

1 Pet. 4:19 (BCF 13) "Trusting Souls"

For the Children: Have you ever been really, really scared of something? People who are very scared sometimes find it hard to speak or move. If we are scared that the Lord won't look after us, it's harder to speak and do the things He calls us to do – to do good, obey Him, worship Him, and tell others about Him. Learning to trust the Lord to look after us is very important for living our lives for Him! **Questions:** Why does the Lord sometimes allow bad things to happen to His children? How does believing in Creation help us to trust the Lord? What does it mean to "trust" the Lord?

Introduction:

First Point: Providence Brings Suffering

- 1) The Providence/Suffering Connection: We often struggle with the fact that suffering comes in God's Providence. This is no accident, but a necessary consequence of the Fall, and our own sinful old nature; as well as due to our connection to Christ. See 4:13.
- 2) For Testing: This suffering is also to "test" us – not to show God what we are made of, but to show us what He has made of us. It is for God's glory and our encouragement. It confirms our connection to Christ, helps train us and gives opportunity to give a witness to others.
- 3) For Good: These reasons demonstrate that suffering, in God's Providence, is given for our ultimate good. The pain of it is momentary, the benefits lasting. That is why Peter describes suffering as being "according to the will of God." It is not merely from Satan, or other people, or by chance. It is completely under the Lord's control – "according to His will" – and therefore the final outcome will be good.

Second Point: Providence Can Be Trusted

- 1) The Faithful Creator: Creation and Providence are closely connected. Since God's infinite and unchanging power, knowledge, wisdom and love were all perfectly displayed in His creating work, we should expect the same in His work of *maintaining* what He created. God knew what He was doing when He made us, too, and set things up for our life. Why should we expect that to change? He still knows exactly what we need and is able and willing to provide it.
- 2) The Faithful Saviour: This point is strengthened by the fact that God is also redeeming what He created, through His Son. Creation, Providence and Redemption are all closely connected. The same power, wisdom and love that is displayed in creation and providence, is also seen in redemption. Why should we worry that God will not look after us in this life, when He has already redeemed us in Christ?
- 3) The Problem of Evil: Sin and misery certainly still abound. But the Lord controls these things and brings good from them, for those who love Him. We may not know His hidden purposes or understand how all the pieces fit together; but we should not try to discover that which we cannot know. Rather, we should accept His revealed will, which assures us of His loving care for us. See BCF 13.

Third Point: Providence Should Be Trusted

- 1) Entrusting Your Soul: We are therefore to "entrust" our souls to Him – place our lives before Him, trusting to His care. With His help, we can make the decision to trust Him with our lives, even if we *feel* that all our circumstances deny the goodness of His Providence. That decision to trust is in the nature of faith, God's gift to us. In doing this, we follow the way of Christ, who entrusted His spirit to His Father on the cross (1 Pet. 2:23/Ps. 31:5).
- 2) In Doing Good: When we trust the Lord in this way, we are freed to express that trust in "doing what is right" - obeying His Word without fear of consequences, praying and worshipping and witnessing to Him, rather than giving in to fear and anxiety.

Conclusion: