

THE BELIEVER'S PRESENT SUFFERING ROMANS 5:3–5

INTRODUCTION

Nothing erodes a believer's confidence in their promised future glory more than the reality of their present suffering.

Pain has a way of focusing us on the present and filling us with doubts about the future.

Therefore, Paul addresses the elephant in the room by following his reference to the believer's future glory with a far more detailed reference to the believer's present suffering.

We remember, of course, that he is introducing a new section in his epistle that spans **chapters 5–8**.

His first subsection, from **5:1–11**, serves as an introduction and overview of what Paul will address at greater length in the chapters to come.

We observe from this introduction that his main concern is the believer's assurance of their future salvation.

Though justified through faith in Christ, we are waiting for God to complete His work of salvation that will culminate in our glorification and enjoyment of eternal life with Him.

The word that Paul uses to describe this assurance he wants us to experience is “**hope.**”

We’ve learnt that hope is looking forward to something with good reason to be confident in its fulfilment.

We place our hope in God that He will fulfil all His promises in the gospel.

We can have absolute certainty that He will fulfil His promises because of His faithfulness.

In other words, hope is future-focussed faith that is confident in God’s promises.

Here in the introduction of **Romans 5**, Paul refers to our “**boast in hope of the glory of God.**”

This is certainly at the heart of the assurance that Paul wants to instil in us.

While it touches on the key theme that Paul is addressing, it is but one of five results of being justified by faith in Christ.

As believers who enjoy a new right standing with God, there are five benefits that we receive that, together, provide us with a full assurance of our future salvation.

Having already considered peace with God, access to God, and future glory from God, we focus now on the fourth result of our justification.

However, few believers would naturally consider the fourth result to be a “benefit.”

The fourth result that Paul lists is that we boast in our afflictions—we rejoice in our suffering.

It seems almost unbelievable that Paul would consider this a benefit because, as I said, nothing erodes a believer’s confidence in their promised future glory more than the reality of their present suffering.

Not only does this not seem beneficial, but it seems to strand at odds with the purpose of our assurance.

After all, pain has a way of focusing us on the present and filling us with doubts about the future.

But incredibly, Paul claims both that our present suffering is in complete agreement with our future glory and, moreover, that our present suffering should contribute to our assurance.

How do afflictions and suffering fill us with hope?

How do the pains and pressures of the present bolster our future-focussed faith in God?

That is precisely what Paul will answer as we examine the text before us today.

In fact, Paul aims to fortify our hope to such a degree that it becomes part of our “**boast**” as believers.

Not only is our present suffering meant to give us hope in our future salvation, but we can have such complete assurance that we gain a “joyful confidence.”

PROPOSITION

In this remarkable text of **Romans 5:3–5**, Paul explains that suffering doesn’t diminish our joyful confidence, but increases it for two reasons:

1. Suffering produces hope (3–4)
2. Love sustains hope (5)

1. SUFFERING PRODUCES HOPE (3–4)

There is evidently a strong link between the third and fourth results of our justification, as Paul writes at the end of **verse 2**, “**we boast in hope of the glory of God**” and then follows in **verse 3**—

³ And not only this, but we also boast in our afflictions...

We can understand boasting in our future glory, but Paul goes on to say that believers also boast in afflictions.

This is an astonishing statement, because we joyfully anticipate and prize our future glorification precisely because it entails leaving our afflictions behind.

There is evidently an escalation in Paul's mind as he makes this incredible claim.

Paul opens the verse with, “**And not only this...**”

Paul often uses the phrase “and not only so, but also” to broaden the application of a principle.¹

He has just applied the principle of boasting to our future glory, but now he broadens its application even to our present suffering.

The principle of boasting is one that we learnt in our study of **verse 2**.

The word “**boast**” as, as we find it in both **verses 2 and 3**, carried the ideas of confidence and joy.

That is why some translations render the verb as “**rejoice.**”

The Greek word can even mean to “glory” in something.

As Doug Moo suggests, when Paul refers to our boasting in either future glory or present suffering, we should understand him as saying, “we are joyfully confident of.”

