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**God’s Fire: Refining Gold**

**Big Idea of the Series:** This 4-week serieswill cover God’s purifying fire. We will see what the Bible says about how God refines us and removes the stains and impurities from our lives. Why trials and tests are necessary for us and why they come to us in this life.

**Week 1**

**Text:** James 1:12, Romans 5:3-5 & Proverbs 3:5-6

**Topic:** Discipline, Refining, Strengthened in Christ

**Big Idea of the Message:** If you are seeking God in all things; in word and deed and truth, then you will find true happiness through the truth in Jesus Christ. Either you let God hold you in the refiner’s fire, to remove the rough edges and blemishes, or you wrestle yourself free and fall into that unquenchable fire that lasts forever.

**Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:**

1. **Praise God in the Refining:** God knows everything that you have went through, everything that you are going through and everything that you will go through and He is sovereign in of all of it. *James 1:12: “Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love Him.”* Our problem is that instead of seeking to learn and grow spiritually during the trial, we try to bypass or find a way around Christ the Refiner standing before us.

We fail to grasp what it says in *Romans 5:3-5: “…but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”* God gives you the Holy Spirit, when you give all of you to Him.Recall the Hebrews in Exodus who would not submit to the will of God; they kept wandering in the wilderness repeatedly (for 40 years instead of a few days).

Even when we think that we have found a way around the Refiner’s fire, (wasting time in our life wandering) the Purifier is still there, waiting. The fire that we have been running from is still waiting to cleanse us.

Do you want to keep going through the same agonizing tests and tribulations again and again and again or will you seek God’s grace and mercy to bring you through them? Will you let Christ carry you through the fire? Only God can take us through. We do not have to understand the why or realize the outcome. We must understand and fully trust that God knows what He is doing and only His Holy Spirit can lead us.

Here is an example of gold refining here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apD5cPVsDjc>

1. **It Takes Trust to Allow God’s Refining**: *Proverbs 3:5-6: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”* That means our paths are crooked and God needs to fix them. *Romans 12:12: “Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.”* We must ask God for help in prayer. *James 4:10: “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”* This is done so that we will be inclined to give God the glory and appreciation that He deserves for our coming out of a trial.

If we did not do it in this way, we would not give credit where credit is due because that is the nature of our flesh. Human beings have horrible short-term memories when it comes to God helping them in tough situations. “Oh God I promise if you get me out of this and Oh God if you get me out that.” Then He does help us, and we suddenly forget our vow to Him. Do we not?

We must constantly trust, be humble, be patient and constant in prayer before, during, and after the storm. And know that no matter what we go through – He is always there with us*. Philippians 4:6-7: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*” We only survive, strengthen and thrive because the Holy Spirit gets us through. Jesus carries us through.

**Message LifePoint**: *Colossians 3:10: And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.”*

“As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest as to burn away all the impurities. The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot; then she thought again about the verse that says: *‘He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver.’ (Malachi 3:3)* She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined. The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed. The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, ‘How do you know when the silver is fully refined?’ He smiled at her and answered, ‘Oh, that’s easy — when I see my image in it.’”

*Philippians 4:13: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”* We can do nothing apart from Him. So, this means our strength is no strength at all – it is in our weakness that Christ’s strength is magnified.

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**Week 2**

**Text:** Romans 8:28, 1 Peter 5:10

**Topic:** Discipline, Refining, Strengthened in Christ

**Big Idea of the Message:** Being refined by God’s Holy Fire is a good thing for us! It is necessary to root out all the junk that we have put into ourselves.

**Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:**

1. **God Fills in Where We Fall Short**: The Holy Spirit will give wisdom and He will fill in where we fall short. If we trust Him to do so. God’s cleansing with Holy Fire will enhance us as Christians when we are in obedience to His perfect will in our lives.

God’s perfect will is when we are following Him steadfastly, heeding the Lord in the call for our lives. We are doing what God tells us to do. Not what we want to do. Do not be caught up in the permissive will. God’s permissive will is where He leaves us to our own devices, our own selfish lusts, desires and pride. Are you following God’s will or your own? Would God approve of the things you say and do? Are you making this evaluation of yourself with your beliefs or with what God’s Word says? Stand still. Stand firm. Stand on God’s truth. Endure the purifying.

