

Searching Our Hearts in Difficult Times  
16 - Living By Faith in Difficult Times

1. Introduction

Rom 1:16-17  
Gal 3:11  
Heb 10:38

Ezek 21:8-13

Job 9:22

2. Faith Gives Fear of God

Is 8:13  
Is 26:11

Ps 9:16  
Rev 15:4

3. Faith Prepares an Ark

Is 32:2

Ps 32:7

Ps 2:12

4. Faith Examines the Heart

1 Cor 6:9-10  
Eph 5:5-6  
Gal 5:19-21

Rev 3:15-16

1 Jn 2:10-11

1 Jn 2:15-17

5. Summing Up

Next time: Part III, Sermon 2: The Use and Advantage of Faith in a Time of Reproaches and Persecutions (pages 116 - 126)

## The sweetness of the Word in the school of affliction<sup>1</sup>

God often brings his people into great depths, and death oftentimes, before deliverance comes that so his glorious attributes may be the more displayed and magnified. We can never know God as we ought without temptations. The Church must have a Red Sea before them and a potent army pursuing them. Daniel must be in the lion's den and the three children in the fiery furnace; and Jehoshaphat and Ahaz contest with vast armies. And these are the times God takes to deliver and save his people that so he may have the glory alone and we may sing to the praise of his holiness, power, wisdom, goodness and truth.

...In the school of affliction and temptation, there it is the Lord generally shows the soul its own impotency and insufficiency to bear trials honorably without divine grace and assistance.... In this school of affliction it is that the soul is taught to suck sweetness out of the Word of God. Now they are taught to know the Word more practically and feel it more powerfully. Now it can say with David, thy law is my delight; and had it not been so, I had perished in my affliction (see Psalm 119:92).

The Word of God before a time of temptation and trouble is almost to a poor soul as a full table to a full belly who loathes the honey-comb. O but God knows how to make the Word and promises sweet, as good food is to the hungry soul.

...We may preach and hear many a good sermon, and in those sermons many a gracious promise be mentioned, yet we may not have had those tastes and relishes of the sweetness of the Word and promises as in a time of temptation. So that what the soul hath often read, now he can feel and experience that it was good for them they have been afflicted.

...The design of God by all your temptations is to take you off from living a life of sense, which we are very prone to, and live a life of faith.

1. From *The Scribe Instructed*, 30, 31–32, 37, 41.

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