In that sense, we are “joyful confident” in our present suffering.

Suffering is painful, distressful, and hard—why would we rejoice or glory or be joyfully confident in that?

¹ Frank Thielman, *Romans*, ed. Clinton E. Arnold, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 266.

Before we consider Paul's explanation, we should not overlook his acknowledgement of our painful circumstances.

As **one commentator** put it—

“No sooner has the Apostle pointed to “the glory of God” as a light shining afar to cheer the believer on his course, than he thinks of the contrast between that bright distance and the darkness that lies around him here.”²

In other words, Paul is not naive to the pain and the pressure that we regularly experience as believers.

Paul was certainly not a prosperity preacher, promising health and wealth and prosperity to everyone with sufficient faith.

According to **Acts 14:22**, Paul would teach all the churches he planted and pastored that, **“Through many afflictions we must enter the kingdom of God.”**

As Paul disciplined the churches, he would be very honest with them about the hardships they would face, as he says very bluntly in **1 Corinthians 15:19**—

¹⁹ If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.

Not only did he think that suffering was the normative experience of a Christian, he would go so far as to claim that it is the experience of every faithful believer, without exception, as he claimed in **2 Timothy 3:12**—

¹² Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

² E. H. Gifford, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans: Commentary* (London: John Murray, 1886), 111.

Paul was certainly no prosperity preacher.

But he was also not someone who lived a life of comfort and ease so that he spoke casually about the suffering of others.

Paul has been afflicted more than most would ever be, so that he spoke with a deep understanding and sympathy for the pain that he was calling others to “**boast**” in.

Turn to **2 Corinthians 11:23-28** to get a brief understanding of what Paul had suffered.

He writes in **verse 23** of a comparison with false apostles, but that he had more afflictions—

23 ...far more labours, in far more imprisonments, in beatings without number, in frequent danger of death.

24 Five times I received from the Jews forty lashes less one.

25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked—a night and a day I have spent in the deep.

26 I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the desolate places, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brothers.

27 I have been in labor and hardship, in many sleepless nights, in starvation and thirst, often hungry, in cold and without enough clothing.

28 Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches.

So Paul was certainly not callous or unsympathetic, asking others to boast in an experience he knew little of.

In fact, Paul had suffered so severely that he wrote at the beginning of **2 Corinthians**, in **1:8**—

8 We do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even to live.

Paul bore the scars that gave him great credibility when writing, “**we... boast in our afflictions...**”

What are these “**afflictions**” then that Paul boasts in and exhorts others to do the same?

The word that Paul chooses to use here, **ὀλιγοί**, is a general term here that refers to the pressures and troubles that believers experience in this present evil age.

Though some want to confine the idea to eschatological afflictions, Paul gives us no indication that he has such a narrow focus in mind.

Indeed, as **Moo** argues, “*In a certain sense, all sufferings are ‘on behalf of Christ.’*”³

³ Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, ed. Ned B. Stonehouse et al., Second Edition, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 330.

That is because whether the affliction comes from the pain and pressure of life in a sin-cursed world, or it comes from the persecution of Christians by the world, every affliction is an opportunity to respond with faith in Christ to the glory of Christ.

Satan, and the world that follows him, seeks to use the opportunity to defile the name of Christ by tempting us to sin when we suffer.

Therefore, every affliction is one that we bear for the sake of Christ—whether it is pain, pressure, or persecution.

But Paul's focus here is on the effect that affliction has on us as those justified by faith in Christ.

In keeping with that focus, he uses the term “**afflictions**” in a broad, general sense to refer to every kind of suffering that we experience.

Suffering, says Paul, is not something that we should view negatively, but something we should view so positively that it produces a joyful confidence as a measure of our full assurance.

We must boast, we must glory, we must have a joyful confidence in our suffering.

At this point, we might look over **verse 3** and think that we understand Paul's point.

Though we must reluctantly face the reality of pain, pressure, and persecution for the sake of Christ, we conclude that Paul is telling us that we can boast **“in the midst of”** our sufferings.