1. **Remember it is a Process**: [Hope for the Heart](https://www.hopefortheheart.org/july-2013-letter-from-june-on-trials/) gives this example of the process:

“**Stage I: The Breaking —The refiner breaks up the natural ore.**

In biblical times, a refiner began by breaking up rough ore—hardened rock encased with common minerals such as tin, copper, and zinc. But that rock also had the promise of valuable, rare metals hidden within—the precious metals of gold and silver. The breaking of the rock is necessary to begin the refining process to expose highly valuable metals to heat. The Lord communicates His perfect plan to us—we are rough rock in need of refining fire. *“‘Is not my word like fire,’ declares the Lord, ‘and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?’” (Jeremiah 23:29).*

**Stage II: The Crucible —The refiner places unrefined silver into a crucible.** The refiner puts broken, crushed ore into a “crucible”—a fireproof melting pot able to withstand extreme heat. Then the refiner places the crucible into the furnace at the precise temperature necessary for removing other metals that would mar the quality of the gold or silver. Just as the furnace is used to purify silver in the crucible, our Refiner uses heat to purify our hearts and cleanse our character. *Proverbs 17:3 says, “The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the Lord tests the heart.”*

**Stage III: The Dross—The refiner places the crucible in the heated furnace to remove dross.** As the ore melts in the crucible under the watchful eye of the refiner, a layer of impurities called “dross” eventually forms on the surface. The Bible says, “*Remove the dross from the silver, and a silversmith can produce a vessel” (Proverbs 25:4).* For us individually, dross represents any misplaced dependency—any wrong motive, wrong attitude, wrong action—anything that keeps us from being all that God wants us to be.

**Stage IV: The Heat—The refiner raises the temperature to higher degrees.** After the refiner painstakingly skims off these impurities, he then turns up the heat and places the crucible back into the blistering furnace. Again, and again (up to seven times, we are told in historical literature) impurities rise to the surface. He knows that only certain impurities are released at certain temperatures. *Psalm 12:6 says, “And the words of the Lord are flawless, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times.”*

**Stage V: The Purification—The refiner continues to remove the impurities**. Each time, with utmost skill and patience, the refiner removes the dross, leaving behind gleaming gold and shimmering silver . . . purer and more precious than before. To gauge his progress, the refiner looks for his own reflection on the surface of the silver-filled crucible. The more dross removed, the less distorted his reflection. The Bible says our Refiner sits over the refining process to purify us, *“He knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold” (Job 23:10).*

**Stage VI: The Reflection —The refiner sees a clear image of himself.**

Only when the refiner investigates the crucible and sees a clear reflection of himself is the process complete. Finally, the silver attains its highest degree of purity!

And that, my friend, describes our Refiner’s loving intentions for allowing us to be in the “furnace of affliction.” As we trust Him to use our trials to cleanse our character and purify our hearts, we will begin to see the “silver lining.” *Isaiah 48:10 says, “See, I have refined you, though not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.”*

**Message LifePoint**: The big picture is not about you. It is not about you. It is never, ever about you. It is and always has been (long before you and long after you) about God alone. There is not one selfish person in heaven and there never will be. We all question God at times and He loves us enough to allow it, but who are we to question God? After God pulled Job out of the fire, he was polished and blessed much more than before he went into the tremendous trials that he suffered.

The life of Job is proof that man usually has no idea what God is doing behind the scenes in the life of each believer. Job knew that God was on His Throne and in total control, though he had no way of knowing why so many terrible tragedies were occurring in his life. Job never lost his faith or trust in God, even under the most distressing circumstances that tested him to his core. Never lose your faith in God no matter what circumstance befalls you.

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**Week 3**

**Text:** Ecclesiastes 7:20, Romans 8:28 & Psalm 34

**Topic:** Discipline, Refining, Strengthened in Christ

**Big Idea of the Message:** All human beings need the saving grace of Christ. We must go through times of suffering and trial to see that we need God over ourselves.

**Sermon Ideas and Talking Points:**

1. **Suffering is Part of the Fallen State of Man**: Why? *Ecclesiastes 7:20: “Indeed, there is no one on earth who is righteous, no one who does what is right and never sins.”* Only Jesus Christ was sinless and thus a perfect sacrifice on our behalf. If we believe and receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, we will be forgiven. Nothing else you do can get you to heaven, nothing. What we deserve is hell. What we are given is eternal life in the very presence of God if we come to Christ in faith alone. Because of our sin, suffering comes.

