

Testing the genuineness of our faith

Part 1



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*Would you – and others – describe yourself as a person of great faith and peace? **Have you learned what is God’s #1 end-goal reason for making so many go through prolonged pain, trials and testing? Find out in this message.** Everything spiritual is by faith. Our salvation is by grace through faith. We are to live by faith, all the time. With the coming times of worst trouble the world has ever seen, our faith needs to be tested, refined and ready for the return of Christ.*

*** [NOTE: I recommend you hear the AUDIO of this along with the notes in front of you.]

Hello everyone. I sure wish I could see you all who come to this site. I love hearing from you. This is Philip Shields and once again, welcome to Light on the Rock, where we focus on our relationship with God our Father and Yeshua our Savior – and with one another.

I have a question today for you: how strong is your faith? Are you sure it’s strong? *How would you know* how strong it is? How would you know how genuine it is?

Before new jets are put out into the public service, test pilots put every strain and test on the new engines, the new jet in order to find out if it works the way it’s supposed to work.

If I willed to you a sparkling rock I called a “diamond”, and some 24k gold bars – if you wanted to be sure they were the real thing, you would have them assayed or tested by an expert. Then you would know your “gold” is really gold.

Wouldn’t you think that our FAITH should be, will be, tested – and I mean tested fiercely, to see if it’s the real thing? That’s what we’re talking about: the testing of our faith.

I’ve given several sermons on faith, and even on getting through trials, and how we should praise God before we even see answers. All of those are great and true. But what about when you’re *20-30 years in a wheel chair* and there’s no end in sight for any relief? Ministers and brethren have prayed for you – but nothing changed. How do you feel about God then? Or if you’ve been anointed by several ministers for healing – and you’re not healed yet.

Of course – please understand – I believe that God usually wants us to be healed, even now; to be strong, prosperous, and healthy and seeing Him exercising His power to give us amazing answered prayers. Many of us do see many big, big answered prayers. I certainly have in my life and in the lives of some of those I’ve anointed for healing. *I’ve seen instant,*

dramatic healings – and some who weren't healed at all. But I don't forget the instant, dramatic ones. It's never too late for Yeshua to step in and even resurrect the dead.

Like Martha said – at Lazarus' tomb – “Lord, I know even NOW I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you” (**John 11:20-22**). That's so true. And Yeshua reminded her, that if she believes, she will see the glory of God. And then she gave that awesome confession in v 27—“Yes, Lord, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.” (We're way too hard on Martha and forget these high, high statements of her great faith.)

OK – I get that, I preach that, I want that, I still look for that. I hope you get where I'm coming from. Yeshua taught us that our Father wants to give us good gifts, way more than human parents do for their children (**Matthew 7:11**). His greatest gifts or “blessings” – however – are not wealth, or health. It's not having a great family – but something far RICHER than all that. And the testing of our faith is what so often makes that happen. What is that “something”? It's not necessarily that your pain stops or that you get out of your wheelchair.

Today I want to talk to and about all those thousands who are amputees, quadriplegics, MS patients who can't move anything below their neck, and all those who aren't being healed of their very serious pain, or family issues, or job issues, or financial troubles. *You see OUR GOD is YAHWEH OUR HEALER* – but that goes WAY *beyond* just PHYSICAL healing. *Yah can heal your marriage. He can heal your finances.* Your job issues. He can rebuke your stroke and make you dance for joy all over again! I've seen that happen after some of us prayed for a man and his wife. GOD is the Healer!

Others we prayed for were not healed. We tend to jump to the conclusion that faith must have been missing. That could be. Sometimes that's true. But as we'll see today – not necessarily so.

But how does one experience peace when in need, when you're in pain, when you're not receiving great answers – when the trial goes on and on and on? That's today's message.

It's FAR EASIER to preach a rah-rah-rah sermon about faith, and go into all the great stories about deliverance from God when faith was exercised – and there ARE so many of those examples. **But this sermon is a brass-knuckles sermon about the TESTING of our faith; when things go awry – by human standards.** When we pray and pray about something or someone – but we don't ever seem to see the relief we were praying for.