But Paul is saying something far more incredible than that!

He contends that not only do sufferings not overthrow the reality of the benefits we have through justification, but our sufferings are themselves occasions for joyful boasting.

We don't boast **despite** our suffering, but **because of** our suffering.

In other words, we don't merely exult **“in the midst of”** afflictions, but exult **“in”** the afflictions themselves—

They are a basis for further confidence in our future salvation.

Even with the scars that lend him credibility, how on earth could Paul make such a claim?

The answer lies in how we interpret our suffering.

Look at **verse 3** again and take note as Paul writes—

³ And not only this, but we also boast in our afflictions, knowing...

There is something that we must know about suffering.

If we know it, if we bear it in mind, then it will change the way we understand afflictions.

It will change the way we interpret our suffering.

What follows, then, is the reason that Paul can must such an incredible claim that suffering doesn't diminish our joyful confidence, but even increases it.⁴

The reason flows **from verse 3 into verse 4** as Paul writes—

**3 ... knowing that affliction brings about perseverance;
4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope**

Paul addresses the problem of suffering with an argument that God will use our afflictions to bring about a greater good.

It's as if he's saying—

"Yes, I know Christians will continue to suffer.

*But life's difficulties do not contradict what I have been saying about the wonderful blessings of being a Christian; in fact, God actually uses them to bring us even greater blessing."*⁵

If we know this, then we will **"boast in our afflictions."**

Paul explains the substance of this **"knowledge"** that we must have in order to rejoice in our suffering.

⁴ "The expression "because we know" (εἰδότες) represents a perfect-tense adverbial participle of cause describing the reason why Paul is able to say something so counterintuitive." Frank Thielman, *Romans*, ed. Clinton E. Arnold, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 267.

⁵ Douglas J. Moo, *Romans*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 171.

He explains the substance by means of a chain of logic.

Paul loves these logical chains.

Perhaps the most famous of them comes in **Romans 8** as he expands there on the subject he is introducing here.

Romans 8:28-30—

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.

²⁹ Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers;

³⁰ and those whom He predestined, He also called; and those whom He called, He also justified; and those whom He justified, He also glorified.

That is very similar in substance and form to the logical chain that Paul uses in **verses 3-4**—

³ ... knowing that affliction brings about perseverance;

⁴ and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope

With the chain of logic, Paul's argument is that afflictions end up producing hope.

The reason believers can exult with joyfully confidence in afflictions is that they work to produce greater hope.

The result of our suffering is an increased assurance.

In order to understand how that can be, we have to follow Paul through his reasoning from one link of the chain to the next.

There are **three links** in this chain, beginning with “**perseverance**.”

The word refers to the capacity to hold out or bear up in the face of difficulty.⁶

It can be translated variously as “patience, endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, or perseverance.”

That is, Paul intends to highlight the spiritual fortitude of a justified believer that bears up under, and is even made even stronger by, suffering.

It is the same concept that James highlights when he addresses the effect of suffering on faith.

In **James 1:2-4** he writes—

² Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials,

³ knowing that the testing of your faith brings about perseverance.

⁴ And let perseverance have its perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Simply put, those who undergo troubles are toughened up so that they are able to withstand the storms of life.

⁶ BDAG, ὑπομονή.

Apart from the preeminent example of the perseverance of Christ, we must surely remember the perseverance of Job.

Using the very same word, Jame highlights this example of perseverance in **James 5:11**—

11 Behold, we count those blessed who persevere. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.

Paul uses “perseverance” to describe the faithful endurance of the church in Thessalonica as they faced great suffering.

We read in **2 Thessalonians 1:4**—

4 We ourselves boast about you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure.

The same description is even used of the believers who endure the greatest suffering—the suffering of the Great Tribulation.

When all the wicked worship the beast and take his mark of allegiance, we read of the faithful believers in **Revelation 14:12**—

12 Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.

Suffering is used by God to produce perseverance in those who have been justified by faith in Christ.

