to get your attention? When you have a few close calls, you just might realize that God is trying to give you a fresh focus.

Here is what the Word of God says. The things you see are temporary, but the things you don't see are eternal, but we are seeking everything we can SEE.

Turn to **James 1:2 [NIV]**. "**Consider it pure joy, my brothers.**" You have to be kidding me! James was the half-brother of Jesus. He lived in the same house Jesus lived in. He said, "**Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds.**" **Verse 3: "Because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance."** Don't quit. **Verse 4: "Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."**

When you go through the storms of life, your attitude is crucial. One man of God said, "**Your attitude will determine your altitude.**" When you go through some things, if you're not careful, you will develop a **rotten attitude**.

Church folk sometimes have rotten attitudes. They complain, murmur, grumble, and gripe; and sometimes people go through some stuff and come out with **hateful attitudes**. That is not why you went through what you went through, and guess what? You are going to go through it again, because you didn't learn your lesson. So when you go through some things, you have to develop perseverance. It makes you strong. So, don't allow things to cause you to become bitter.

Through it all, **keep your eyes on the promises of God** and not on the problems you're facing. Through it all, **look to the Savior** and not to the situation. The battle may get hard, but **God is on your side**; and "if God be for me, who can be against me?" **Don't give up!**

You may get weary and worn, but Jesus will not fail you. Keep trusting Him. Hang in there, because God loves you, and I believe God will see you through. Disappointments may come your way, but hold onto Jesus and don't quit; because I believe **Jesus can**

turn your setbacks into comebacks! We always triumph through Christ Jesus.

The devil has tried to kill us, but my **God can take a tombstone and make it a stepping stone**. That is what the old mule did. He used the very thing that was trying to kill him as a stepping stone to go higher. Don't stop. Keep the faith. It's a faith-fight. Our weapons are not carnal, but our weapons are mighty. **We have the Word of God**. It's alive. It's powerful.

We have the name of Jesus. God gave Him a name that is above every name in Heaven, on earth, and under the earth. Use the name of Jesus. That cross you wear around your neck is not a weapon. The devil is not afraid of any religious jewelry you wear. **Use the blood of Jesus!** The devil cannot cross the bloodline.

Plead the blood. You have the ability to plead the blood of Christ over your family, over your situation. Tell that foul spirit to back up! The weapons we use are not carnal. They are not physical weapons. They are mighty weapons.

Years ago, God gave me a statement. I was young and would make statements, not having the reality of what those statements meant, but I've gone through some stuff. The reality of the statement I made in those days means more to me today than it did then. This is what I said in the old sanctuary. "**Defeat is unacceptable in any form or any fashion.**"

I've got one more point. **(2) Storms come for a season**. Thank you, Jesus; but I've been in storms that I thought would never end. Sometimes **Jesus calms the storms for us**. I like that! Other times, **He calms the storms in us**. The storms out there are still raging, but in here (my spirit) I have peace that passes all human understanding.