



# ROMANS Part 38

Chapter 5:1-5

## EXPECTING THE GLORY OF GOD

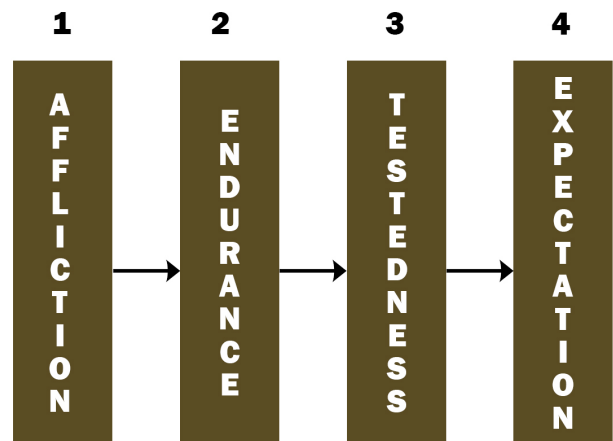
**Being, then, justified by faith, we may be having peace toward God, through our Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom we have the access also, by faith, into this grace in which we stand, and we may be glorying in expectation of the glory of God. Yet not only so, but we may be glorying also in afflictions, having perceived that affliction is producing endurance, yet endurance testedness, yet testedness expectation. Now expectation is not mortifying, seeing that the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the holy spirit which is being given to us.**

The last time I was with you we covered the first two verses printed above. It is essential to reprint them to prepare us for what follows in verses three through five, especially verse three. When last we talked on the book of Romans, we were “glorying in expectation of the glory of God” (verse 2). Each of you passed this test with flying colors. When it comes to expecting glory, you are all very good at it. I’m fairly adept in this department myself. Glory is blinding light, luscious heat, levity, intergalactic celebrity, and perfect spiritual union with our Maker. Who doesn’t want that? Who would not naturally want to expect it? What follows in verse three is the shocker. Paul introduces the shocker with these words, “yet not only so.” In other words, there is more to glorying in the expectation of the glory of God than doing this apparently simple thing. It’s not as simple as it looks. There is something else; there’s a necessary prelude. “Yet not only so,” Paul writes, “but we may be glorying also in afflictions.”

Paul, have your many shipwrecks and beatings driven you mad? What human glories in afflictions? We may endure afflictions, yes, but glory in them? What human is even capable of it? What human among us *wants* to be capable of happiness in the face of so many tragedies?

An intelligent human, is who. Watch.

We know that Paul is a difficult writer. He gets around to what he wants to say—eventually. What he does here is set up a series of “dominoes” that are essential for understanding the reason to glory in affliction. Here are the dominoes: 1) affliction, 2) endurance, 3) testedness, and 4) expectation. Notice that expectation—the thing we’re supposed to do concerning glory that is so apparently easy to do—is the last domino in line. Thus, it is the last to fall. But didn’t Paul present “glorying in expectation of the glory of God” first? Why now these other things lined up before it? Because the thing Paul mentions first (glorying in expectation of the glory of God) can’t happen unless four things precede it. Let’s look at this graphically:



It turns out that affliction is the first step and a necessary prelude to glorying in expectation of the glory of God. If we’d stop to think about it, we’d know this by experience. We’ve all perceived it. Thus,

Paul introduces his domino theory by calling upon common human experience: “Having perceived that affliction is producing endurance, yet endurance testedness, yet testedness expectation.”

We’ve all been afflicted, and we hate it. Every time we turn around, something new hits us that either merely bugs us, or threatens to destroy us. Our first instinct is to curse the affliction, and many of us obey that instinct. Now what? In the aftermath, we take sober stock of the affliction and realize that (“having perceived that”) affliction does indeed produce something every time. Assuming that we don’t kill ourselves, it produces endurance. Undergoing one trial makes us a little tougher to undergo the next, and better able to bear it. Experience is a great teacher.

#### “START ‘EM YOUNG”

It starts in babyhood, when we’re compelled to endure things like runny noses and wet diapers. This is no joke. It starts even before that, when we’re pulled from a dark, warm uterus into a fluorescently-lit hospital. Thus begins



a dizzying series of afflictions that grow in complexity and gravity. As babies, we endure rashes in delicate places. As adults, our boss calls us into the office and fires us. Or

our spouse dies. Or a child is killed by cancer. The only way to endure affliction is to experience it. As the saying goes: *What does not kill us makes us stronger*. But not only that.

What is so great about endurance? For the man or woman of God, endurance is a commodity more valuable than gold: endurance can later be traded for great heavenly capital. Can that be said of gold? No precious metal gets snatched away with us into the celestials.