By contrast, those who may profess faith in Christ but have not truly received the salvation that God promises in Him are exposed as frauds when they suffer.

In His parable of the sower, Jesus describes these as those with rocky hearts.

He says in **Matthew 13:21** that, “**when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.**”

Those who are united to Christ by faith in Him and are thereby right in their relationship with God are revealed as genuine by their endurance of suffering, as Jesus says in **Luke 8:15**—

¹⁵ **But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.**

This is precisely what Paul has in mind when he writes that, “**affliction brings about perseverance.**”

But just as the affliction produces the **first link** in the chain, so that, in turn, produces the **second link** of “**proven character.**”

We already have an idea from what “**perseverance**” means that suffering will result in the genuineness of faith being revealed.

That lays a good foundation for understanding what Paul means by “**proven character.**”

The word itself is difficult to put into English, which is why the translators of the Legacy Standard Bible chose two words to do the work of one.

It indicates the result of being tested, the quality of being approved on the basis of a trial.⁷

It is the same word that James used in **James 1:3**—

³ **knowing that the testing of your faith brings about perseverance.**

Paul used the word in **Philippians 2:22** to describe the character of Timothy which had been demonstrated by his faithfulness over time—

²² **But you know of his proven worth, that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father.**

In **2 Corinthians 8:2**, Paul described how churches like Philippi and others in Macedonia were proven as they suffered through great poverty—

² **In a great testing by affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the richness of their generosity.**

He even uses it with the Corinthians to refer to the revelation of their faithfulness in challenging circumstances, as he wrote in **2 Corinthians 2:9**—

⁹ **For to this end also I wrote, so that I might know your proven character, whether you are obedient in all things.**

So as Paul uses it in **Romans 5**, his logical chain indicates that as those who are justified suffer, they persevere through their pain, pressure, and persecution and thereby prove the genuine character of their saving faith.

⁷ Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 220–221.

The genuineness of their faith increases their assurance of receiving God's promised final salvation, to the degree that they can boast in joyful confidence.

Therefore, our steadfast endurance leads to the quality of tested genuineness.

This tested genuineness or “**proven character**” provides a believer with the **third and final link** in the chain—“**hope**.”

We have already established that hope is looking forward to something with good reason to be confident in its fulfilment.

Hope is future-focussed faith that is confident in God's promises.

The future-focus is evident as Paul writes later in **8:24**—

²⁴ **In hope we were saved, but hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what he already sees?**

The promise element is clear as Paul describes our future salvation with a synonymous concept of eternal life, writing in **Titus 1:2** of, “**the hope of eternal life, which the God who cannot lie promised from all eternity.**”

Later in the same epistle, he writes in **Titus 3:7** that, “**having been justified by His grace, we would become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.**”

So this is the point of Paul's logical chain—suffering produces hope.

As a result of tested character, the justified believer will find that their hope has been strengthened.

Just as resistance to a muscle strengthens it, so challenges to our hope can strengthen it.

God designs our sufferings to build us up so that we confidently expect Him to do what He has promised.⁸

Afflictions produce assurance because as we endure afflictions they demonstrate the genuineness of our faith which, in turn, increases our assurance that God will complete all He has promised us in Christ.

As our hope is strengthened, our boast is no longer simply **“in the midst”** of suffering as we wait for future glory, but it is **“in”** the very suffering itself.

Suffering doesn't diminish our joyful confidence, but actually increases it as we consider what God uses it to produce in us.

All of this is strengthened and made all the more certain as we consider one essential point before moving on.

Commentators often remark that this logical chain works only if one responds to the troubles appropriately.

⁸ Andrew David Naselli, *Romans: A Concise Guide to the Greatest Letter Ever Written* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022), 70.

That is, they argue that it is only “*the Christian who responds to sufferings with the proper attitude*” who will experience an increased hope.⁹

However, as much as this is theologically true—and Paul would certainly not deny it—we must observe that he did not refer to any condition in his chain of logic.

Why is that?