Will you, in those circumstances, remain faithful to God? WILL you continue to praise Him and even get closer to Him? Let's talk about all that. Will you be able to say with Paul, **that “whatever state I'm in, I've learned to be content”?** I believe that's an excellent statement of living by faith. Paul had been beaten, shipwrecked, hungry, beaten with lashes, stoned – and “whatever state I'm in, I've learned to be content.”

EVERYTHING we do spiritually is through and by FAITH. EVERYTHING. Scripture is clear that we are saved by grace through faith (**Ephesians 2:8-9**) and we are to *live* by faith – that means 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week (**Romans 1:17**). We also know that we are soon going to be going through the toughest time of testing world has ever seen – and Christ even asked if he would find faith on the earth at his return (**Luke 18:8**). Will

YOU and will I have the faith to endure to the very end in the time of worst trouble the world has ever seen?

In Iraq and Syria some very troubled times are already happening. Children being crucified in front of their parents. Others are burned alive after prior severe torture – for being a Christian. And it's only going to get worse and someday it will come to wherever you live.

Those coming back with Christ – will *only* be those “Called, chosen & Faithful”.

And if you think you're a shoe-in for “**the place of safety**” and will skip all that time of great trouble ahead of us, or be raptured to heaven somehow – then how do we explain the many scriptures in Daniel 8 and Revelation that speak of so many of the saints being stressed, persecuted, beheaded? Don't put your faith in a place of Safety – but in the Rock of our Salvation. Turn please to 1 Peter 1.

Our faith IS going to be sorely tested in the coming months and years. Some of you have already been in testing for a long time. *I've seen a spike in the testing of my own faith.* It seems one thing after another in rapid succession. And one big, big reason for all that: to test our faith to see if it's the real, genuine article. And you'll find that the testing our faith also DRIVES us closer to our Savior! That's always good.

When our faith is FIRST tested, our prayers are prayers where we're ASKING for things – healing, answered prayers, a job, a wife, and so on.

But as we get deeper into the test, you know what happens? We finally are broken. *We quit asking and just say – “Yeshua, I just want to be like Paul and come to really know you. Abba, please speak to me. Please let me see you and understand you in a deeper way I've never known before. Reveal yourself to me dear Abba, my Father”.*

So now the testing of our faith is leading us to its real purpose: intimacy with God; salvation; being in total relationship that ends in us absolutely trusting Him.

1 Peter 1:3-9

“Blessed (happy) be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 **who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation** ready to be revealed in the last time.

(Now let's read the next 3-4 VERSES carefully and slowly and again later.)

6 In this you greatly *rejoice*, though now for a little while, if need be, you *have been grieved by various trials*,

7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory [not condemnation] at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, **9 receiving the end of your faith – the salvation of your souls.**”

Did you get verse 9? What's the end goal for our faith? SALVATION of your souls. Is that what you and I would have normally said? That's when we are intimate with our Master and given eternal life and perhaps even part of his Bride.

And verse 7: If you could choose between a huge trial to test your faith – and a roomful of 24k gold bars, which would you pick? Seriously, which?

We need to be tested – so we are prepared for the high calling God has for us. We're children of a spectacular destiny – and God wants us to get our minds off the mundane and on to the things what really matter.

James 1:2-4 says we should be happy when we're being tried, knowing that the "testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, ***that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.***"

We'll see that in fact that's what happened to Yeshua! Testing faith = patience... trusting GOD'S timing. It's sometimes so hard to obey verses that say "WAIT upon the Lord..." I'll speak more about God's timing in Part 2.

What happens when we're not given the answers we hoped for?

SO often we do have great blessings from God. We feel close to him. We're happy, we're healthy, our family lives are good, our marriage seems sound, we make a lot of money, we love our church, and we have a nice home and car. In those times we speak in terms of being blessed. But is it possible we're not seeing the real blessings?

