



The Gift of Trials—Part 4
Preparing Us for Ministry
From Sermon 12.27.20

Read *2 Corinthians 1:3-4*

Review from Sunday's sermon: Among the many reasons God sends us through trials to prepare us for ministry. Jesus came to reconcile the elect to God by paying fully for their sins. But, the conversion experience is not the end. Every Christian is a commissioned and equipped minister—called to serve in the local church. Besides our spiritual gifts, talents and interests, God wants us to use our life experiences—good and bad—to serve and comfort others. The very thing we most want to hide may be the very thing God wants to use.

1. From Sunday, what is actually the greatest trial any Christian has ever faced? Their past and their sin. It put us in an impossible situation with a certain fate—separated from God for all eternity.

1a. According to *2 Corinthians 5:21*, what did Jesus do for us? He took on our sin—our impossible trial—for us. He imputed to us the required righteousness of God. He transformed us from our old, worldly, death-facing life.

1b. What does He now expect us to do with this new life and gift? Tell others our story (testimony). When we keep our story/past to ourselves, we make the unsaved world think only perfect, happy, problem-free people can come to church and be included. See also *1 Corinthians 6:11* & *Matthew 10:8*

2. Even after we are saved, what does God want us to keep including in our increasing/unfolding God story? Our failures. We did not stop sinning, relapsing, or backsliding, just because we are in Christ.

3. From Sunday, what trial did Mary face that prepared her for ministry in the first Church? She had to trust God in the impossible situation of being pregnant out of wedlock. She apparently lost her husband at an early age. He had to watch her son's public ministry and wonder what He was doing. She had to endure the very public arrest, trial, scourging, and execution of Jesus.

4. What ministry would she be best at in the new Church? Comfort—to widows, orphans, and those who lost children, especially to martyrdom. See *Acts 1:14*

5. Re-Read *James 1:2*. What do you find the most challenging aspect of this admonition? Various personal answers.

5a. What has this series taught you that makes it a little more possible, understandable, or desirable? Various personal answers. Hopefully, that joy is indeed a choice and not an emotion or feeling.

6. Series Review. How can Trials be a Gift from God? List the 4 ways that were covered in the series. Which one is your favorite? Which is your least favorite and why?

- Trials (the impossible ones) are the only way to witness a Miracle.
- Trials teach us to Rely on a Faithful God.
- Trials come to Build Godly, Christ-Like Character.
- Trials Prepare Us from Ministry.