

“Rejoice”

Twice in Romans five, the word “rejoice” is found. *“And we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so but we also rejoice in our tribulations; knowing that tribulation worketh steadfastness and steadfastness, approvedness, hope, and hope putteth not to shame because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us”* (Rom. 5:2-5). Paul rejoiced in hope and in the tribulations which brought about that hope.

Tribulation in this text comes from a word which signifies “pressure, affliction.” It was often used by Paul and the first appearance of the word through him is found in Acts 14:22 where newly born Christians were warned *“through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God.”* Jesus warned His disciples, *“In the world ye have tribulations”* all the while assuring them, *“Be of good cheer for I have overcome the world”* (Jn. 16:33).

Temptation (trials) is often CO-joined with tribulation. Trials and tribulations are kindred words and patience is said to be wrought through either of them. First, in the Roman passage and then again in James 1:12 where James wrote, *“Count it all joy (rejoice), my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations, knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience. And let patience have its perfect work ...”* Paul gave the chain through which “patience” passes to reach its perfect work: hope. That chain? Patience (steadfastness), approvedness, hope.

So, when Paul tells us we rejoice in hope, he then proceeds to show that hope often begins with tribulation. Peter wrote, *“And the God of all grace, who calleth you unto his eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while”* (1 Pet. 5:10). Tribulation tests both our character and faith. Is our faith real or shallow or pretended? Trials will reveal it! *“Herein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief through manifold trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire ...”* (1 Pet. 1:6f).

Thus, tribulations and trials or temptations bring about steadfastness. We must not be moved by trials but rather remain stable (1 Cor. 15:58; 16:13). Remaining steadfast in the face of whatever storms enter our lives will bring about God’s approvedness. And with God’s approvedness, comes hope!

Jim McDonald