But what if someday you're told you have M.S? Or Cancer? I was told I had pancreatic and liver cancer about 15 years ago. And then 2 years ago that my spleen, liver and heart were all enlarged –and that I might even have a brain tumor. Those all disappeared. Then here recently I had to go thru a 45 minute MRI to once again be sure I didn't have a cancerous brain tumor.

Plus tests galore happening to my brother and sisters. I mean huge tests. All this tests your faith... [I discuss some recent issues.] Or you're told you're going to lose your job, and you're 67 already. You know jobs will be hard to come by. Or you get the dreaded phone call that you need to rush to the hospital – because your wife or child was in a terrible accident.... And when you get there, it's even worse than just an accident. Now what?

For years I would go nuts if I heard someone scream, or heard an ambulance – why?

Because those were the 2 dramatic sounds I heard when we found our baby boy on the bed, all blue – and stiff. He was dead. His time in the womb was very rough and my wife had to spend most of the pregnancy in bed. But we thought he had been healed. And I could go on and on with many, many more trials we've been through – *so I'm no novice at this subject.*

[Audio discusses what happened when our baby boy died.]

When our hearts cry out to God the Father – "WHY, Abba, WHY? Why can't you relieve my loved one's pain? Why don't you heal my daughter? Why do you not help my friend find a job so he can take care of his family? WHY is that family struggling with so many issues?"

WHAT REAL FAITH looks like:

GREAT faith ends up like Paul's explanation – that he had learned to be content whether in chains or a free man; whether in plenty or in want. He had learned to be content and at peace in his heart, to be CALM – and not anxious --knowing whatever was happening – GOD WAS IN IT. *“God's got this”*. It was well with his soul.

Philippians 4:11-13

“Not that I speak in regard to need, **for I have learned in WHATEVER state I am, to be content:** **12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound.** Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound **and to suffer need.** **13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”**

What a great example of living by faith.

In 1 Tim. 6:8 – “Having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.”

But we don't get there in one leap. That kind of faith comes about after intense suffering – and our experience of beginning to get depressed, then in prayer springing back to trust, trust, and trust – no matter what.

Yahweh has to know we absolutely trust him because we have come to know him so intimately.

In a nutshell, that's what this sermon is about: learning to believe God, to TRUST God, no matter WHAT He is putting us through. And when we get to that point, there's a great JOY and PEACE that comes over us. There's a great calm that sweeps over us.

I've experienced that many times. I've also – more often than not – experienced the opposite, that of stewing, fretting, sleepless nights because the tests are making me worry. We'll say more about that later. It's better to learn to come to the peace of mind of FAITH – and leaving the problems with God.

SUFFERING – a main way God tests our faith

Prolonged suffering is a main way God chooses to test our faith. We're tested because we know He is Almighty – and can relieve all the suffering we are going through. We reason that WE would intervene and stop suffering if we could – so why isn't God intervening?

Let's look at a few scriptures on this, as they also reveal some of the reasons FOR the suffering we are put into:

First of all, persecution and suffering was something all those who went before us also had to go through:

Matthew 5:11-12

“Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Paul talks about how the people of his day even rejoiced when they were *plundered* of their goods. Imagine that – and “*joyfully* accepting” of it! V. 34.

Hebrews 10:32-36

“But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: 33 partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; 34 for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. 35 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

It used to be dangerous to be a Christian, a true follower of the Christ. And it’s going to actually get worse than it’s ever been in history – in just a few short years.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 [audio has additional comments]

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is **working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory**, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

God didn’t even spare his own Son – Yeshua the Messiah – for He also suffered immensely.

Hebrews 2:17-18 Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB)

“Therefore He **had** to be like His brothers in every way, so that He could become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For since **He Himself was tested and has suffered, He is able to help** those who are tested”.

[There are some personal examples and stories on the audio...It’s so true, when we suffer, we can be so much more understanding of others going through the death of a child, or severe pain, or other trials]

Hebrews 5:7-10 HCSB

“During His earthly life, He [Christ] offered prayers and appeals, with loud cries and tears, to the One who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence. 8 **Though a Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered**. 9 **After He was perfected**, He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, 10 and He was declared by God a high priest “in the order of Melchizedek.”