Paul writes in 2 Timothy 2:12—“If we are enduring, we shall be reigning together [with Christ] also.” What a payoff. It’s not only a payoff, but in Paul’s gospel, endurance is essential to reigning. Only those who successfully endure hardship here (they don’t quit; they don’t run) are sufficiently prepared to manage and reconcile maleficent spiritual beings to God. Here is corroboration from 2 Thessalonians 1:4-5—

So that we ourselves glory in you in the ecclesias of God, for your endurance and faith in all your persecutions and the afflictions with which you are bearing—a display of the just judging of God, to deem you worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering also.

This principle applies even in the gospel to Israel. Our Lord is quoted in Luke 21:19 as saying, “By your endurance shall you be acquiring your souls.”

Though he’s the chief of the Circumcision and not our apostle, James recognizes the value of endurance—and thus the value of the trials producing it—to those pursuing a calling higher than mere salvation:

All joy deem it, my brethren, whenever you should be falling into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith is producing endurance. Now let endurance have its perfect work.

James refers vaguely to what Paul details in Romans by saying, “Now let endurance have its perfect work.” He does flirt with Paul’s inspired elaboration with the phrase, “the *testing* of your faith,” but here is Paul’s elaboration: “Yet endurance [is producing] testedness, yet testedness [is producing] expectation.”

#### TESTEDNESS

Testedness means that your endurance has been proven to others, and to yourself. (God doesn’t need the proof; He already knows everything.) Testedness means that God has tried you with various trials and you have been found fit. How? You haven’t run; you haven’t quit; you



haven't given up on God. What a joyous thing this ought to be to you, not only to be worthy to have trials sent your way by God Himself, but to be found true due to your endurance of these trials. Because of these trials, your faith of endurance is no longer theoretical, but real. No one can question or deny it: God presents to the universe—and to you, yourself—Exhibits A, B, C, D—all the way down through the alphabet—testifying to you putting up with every-

**“Your endurance impresses the heck out of celestial beings. They know God is training you to rule them.”**

thing thrown at you by Celestial Testers dispatched from heaven by God. It doesn't mean you haven't screamed, cried, cursed, or experienced moments (*moments*) when you wanted out. What it does mean is that you have stayed the course. Even though you have wavered (who doesn't? Jesus Himself wavered in the Garden of Gethsemane), you haven't quit. You're still here. You still believe in God. You're not giving up “this God stuff” to join the French Foreign Legion. You're not withdrawing into a shell. You haven't joined a monastery

or a nunnery. You get out of bed each day to face another day of whatever God may bring.

This impresses the heck out of the celestial beings monitoring your progress. (They know God is training you to rule them.) It ought to impress the heck out of you. I wish it would. This being tested and found firm (“testedness”) is a necessary prelude to expecting glory. (You expect it because God promises it to those who endure—2 Timothy 2:12.) It is an amazing honor that God does this for you. He doesn't do it for everyone. That you are enduring these things broadens your fame to celestial bigshots. They are more interested in you than you are interested in yourself. I wish you would be more interested in yourself. It's not a sin. It's giving God credit for being interested in you. Are you better than God? Become imitators of God (Ephesians 5:1) by being interested in yourself.

Paul writes to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 2:9): “For I write also for this, that I may know your testedness, if you are obedient in all things.” He writes concerning Timothy in Philippians 2:22, “Now you know his testedness, that, as a child with a father, he slaves with me for the evangel.” To the Philippians Paul also wrote: “For it is graciously granted you ... to be suffering for His sake” (Philippians 1:29). How can suffering be said to be graciously granted us? Because suffering (trial) gives us the “opportunity” to endure it. Enduring it proves our faith (“endurance [is producing] testedness”). Apparently, proof is important—maybe not to God (as I said, He already knows everything), but to us. It gives us confidence to expect glory. By the testedness, we will know that we know that we know we have glory coming. This isn't your idea, it's God's.

PROOF OF BOTH DESTRUCTION AND SALVATION

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I like what precedes the above verse quoted from Philippians; Paul actually uses the word “proof.” Watch: “[Do not be] startled by those who are opposing in anything, which is to them a proof of destruction yet of your salvation, and this from God, for to you it is graciously granted ... to be suffering for His sake” (Philippians 1:28-29). Paul talks here about proof of your salvation. As if we need it. But maybe we do. Maybe proof is helpful. Maybe proof makes us confident enough to shamelessly expect future glory. Isn't a little proof helpful, even in a walk of faith? I say it is. In Romans 5:3-5, God says it is. So don't shun proof. Don't think it's unspiritual.