He left out any condition because he believed that God will overcome a believer’s tendency to wilt under pressure.¹⁰

If we return to the parallel in **Romans 8** we’ll see this even more clearly.

Romans 8:28-30—

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.

²⁹ Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers;

³⁰ and those whom He predestined, He also called; and those whom He called, He also justified; and those whom He justified, He also glorified.

Paul inserts absolutely no condition here in **chapter 8** because it would be misleading by implying that the chain can be broken.

⁹ Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, 331.

¹⁰ Schreiner, *Romans*, 264.

The whole point that Paul wants to communicate here is the unbreakable nature of the chain and so, while he does not deny human responsibility, he focusses on the ultimate cause of God's sovereignty that makes the chain an absolute certainty.

That is exactly what he is doing in **chapter 5** too.

Paul's point is that we can be absolutely certain that our suffering will produce our assurance and joyful boast because that result is secured by God's sovereignty not our responsibility.

In **chapter 6**, Paul will clarify that our assurance is no ground for shirking our responsibility and indulging our sin.

But for now, his whole intention of filling us with joyful confidence in the face of pain and pressure would be undermined if it was conditioned on our faithfulness.

Just as God sovereignly produces in His chosen people the faith by which they are united to Christ and justified in Him, so He also guarantees the benefits and blessings that result from our justification.

Therefore, as Paul will argue in **Romans 8:28** and following, suffering now works for us, not against us, as God uses suffering to produce hope.

But as we continue into **verse 5** we find that Paul gives us a **second reason** that suffering increases our joyful confidence.

2. LOVE SUSTAINS HOPE (5)

Paul provides a second reason to reinforce the first—

⁵ and hope does not put to shame, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Paul's reasoning here is rooted deeply in the Hebrew thinking of the Old Testament.

Throughout the Old Testament is a repeated assurance offered to those who trust God, that they will be vindicated for placing their confidence in Him.

For example, we read in **Psalm 22:5**—

⁵ To You they cried out and were granted escape; In You they trusted and were not disappointed.

Psalm 25:3, 20—

³ Indeed, let none who hope in You be ashamed...

²⁰ Do not let me be ashamed, for I take refuge in You.

Psalm 119:116—

¹¹⁶ Do not put me to shame because of my hope.

As Paul uses this concept of shame in **Romans 5**, he is saying that believers never have to worry about experiencing shame because what they hoped for did not truly come to pass.

Given the context of Paul's focus on the eschatological future and the final judgement, it is best to understand his argument here to be future-focussed.

That is, he is pointing towards the final judgement and saying that those who are justified through faith in Christ will not be put to shame in the judgement because everything they hope for will come to pass.

God is faithful and will complete His gospel work by granting to every believer their final salvation.

But how can we be certain—so certain that we can boast in joyful confidence—that our hope won't prove futile?

The answer as Paul presents it in **verse 5** is that **love sustains hope.**

That is, our present experience of the love of God sustains our hope when our confidence waivers amidst our suffering.

To put that another way, God provides ongoing assurance of His love to sustain our hope in the midst of trials.

Believers will not experience shame, and the proof for that claim is the love of God poured out in their hearts by the Holy Spirit.

That's what Paul is getting at in **verse 5**, but to clarify this let's consider, first, what Paul means by "**the love of God.**"

Grammatically, there are at least two options for understanding this phrase.

Paul could mean the love that we have **FOR God**, or he could be referring to the love that we have **FROM God**.

As we've previously noted, this whole section of **5:1–11** is intended by Paul to offer us assurance by pointing us not to what we do in our own achievements, but by pointing us to God and the results He achieved on the basis of our justification.

Therefore, the context is heavily weighted towards understanding this phrase as the love we have **FROM God**.

That interpretation is further reinforced by the language Paul uses as he refers to **“the love of God has been poured out within our hearts.”**

This is the language associated with God's gift of His Spirit to His people, as we read in **Joel 2:28**—

28 “And it will be afterwards that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind....”