So even the Son of GOD was tested through suffering. He learned obedience. He was heard – but what was God’s answer for Christ? - “NO, Son, you have to go through with it.” He learned obedience – though even on the cross he was hearing people taunt him – “Let’s see if God will save him”. How painful was that?

So this suffering is something that paints the picture for us of *what is most important and valuable*. *It puts everything in correct perspective for us*. Suddenly the new car, or the little scratch on the new car, or the new movie – are all so meaningless. Compared to what our forefathers went through, most of us have very light trials and testing – so far. Suffering makes someone a much more mature, a much deeper, person.

- **IT perfects us. It teaches us obedience.** When faith is tested, we're tempted to try something that might not be according to God's law. But even Christ "learned obedience by the things which he suffered."
- **Suffering certainly drives us to pray more**, seek God more, and put first things first more in our lives.
- *Suffering also makes us be more compassionate* and able to comfort others going through something we went thru (**2 Cor. 1:3-5**). And it will help us be better leaders and rulers in the kingdom of God – just as it did for Christ.
- I have a strong impression that people who have suffered deeply are far **DEEPER people** than people who have suffered little. They're more serious. They have a closer relationship with God. They can talk deeply about what you're going thru. Suffering **MATURES** us, in other words.
- Later in the sermon I will talk about the greatest things about Pain and suffering *and testing of our faith: it drives us to an INTIMACY with our Lord we NEVER would have had, to a DEPTH we never would have reached, without that pain.*
- **BEST of all: testing of our faith through infirmities and suffering MAKES US RELY ON Messiah.** It kills our independence and pride. I know a man who has an infirmity, lives in a wheelchair or in his bed – because he can't move. Someone has to help him use the bathroom. Or wash up. Or brush his teeth. Or put on a shirt. Getting the picture? But he's **STRONG** – because he's learning to look to Christ. 2 Cor 12:8-10 is what I'm talking about:

[On the AUDIO I speak of a couple in TX who need prayers; Plus a young man and his pregnant wife in FL – Jason and Melanie -- who need prayers for the fetus – who is having some real testing going on. Please hear the audio. And I mention Omae in Africa who with his wife care for 25 orphans. Because many of you helped out, they live. Thank you for giving a glass of water to this little one in Christ. Pray for Omae's bone cancer and his children.]

THE GOAL OF PAINFUL TRIALS – TO COME TO KNOW AND TRUST God

2 Corinthians 12:8-10

"Concerning this thing [Paul's "thorn in the flesh"] I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 9 And He said to me, "***MY*** grace is sufficient for you, for ***MY*** strength ***is made perfect in weakness.***" ***Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*** 10 ***Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities,*** in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. ***For when I am weak, then I am strong.***"

When we're feeling WEAK – is when Yeshua's strength can finally SHINE!

That's how he could say later to the Philippians "I can do ALL things Through Christ who strengthens me." Whatever your sore trial – you say – "God's got this. Christ walks with me in the fire. I can get through this by HIS power because I'm IN him and He's IN me." – and you start to PRAISE AND THANK God **FOR** the trial. I really mean that.

And suddenly you understand how we can have the JOY AND PEACE beyond explaining to anyone – even IN the sore trial.

So Paul explains in **2 Cor. 4:7** – "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels (our bodies), that the EXCELLENCE of **the POWER may be OF GOD and not of US.**" Let that sink in.

Think of what our SAVIOR went through. And because he DID, he is going to be able to comfort and understand you and me FAR more when we go to him – for things like Rejection, physical pain, being called names (bastard), torture, abandonment, shame (naked criminal's death on a stake), being falsely accused, unfairly tried, not given justice.
Now when you and I go through these things, we know he understands!

