

Pastor's Corner

by Pastor Howard Chang
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Finding Rest in God Alone

Last month in my James CE class we looked at the beginning of James where it says, "Consider it pure joy when you face trials of many kinds..." He goes on to say the reason is so that through perseverance in faith through trials believers will become "mature and complete, not lacking anything" (James 1:2-4).

This passage brought me back to my experience at the Psoriasis Treatment Center in Palo Alto the summer after I graduated from high school. For six weeks I spent six hours a day, five days a week, covered in a stinging paste spread over the many sores all over my body. During treatment I lived with a family friend nearby the clinic and only drove home on weekends. With so many idle hours at the clinic and lonely evenings at a mostly empty house, I wanted to do something productive. I decided to scour the Bible to discover God's view of suffering and how I could endure those long days of treatment. One of the key verses I memorized was the one I quoted above from James. Part of the answer came from the joy of knowing that this trial would lead me to grow solid in faith.

Twenty years and countless treatments later I still endure the suffering of chronic, severe psoriasis. Thankfully the recent treatments are working much better than the older ones. However, it's natural to become tired of the daily and weekly medicine routines as well as the unpredictability of when treatments might lose their effectiveness. This year's theme of coming to Jesus and finding rest in Him speaks to another part of the answer to how to endure in the face of tiring trials. I've learned that when I stay close to Him, learn from Him, He supports me in the work ("yoke") that He has called me to each day.

Each of us has different challenges in life. We don't need to be reminded of the troubles our economy and world are facing. Some of these may feel chronic and never ending. Yet with a godly perspective and Jesus' support we can find rest in Him in the midst of strife. As Psalm 62:1-2 says, "My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken."



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唯在主裡找到安息

在我所教的主日學課程《雅各書》，上個月一開始我們便讀到：「你們落在百般試煉中，都要以為大喜樂；因為知道你們的心經過試驗，就生忍耐。但忍耐也當成功，使你們成全完備，毫無缺欠。」（雅各書 1: 2-4）

這一段經文，使我回想起在高中畢業那一年的夏天，於 Palo Alto 的皮膚科醫療中心接受牛皮癬的治療，整個療程長達六個星期，每週五天，每日六小時，在每次療程中，我全身受感染的地方都被塗上一層使人刺痛難耐的藥物，十分難受。為了方便接受治療，我就搬到朋友家中暫住，（因為他的家就在醫療中心附近），只有在週末時才回家一次。每當我想到要無奈地過著每日六小時的治療及孤獨地熬過每一個漫漫長夜時，我就立下決心，要好好地利用這段時間去做一些有意義的事情，我開始去研讀聖經，尋找神對苦難的啟示，教我去渡過那段漫長的日子。當中一段使我最難忘的經文正是上述所提及的雅各書章節，這段經文給我最大的啟示和安慰就是從苦難和磨練中，我們可以建立更堅牢的信念和信心。

就是這樣，經過了二十年數之不盡的治療，我依然一直在忍受著這個皮膚病的煎熬，很感恩最近的治療比較有效。但是，這種規律化的治病生涯及不可預測的療程、藥物何時會失效的情況，很自然地使人感到疲乏厭倦。我們今年教會的主題是「耶穌說：到我這裡來。」凡勞苦擔重擔的人，只要到祂那裡去，祂就會給他們安息。這也是我如何去面對和忍受苦難與試煉的座右銘。我知道只要我緊緊的靠著神和虛心的去效法祂的榜樣，祂就在祂呼召我每天的工(軛)上支撐我。

我們每個人自己都面對人生不同的挑戰，更不需要人來提醒我們有關那些經濟的困難和世界各樣問題。那一些有的是叫人覺得漫長而永無止息的。只有當我們抱持神的觀點和靠著耶穌基督的支托，這樣，縱然是在衝突當中，我們可以在主裡面找到安息。正如詩篇 62:1-2 所說：「我的心默默無聲，專等候神；我的救恩是從祂而來，唯獨祂是我的磐石，我的拯救；祂是我的高臺，我必不動搖。」