

Come forth as gold

I have been thinking of what I was going to title this, and for a while I considered to name it “more than I can bear.” There are times in all of our lives when we enter into a season of suffering. A season of trial, a storm, a season of testing. A time when we are passed through the fire. It really encourages me to know that our God is able. He is able to sustain us, strengthen us. He is able to supply all our needs according to his riches in Christ Jesus! Glory!

I want to turn to a story in Matthew 14:22-33. Let’s read it starting from verse 22...

22 And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

23 And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

The disciples were with Jesus but they found themselves in the middle of a storm. This time Jesus was not with them in the boat. Again they were in a storm and the ship was being tossed about, the wind was contrary. There are times in our life when the ‘wind’, when our circumstances are ‘contrary’ to us.

Sometimes, we are put in a storm because of our own actions, our own disobedience. I can think of Jonah when instead of obeying God and crying out against Nineveh he went in the exact opposite direction! ***
But not all storms in our life are necessarily a consequence of our being out of God’s will. Let’s look at verse 22 from Matthew 14.

22 And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship

Jesus “*constrained* his disciples.” Mark 6:45 is the same passage, and the Amplified Bible says it like this, “he insisted his disciples get into the boat.” The NASB says “he made.” There was no option. It was His will they get into the boat. Jesus knew they would enter into a storm. Actually, the disciples had already been through this before. In Mark 4:35-41, they were caught in another storm, with Jesus in the boat with them! They asked “Master, carest thou not that we perish?” Jesus’ answer? “Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?”

I know first hand that it is not easy to be in the midst of a storm. In the midst of suffering. I know what it is like to be at a place where I don’t have enough faith. I don’t have enough patience. I don’t have enough strength. This is a very hard topic, because no words can describe what it feels like at the bottom. In fact every time I have been there I really hated it. The only thing I can say is despite how awful it feels, how painful it is, how hot the flame... we *are* in a good place. Yes, it is a good place. We are not supposed to have enough faith, enough patience or enough strength at this time. God in His love has placed us there, or allowed us to be there. He wants to stretch us. Purify us. I want this to be an encouragement to those who are there. We need to know...Jesus is with us! He was with the disciples in the first storm, and he came to them walking on water in the second! In fact, Jesus “maketh intercession for us” (Romans 8:34) as “he went up into a mountain apart to pray for them while they were in the boat.” Matthew 14:23. While they were going through the storm let me suggest that Jesus was praying for them!

The Lord was with Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego when they were thrown into the *blazing fire*. They were tied up but look what the King said “Look, I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!” Daniel 3:25. He is with us! He is with us! He will never leave us!

“Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the furnace of blazing fire; he responded and said, “Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, come out, you servants of the Most High God, and come here!”

You servants of the Most High God! Come out! We are the servants of the Most High God. That’s why we are in the fire. That’s why we come out of the fire. Untied! Loosed! No burns! When people see you *walking* around in the midst of a fire will they not know who you are? You are a servant of the MOST HIGH GOD!

Oh Lord...speak to our hearts...

“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour” Isaiah 43:2,3

Father in heaven. We thank you for your enduring love. We thank you that when we don't understand, even while we are suffering, even though it hurts so much, we know you are there. We know you are with us. We thank you that we are your servants. We know you are in control. We know this is for your greater glory. Please give us the strength to endure, give us the faith we don't have, give us the faith we need. Amen.

“Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.” Isaiah 48:10

Job said “But He knows the way I take; When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” Job 23:10

Come forth as gold!

We glorify God when we endure trial...”you have been distressed by various trials,so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ” 1 Peter 1:6,7.

Let me suggest three reasons to hold on in the fire so you can come forth as gold.

1) It is so you call on our Lord to increase your *faith*...

“And I will bring the third part through the fire, Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, "They are My people,' And they will say, "The LORD is my God.” Zechariah 13:9

2) To *comfort* those who are broken, who are in the fire...

“who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” 2 Corinthians 1:4

3) *Salvation* of others!

“For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.

But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are sharers of our comfort.” 2 Corinthians 1:5-7

Heavenly Father. We come to you as humble servants. We are weak, but we know that your strength is made perfect in our weakness. We know your grace is sufficient for us. Let your word bring life in us, overcome our feelings by your power. In Jesus name! Amen!

***He listened after being caught in the storm, Ch Jonah 2:2 he cried, God answered....Jonah 3:3 “so Jonah arose.”

Isaiah 43:2,3

2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

3 For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour

1 Peter 1

6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,

7 so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

2 Corinthians 1

4 who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

5 For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.

6 But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer;

7 and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are sharers of our comfort.

Romans 8:34

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

2 Corinthians 4

16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,

18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. 5

2 Corinthians 12

9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Zechariah 13

9 ""And I will bring the third part through the fire, Refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them; I will say, "They are My people," And they will say, "The LORD is my God.""

1 Peter 1

7 so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

Job 23

10 ""But He knows the way I take; When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

Isaiah 48

10""Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.

Malachi 3

3 ""He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the LORD offerings in righteousness.