*One more thing Yeshua understands – if someday YOU have to face this: knowing you're going to die and Father is going to let you die. Remember Hebrews 5:7 – he was heard – but the answer still was "you have drink of that cup and die so billions can be saved."
The war against fear and against Satan is done on our knees!*

But this suffering also tries our faith. Big time. If we spend much of our time on our knees in these times, we will come out stronger than ever before. Paul says that in **2 Cor 4:17** – it's working out for us a much stronger weight of glory.

This testing and proving of our faith is worth more than a castle full of 24k gold bars.

Remember what Paul went through. He chronicles it in 2 Cor. 11:23-29 – in stripes above measure, in prisons frequently. He was beaten FIVE TIMES by Jews with 39 lashes each time. Beaten with rods three times. Stoned once. Shipwrecked 3 times. Plus many more things he lists – and in cold and nakedness... But we don't find him complaining about where was GOD in all of this. He seems to have accepted it as his lot in life. If beaten by rods, Paul experienced broken bones, broken ribs, concussions and more.

Let's shift gears now a bit.

Lessons from Job, the blind man and Paul... the real purpose of pain

There are many lessons from the book of JOB. Here's one: We're all tempted to feel like Job's friends felt: when we suffer, it's because we've sinned and have upset God. But that wasn't true! They said he was being punished for something wrong he did. After all – the massiveness of Satan's attacks – one right after another - - would make most people feel you were cursed, right? That would have crushed most of us. But Satan can go only as far as God allows. [More detail on audio]

[Note that Eliphaz admits that he got his messages from a strange spirit that accused God of even finding fault with his angels. This was not a good angel. **See Job 4:12-21**).

But God said Job was blameless (Job 1:8). HIS suffering was NOT because of sin. But we're tempted to THINK that way: that God must be mad at us when one test after another comes upon us. This is also a test.

Sometimes yes – that's true sometimes – that people can be punished for their sins. But the story of Job and John 9 show us that is not always the case.

John 9:1-3—when disciples saw a man born blind, they went to the natural first assumption: someone sinned. He's the result of someone's sin. But Yeshua clearly said – NO, it's not that at all, but this is going to be for the glory of God."

What was the glory of God revealed? Being healed of his physical blindness? NO, brethren. The real glory of God revealed was the spiritual sight this man was given as a gift.

What happened? Yeshua was even more concerned that this blind man came to see His SAVIOR – even more than he was concerned that he could physically see.

See John 9:35-41. The formerly blind man wanted to know who the Son of God was. Yeshua said: "you have both SEEN HIM and it is He who is talking with you." -- and so he said he believed, and he worshiped Christ. THIS is the GLORY OF GOD revealed: when we come to KNOW, COME TO MEET, come to SEE the Son of God at work in our lives – even in and through, during and after, our trials.

THIS is the deeper reason for the testing and trials we all will go through. This is the DEEPER healing God is more concerned with: that we come to see HIM.

We come to fully TRUST GOD no matter what – because we are coming to know him intimately, and therefore we can trust.

So in the book of JOB, the deeper healing JOB came to was at the end of the book: "NOW I SEE YOU...Now I GET it!"

Job says in (Job 42:5-6) "I knew ABOUT you – I'd heard all about you – but NOW I GET IT. Now I see. I see YOU. Therefore, I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

The test, the affliction, the infirmity, including the coming Great Tribulation – is to BREAK our pride and faith in ourselves – to break our self-reliance, and have us put everything on Christ and rely on HIM, trust HIM, seek HIM, and come to intimately KNOW him.

That's why I get so worked up when people refuse to see that even the righteousness we must have is by FAITH too. It's HIM, HIS perfection, HIS righteousness. "Become you therefore PERFECT, as God the Father is perfect!" – Matthew 5:48. That perfection is possible only by faith in Christ and HIS perfection that he covers us with, by faith.

Even **Philippians 2:12** – "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" is followed by the rest of the sentence in **verse 13** – "for it is GOD who works in you both to will and to do."

And that is why Paul said so clearly in Philippians 3:8-11 that he did not want his own righteousness from the law, but the righteousness that is from God through faith in Christ.

