



# GOSPEL DAILY DEVOTIONAL

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A MINISTRY OF GRACE CHAPEL

For Individuals

## THE ONLY THREE THINGS THAT LAST FOREVER

Start with prayer and then read...

***“And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love.  
But the greatest of these is love” – 1 Corinthians 13:13***

 **READ:** Psalm 33:16–22

This psalm rejoices in true faith, hope, and love that only come from the Lord. The Old Testament alludes to these same three things as being worth the wait:

***Psalm 33:20–22, “We wait in hope for the Lord ... for we trust in his holy name ... May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you,”***

There are many places in Scripture where faith, hope, and love are intertwined. The three are inextricably linked. You cannot have faith without hope, or hope without faith, and both our faith and our hope are anchored in the unfailing love of God.

## DIGGING DEEPER

In Romans, Paul writes that **“having been justified by faith ... we exult in the hope of the glory of God ... and hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us”** (Romans 5:1–5).

Faith leads to hope that does not disappoint us because of the love God has poured out by the Holy Spirit. But do you know what verses come in between those verses, where I put the little ellipses?

 **READ:** Romans 5:3–4

Wait, what? I thought we were rejoicing in the hope, faith, and love of God. What is this? Tribulations? Really, God? If I'm suffering, you want me to be happy about it? Slap on a smile and act like this is the best thing that's ever happened to me?

No, this isn't a command to put on a happy face through our suffering. In the Gospels, Jesus wept when His friend Lazarus died, even though He knew He was about to raise Him. He was deeply moved in His spirit. The word translated as "deeply moved" means to snort with anger (John 11:33–35).

Paul doesn't tell us to put on a happy face. He tells us we can rejoice because of what our suffering leads to—endurance, character, and hope.

Paul doesn't tell us to rejoice about the suffering but to rejoice in the suffering. Because God will always use it for good (Genesis 50:20; Romans 8:28). Because of what suffering produces in us.

Or, back to the Old Testament, the Psalms show us that God welcomes our laments. He invites us to be honest and raw and real about suffering instead of being phony and sweeping it under the rug. The Psalms are the prayers of a hopeful realist. They are honest about suffering, but also confident of where hope is found—in the Lord.

Remember we look at earlier in our study—that faith, hope, and love are God's greatest gifts? Like the fruit of the Spirit, God grows and develops them in our lives as we walk with Him. And suffering is one of the biggest ways He does that. Suffering shakes us up, peels away all that distracts us from God, and refines us like fire refines gold, making us more and more like Jesus.

## APPLYING IT TO LIFE

C. S. Lewis said, "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain. It is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

- Suffering develops faith in us, teaching us to trust in God rather than our circumstances.
- Suffering develops hope in us, teaching us to hope in God's promises rather than the things of this world.
- Suffering develops love in us, as we cling to God's love in the midst of all of the uncertainty.

There's a mysterious, other-worldly inner strength that comes from suffering in Christ. Those who can rejoice in suffering are the ones who understand and embrace the values of the kingdom of God—that holiness is more important than happiness, and character is more important than comfort.



**READ:** Romans 5:5

Romans says God's love is poured out on us. This is a present reality. Not it has been or will be. It is poured out. Without the love God has poured out on us through His Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5), our faith becomes naiveté and our hope becomes wishful thinking. But because we know God loves us, we can have faith and hope no matter what suffering or struggle comes our way. We can join with the psalmist in saying:

*Sing joyfully to the Lord, you righteous;  
it is fitting for the upright to praise him. ...*

*No king is saved by the size of his army;  
no warrior escapes by his great strength.  
A horse is a vain hope for deliverance;  
despite all its great strength it cannot save.  
But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him,  
on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,  
to deliver them from death  
and keep them alive in famine.*

*We wait in hope for the Lord;  
he is our help and our shield.  
In him our hearts rejoice,  
for we trust in his holy name.  
May your unfailing love be with us, Lord,  
even as we put our hope in you. – Psalm 33:1, 16–22*



**REFLECTION QUESTION:**

How is this time of suffering developing faith, hope and love in you?



**REFLECTION QUESTION:**

How can you share your faith, hope, and love with others who are struggling right now?

## **SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: SUFFER GOD’S WAY**

When we talk about spiritual disciplines, we like to think of things we add to our lives—rhythms, practices, prayers. Maybe it’s painting or journaling, time spent wandering a trail in nature, or a different way of allocating our time. Regardless of the method, the goal is the same—to connect with God. Other times, the rhythms we find are unexpected. Sometimes God allows unexpected suffering to interrupt our lives, forcing us to connect with Him. As we said, suffering is God’s megaphone to rouse a deaf world.

To practice suffering as a spiritual discipline today, spend some time in prayer, naming all the things that you are struggling with right now. Any way you are suffering. Even if it feels silly, like you can’t get your morning coffee from your favorite place. No suffering is too small or too big. Pour out all your sufferings before God in prayer and give them to Him as an offering. Lay those sufferings at His feet and ask Him to fill you with His faith, hope, and love. Close your time by praying the quote from Psalm 33 (above), committing to trust and hope in the Lord.