

May 14, 2017

Proving Ground  
Pastor Charles Mendenhall

Does God prove us? Is there a testing from God and what is the purpose of it? The children of Israel had been brought into the land, everything had been prepared for them and everything had been multiplied for them, but there had been a time of testing for them in order for Him to know their hearts. Part of the proving of God is to see what is in our hearts, if we will obey and keep His commandments in order for Him to bless us.

Deut 8:2,16 "2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. 16 Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;" KJV

Hebrews chapter 12 tells us how God will discipline or correct us, He does not bring any bad thing upon us for correction or in order to prove us. However, there are those who believe that He does, this is not correct, God loves us and wants the best for us.

Example is given using welding on different types of pipe, after it is welded and pressure is applied to the weld on the inside, if there are any imperfections in the weld it will show up as a crack or leak, pressure applied to the weld did not cause the leak, it only revealed the problem, x-rays are sometimes used to do this, they do not cause the weakness but will show up the weak spot. This is how when God proves us, His proving is not to destroy us but will show where unbelief is at, whether we are in faith, or are we going to be moved by circumstances or by our feelings or by our word, it will determine whether we are going to continue to trust Him or believe Him regardless of what is happening. This is what happens in Gods proving us. There can be different ways that God will prove us, by the circumstances that we are in, what our attitudes are, our mind sets. The end result is always the same, are we going to continue to trust or are we going to get into unbelief? The proving of God will always show what is in our hearts, unbelief or faith.

Abraham did not have the kind of faith of what was needed to bring to pass what had been promised, but as God proved him by what had been spoken to him, he was able to obtain the promise of a son. He believed not looking at the circumstances around him, but held on to the promise.

Rom 4:18 "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be." KJV

Many times in our lives we may be going through different circumstances and situations that come unexpectedly and each of these things may be processed differently, but if we are fully persuaded that God will bless us in the end and we continue to believe and trust Him, we shall have the victory regardless of what the enemy would try to tell us.

Sometimes, in the natural, we had to take a test in order for us to pass, we had to prove what we had learned about something. Part of the proving is whether God can trust us with greater responsibility, sometimes the greater the proving the more responsibility is getting ready to come our way and if we show good stewardship it will bring greater blessings.

Paul is explaining what had happened that he had not gone to the Thessalonians earlier, because Satan had hindered him. Satan is going to hinder in any way that he can; disappointments,

offenses, discouragements, getting our eyes on the problem or circumstances and the more we look at these things, we begin to magnify the problem, that is why we keep our eyes on Jesus to magnify His goodness and His bigness, when Satan breaks up the road and tries to stop the plan of God in our lives, our responsibility is to rise up in Jesus name and put him under our feet.

1 Thess 2:18 "Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan \*hindered us. ' KJV

\*hindered means that the road had been broken up on which he was traveling, it can mean that we have gotten out of our lane in a race been bumped and we lost our stride

God proves us or tries us in different seasons of our lives. God tries us to bring good things to us, the enemy tries us to try to destroy us. The trial of our faith is tried with temptations and is more precious than gold. The purifying of gold does not destroy but makes it more valuable. We may think that we will break under the pressure of the proving of God, but that is not what is intended it is only meant for us to come out more valuable. The end is glory in Christ Jesus.

1 Pet 1:6-7 "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:" KJV

1 Pet 1:7 "I know how great this makes you feel, even though you have to put up with every kind of aggravation in the meantime. Pure gold put in the fire comes out of it *proved* pure; genuine faith put through this suffering comes out *proved* genuine. When Jesus wraps this all up, it's your faith, not your gold, that God will have on display as evidence of his victory." MESSAGE

Jesus told Peter that Satan had tried to destroy him, by putting him on trial which Peter failed, but that Jesus had been praying for him that he would be strengthened and arise. The scriptures teach us that Jesus is at the right hand of the Father making intercession for all of us right now.

Luke 22:31 "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath \*desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:" KJV

\* desired means that satan had wanted to put him on trial

1 Pet 4:12-14 "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: '13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. 14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified." KJV

Any suffering that we may go through is only a down payment on the glory that is getting ready to be revealed in our lives, the devil is the loser. The glory is just around the corner. There may be some persecution that the believer will face, but count yourself fortunate.

Rom 8:18 "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. ' KJV

1 Pet 4:12-19 "Friends, when life gets really difficult, don't jump to the conclusion that God isn't on the job. Instead, be glad that you are in the very thick of what Christ experienced. This is a spiritual refining process, with glory just around the corner. If you're abused because of Christ, count yourself fortunate. It's the Spirit of God and his glory in you that brought you to the notice of others. If they're on you because you broke the law or disturbed the peace, that's a different matter. But if it's because you're a Christian, don't give it a second thought. Be proud of the distinguished status reflected in that name! It's judgment time for God's own family. We're first in line. If it starts with us, think what it's going to be like for those who refuse God's Message! If good people barely make it, What's in store for the bad? So if you find life difficult because you're doing what God said, take it in stride. Trust him. He knows what he's doing, and he'll keep on doing it." MESSAGE

A story was shared regarding a minister who had heart problems but because of the denomination that he was involved with, healing was out of the question that had been done away with and was not for this day and time. He knew many who did believe for healing and because of what he heard from them, he began to have hope on the inside of himself. He took a leave of absence and began to spend quality time with God and what the word said about healing. He took his bible and began to study 6 hours a day and became convinced in his mind that Jesus was the healer that He said that He was. He accepted the truth of divine healing, began to preach to others about healing, made a vow to preach and teach the remaining days that had been given to him.

In the proving of God, He doesn't come to destroy, He comes to lift us higher, to bless us in the later days, but our attitude must be one of rejoicing, knowing and fully persuaded that He is able to perform what He has promised each of us and that we will experience the glory and goodness of God. We are victorious and we are going to rejoice when God is proving us, to bring out His character in us, because God's glory is just around the corner. Satan is under our feet.