And when He comes to live in us, we will be obedient. We're done with sin – as Peter says in his epistle. I'll speak more of that in the conclusion part 2 of this sermon.

Now get this: The DEEPER healing God wants out of all of us is replacing our self-centered desire for him to hear US – with an outgoing desire to hear and see HIM, and witness to what HE IS. And guess what? As a bonus he often will physically heal us as well, as he did Job in Job 42. He is God our Healer – but the focus of that is deep SPIRITUAL healing, compassion for others, and a desire to pray deeply for others.

So God tells us – “Pray for ONE ANOTHER so THAT YOU may be healed.” **Jas 5:16**

I'll say more about this point in the next sermon. I sometimes wonder, in face of all the church splits and splintering, *if God isn't allowing so much sickness and testing to make us CROSS CORPORATE LINES*, church lines – and pray urgently for those folks “over there” who aren't a part of your group (but should be!). The testing of our faith in trials is bringing the brethren together, no matter what group they attend now.

In fact in **1 Cor. 11:27-30**, Paul says as much. He says one reason we have so much illness and death going on – instead of healing and health – is *because of the way we're treating the body of Christ (one another, in other words)*. God's not pleased with the way we are with each other.

Father wants us praying for one another –even those persecuting us. Ask God to bless them. Pray that He will lead them and us to be true brothers.

When the body parts don't function properly together, the body gets sick. And eventually dies. The liver has to do its job. We're the body parts. Get it? The spleen has to do its job. And the liver, spleen, pancreas and all the body has to work together – or the body gets sick and dies. Some of us are “livers” or “Spleens” or arm pits like me maybe – but the body needs all its parts. When the body parts – the brethren – don't work as one, together – the brethren get sick and die. So we need to repent of our fracturing and turn our hearts to God first, and then to one another next.

PAIN, TESTING, ILLNESS, TRIALS – bring us closer to God and to each other. THAT is good. That is amazingly good. And when we GET IT, when we see it, we say *“Thank you, dear Father, FOR pain. Thank you for pain that is working wonders.* It makes me rely on you and even rely on the body of Christ to HELP me, to humble me and let them be blessed by you in turn. And it's good for me to help those in need. It draws us together with you - and with one another. Father, that's GOOD. That's something I can be thankful for.”

Now I didn't come to see or live all that overnight. But between 2013 through 2016 so far, we've had some painful trials with one pain issue after another. And I'm finally thanking God FOR the pain, both physical and emotional. I'm learning to thank Yahweh FOR the trial and IN the trial. Because God is in it – and draws me closer to him. It's making me more compassionate and making me pray much deeper for everyone else. (That's the next sermon).

God wants a **STRONG** relationship with us. Strongest relationships come after years of **HARD** times, of testing and hardship. That's why men who have gone through combat together and had to rely on each other for each other's survival – create an intimate bond that will never be broken. They become a Band of brothers. We're in the fight of our lives but many of us don't seem to realize it.

So far more important than our tumor or cancer or pain – more important than all that -- is a deep abiding relationship with our Savior that ends in us trusting him no matter what, because we have come to know him. That kind of deeper healing often comes from the suffering itself.

As we apply what I'm saying here – we will see us all being healed even physically more.

The trials transform us “from glory to glory” – IF we keep focused on our Savior (**2 Cor. 3:18**). It's the result of the testing of our faith. And finally we can learn to let go and totally **TRUST** God.

So we finally can come to where we are **THANKFUL *FOR* the suffering.** Thank **GOD** for suffering. Suffering is what wakes us up. Suffering makes us seek God. Suffering exposes us – bare and naked – before our Maker and we **BOND** with Jesus, we **BOND** with Abba. This is the deeper goal of all our testing and suffering.

Let's leave it there for now.

[Closing prayer on audio. Asked Yeshua to come live in us, give us His faith, cover us with **HIS** peace, hope and faith and compassion. ... and more.]

To be continued – in **PART 2**.