## “ROLL THE TAPE”

I have always thought that those who will be rejected for eonian life (they are destined beforehand to be rejected, I realize that) will be shown proof of their evil hearts at the Great White Throne. They will stand before God on the day of their judgment, arguing that they were “good Christians.” God will say, “No, you actually hated the truth.” They will say, “When did we hate the truth?” God will then say, “Roll the tape!” and they will be shown graphic images of how they opposed true members of the body of Christ—people such as Paul,



people such as the Philippians, and people such as you and me. This is why Paul says that the opposition against the believing Philippians, by others, was “proof of the destruction” of these others. Yet it was, at the same time, “[proof] of your salvation.”

The fact that we are suffering affliction (being opposed) by people who hate what we stand for in Christ, is proof not only of the eonian destruction of those who oppose us, but also of our salvation. It fits the pattern of Romans 3:3-5: affliction produces endurance; endurance produces testedness (proof); testedness produces expectation.

I’m not saying that those of us who endure little or no affliction will not have glory. We’re talking about degrees of glory. I do think that those living lives of ease

instinctively realize that they shall not receive the degree of glory reserved for those—such as Paul—whose endurance of affliction proves their mettle and hunger for “the prize of God’s calling above in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14). This prize is above and beyond general salvation, for general salvation is not a prize, but a gracious gift. A prize is an award of extra glory given to those enduring suffering for the cause of Christ. It is to these individuals who, like Paul, are “stretching out” (Philippians 3:13) for more in Christ, to whom our Romans passage primarily applies.

## TOPPLING BACK TO THE TOP

Thus, the dominoes. Let us now consider these dominoes in reverse order, beginning with the last domino to fall, that is, the expectation of the glory of God. Apparently, we cannot be fully confident of an “expectation of the glory of God” (“the prize of God’s calling above”) without the knowledge that we have been tested and found true. We cannot be tested and found true without having endured things. We cannot endure things unless there are things to be endured, that is, afflictions. This is why “we may be glorying also in afflictions.” The afflictions make us endure, the endurance proves to us our own mettle (a mettle given by God, of course), making us confidently expect glory from the God Who promises it to those who endure. This is God’s Word speaking, not me.

Now you know why we should welcome afflictions.

## WHY THE WAIT DOESN’T KILL US

**“Now expectation is not mortifying, seeing that the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the holy spirit which is being given to us” (Romans 5:5).**

Why would expectation ever be mortifying? because we have to wait so long for it to be realized. Expecting glory means that we have not yet received glory. Paul confirms this in Romans 8:23-25, writing—

Yet not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruit of the spirit, we ourselves also, are groaning in ourselves, awaiting the sonship, the deliverance of our body. For to expectation were we saved. Now expectation, being observed, is not expectation, for what anyone is observing, why is he expecting it also? Now, if we are expecting what we are not observing, we are awaiting it with endurance.



Expecting the glory of God is one of the afflictions that produces endurance. Expecting and expecting and expecting, without getting, is certainly an affliction. As the wise man said, “Hope deferred makes the heart sick” (Proverbs 13:12). Not only, then, do afflictions produce endurance, which produces testedness, which produces greater expectation, but the expectation itself becomes an affliction, which then produces more endurance, which then produces ... — and so on. For now, this is a continuous cycle. Just between you and me (and every celestial being gazing upon my experiences and these words), I am looking forward to breaking out of this cycle. That deliverance is impending.

What is the cure to awaiting this deliverance? Why is this cycle *not* mortifying us? “Seeing that the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the holy spirit which is being given to us.”

This hearkens back to our study on love. The holy spirit that makes its home in us (1 Corinthians 3:16), assures us

that God loves us. God’s love, remember, is tough. “For whom the Lord is loving, He is disciplining” (Hebrews 12:6). One of the ways God disciplines us is by the trial of time. One way to try us by time is to withhold that which we earnestly expect. This continual expectation of what is still out of reach could slowly kill us with discouragement apart from the fact that the love of God has been poured out in our hearts; we *perceive* the love of God, we are convinced of it, even in trial. In fact, it is the trial that proves God’s love, “For whom the Lord is loving, He is disciplining.”

Thus, this expectation of the glory of God is an inspired affliction meant to produce more endurance, meant to produce more testedness, meant to produce even more expectation. Let not this be mortifying you. Rather, let it prime you to receive the highest degree of what glory awaits you, for “blessed are all they who wait for Him” (Isaiah 30:18). —**MZ**