Paul adopts the same language when in **Titus 3:6** he refers to the Holy Spirit, **“whom [God] poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.”**

Though this language is most often used of the Spirit, since He is the Divine Person who communicates the love of God to our hearts, as Paul will explain, this language seems very appropriate.

In fact, Paul doesn't seem burdened to draw a strong distinction between the love of God and the Spirit of God since the distinction in this case would make very little difference.

What is important to note, though, is that grammatically the Greek verb can be understood as a present experience of ongoing significance, not a simple past tense event.¹¹

In fact, the grammar emphasises the ongoing reality of God's love in our hearts.

So as Paul explains, **“the love of God [is being poured out] within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”**

We should understand that the love that God has for us as believers in Christ is communicated to our sensations by the Holy Spirit, who resides in every believer.

The reason we can be fully assured that we will be spared from God's wrath in the future is because we presently experience God's love for us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

To put it another way, the gift of the Holy Spirit demonstrates that believers will be spared from God's wrath on the day of judgment.

¹¹ “ἐκκέχυται. Prf pass ind 3rd sg ἐκχέω. The stative aspect (perfect tense-form) describes being in a state of being poured out and is prominent in this co-text. The passive voice indicates external causality; the Holy Spirit is the agent.” Stanley E. Porter and David I. Yoon, *Romans: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, ed. Lidija Novakovic, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2023), 109.

As the Holy Spirit continually communicates God's love for us to our hearts, that experience of God's love strengthens and sustains our hope.

That experience is only heightened as we consider again that Paul clearly indicates God's initiative in loving us.

Not only does God do the pouring out of His love within our hearts, but He also is the One who gives His Spirit to dwell within us.

The once-for-all, irrevocable gift of “**the Holy Spirit who was given to us**” clearly establishes God as the One who takes the initiative in loving us, and therefore we have all the more reason to be assured by His love.

When Paul expands on this matter later in **chapter 8**, he offers one of the most magnificent assurances of the enduring love of God in the midst of our suffering.

Romans 8:35, 38-39—

35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction, or turmoil, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So Paul is making a simple but profound point—
when we suffer, the Holy Spirit assures us of God's love for us so that this assurance will sustain our confidence of receiving our promised final salvation.

It is suffering that produces hope, but love which sustains hope as we wait for the fulfilment of God's promises.

CONCLUSION

Paul is a realist—he knows that nothing erodes a believer's confidence in their promised future glory more than the reality of their present suffering.

That's because pain has a way of focusing us on the present and filling us with doubts about the future.

So taking the proactive approach to nurture our assurance, he offers two reasons why suffering doesn't diminish our joyful confidence, but instead increases it.

First, suffering produces hope because God designs our sufferings to build us up so that we confidently expect Him to do what He has promised.

Second, the love sustains hope as we presently experience God's love for us through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

As Paul nurtures our assurance, we come face to face with the breathtaking reality that the reason we experience any of the salvation that the gospel promises in Christ is because of God's love for us.

Therefore, if you have not yet been justified—if you have not yet been made right with God through faith in Christ—then let the magnificence of God's love woe to to come to Him.

As the apostle John writes, **“In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins”** (1 John 4:10).

However, if you have been united to Christ and justified through faith in Him, then learn to boast in your suffering because in doing so you will learn to boast in the love of your God.

If you learn to glory in your **afflictions** then you will learn to glory in the **affection** of your God.

Do not let your joy or your confidence rest on how much love you have for God, but let them rest on how much love God has for you.

That is the very message that He has sent His Spirit into your heart to proclaim to you—He loves you with such a great love that no pain or pressure or persecution can ever separate you from His unceasing love.

BENEDICTION

May the peace of God, our heav'nly Father,
And the grace of Christ, the risen Son,
And the fellowship of God the Spirit
Keep our hearts and minds within His love.

May this peace which passes understanding,
And this grace which makes us what we are,
And this fellowship of His communion,
Make us one in spirit and in heart.¹²

2 Corinthians 13:14

**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with you all.**

¹² *Benediction (May The Peace Of God)*, <https://gettymusic.store/products/benediction-may-the-peace-of-god>