

Romans 5:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

Analysis

And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also (ἀλλὰ καὶ καυχώμεθα ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν)—the same verb 'boast/rejoice' now takes the startling object of tribulations (θλίψεσιν, thlipsesin), a term denoting crushing pressure, affliction, persecution. This is neither masochism nor Stoic resignation but eschatological confidence: present sufferings are birth pangs of coming glory (8:18).

Knowing that tribulation worketh patience—the participle εἰδότες (eidotes, 'knowing') indicates settled conviction, not mere speculation. The divine pedagogy proceeds: θλῖψις (thlipsis, tribulation) produces ὑπομονή (hypomonē, patient endurance), not passive resignation but active perseverance. James 1:2-4 and 1 Peter 1:6-7 develop this same theology of sanctified suffering.

Historical Context

For the Roman church facing increasing hostility under Nero (who would launch systematic persecution in AD 64), Paul's theology of suffering was intensely practical. The empire valued conquest and glory through military might; Paul proclaimed glory through suffering with Christ. This inversion of worldly values echoed Jesus's teaching that losing one's life gains it (Mark 8:35) and His beatitudes pronouncing blessing on the persecuted (Matthew 5:10-12).

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What prevents you from 'glorying in tribulations'—lack of faith in God's purposes or misunderstanding of suffering's role?
2. How can you distinguish between suffering that produces patience and suffering that results from foolishness or sin?
3. In what current trial might God be working to develop patient endurance in your character?

Interlinear Text

οὐ	μόνον	δέ	ἀλλὰ	καὶ	καυχώμεθα	ἐν	ταῖς	θλῖψις
not	only	And	so but	also	we glory	in	G3588	tribulation
G3756	G3440	G1161	G235	G2532	G2744	G1722		G2347

εἰδότες	ὅτι	ἢ	θλῖψις	ὑπομονὴν	κατεργάζεται
knowing	that	G3588	tribulation	patience	worketh
G1492	G3754		G2347	G5281	G2716

Additional Cross-References

James 1:12 (Parallel theme): Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

1 Peter 3:14 (Parallel theme): But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

2 Corinthians 4:17 (Glory): For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

Luke 21:19 (Parallel theme): In your patience possess ye your souls.

Ephesians 3:13 (Glory): Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

Acts 5:41 (Parallel theme): And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.