"The Oak Tree" – “*A mighty wind blew night and day, it stole the oak tree's leaves away, then snapped its boughs and pulled its bark until the oak was tired and stark. But still the oak tree held its ground while other trees fell all around...The weary wind gave up and spoke, "How can you still be standing, Oak?" The oak tree said, "I know that you can break each branch of mine in two, carry every leaf away, shake my limbs, and make me sway. But I have roots stretched in the earth, growing stronger since my birth. You'll never touch them, for you see, they are the deepest part of me. Until today, I wasn't sure of just how much I could endure. But now I've found, with thanks to you, I'm stronger than I ever knew."* ~ Johnny Ray Ryder, Jr.

**How deep are your roots in Jesus Christ?**

1. **We Must See God as Who God Is:** Our God is eternal, infinite, omniscient (*all-knowing*), omnipresent (*everywhere*), and omnipotent (*the adjective for the word is all-powerful, the noun - God).* Why should human beings who are not omniscient, not omnipresent, or not omnipotent expect to be able to fully understand God’s ways?

Remember *Romans 8:28: “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.”* A diamond is the hardest substance known, so its interior should be very resistant to corruption. But diamonds require very high pressure to form. So, the Holy Spirit must allow very high pressure (trials, tribulations, tests) to strengthen our interior, as it also removes the debris, the dirt and baggage from us so that the treasure within can be seen and shine in God’s creative brilliance.

I think it is wiser that instead of questioning God, we are to focus on the example of our Savior Jesus and ask that God’s will be done and not ours in our own lives. If God is calling and sanctioning you to do something for Him, you can and should expect to be tested. You can expect testing proportionate with the seriousness of your call. Your hardships may seem unbearable apart from the grace of God - that is because they are! Comfort, strength and resilience only come from God.

Trials are for our benefit even though we at times despise them. They are never pleasant and at times we hate them, but we should rejoice in them – because those of us that know God – we will suffer for the sake of Christ! And we should rejoice that we are blessed to do so!

1. **Seek God’s Comfort in the Refining**: *1 Peter 5:10: “But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.”* We have the power of the Holy Spirit to comfort and reinforce us in our times of tribulation. God will help us through any anxiety, stress, disease, loss, etc.…if we obey His will for us. *Psalm 34:19: “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.”*

Jesus obeyed the will of the Father and God gave Him the strength to withstand. As He will us as well that love Him. *Psalm 34:17-18: “When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.”*

**Message LifePoint**: Every tribulation has a purpose. Every test has significance. And your true character will show amid those trials. What is truly in your heart will show during a conflict or test.

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**Week 4 - Conclusion**

**Text:** 1 Peter 4:12-13, James 1:2-6, 1 Peter 1:6-9, & 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

**Topic:** Discipline, Refining, Strengthened in Christ

**Big Idea of the Message:** So, where are you? How deep are your roots in Christ? Do you have any roots at all? How much of God’s Word are you being fed and how often?

1. **Trials are for Our Benefit**: [K. Farran of ABWE](https://www.abwe.org/blog/10-reasons-god-entrusts-us-trials) gives 10 great reasons for trials:
2. “TRIALS ARE PART OF GOD’S WORK.
3. TRIALS PUT GOD’S POWER ON DISPLAY.
4. TRIALS PREPARE ME FOR SERVICE (EVEN LITTLE TRIALS).
5. TRIALS SANCTIFY ME.
6. TRIALS MAKE ME DEPEND ON GOD.
7. TRIALS SHOW OTHERS THAT GOD IS DEPENDABLE.
8. TRIALS SHOW US AND OTHERS THAT GOD IS INFINITELY VALUABLE.
9. TRIALS ARE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR REWARD.
10. TRIALS MAY BE SPIRITUAL WARFARE.
11. TRIALS MAY BE FOR DISCIPLINE.”

Every minute of ordeal that you endure with the strength of Christ builds eternal rewards of glory that will be cast to the feet of Jesus for saving us.

*1 Peter 4:12-13: “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.”*

Now ask yourself, truly how big is your small trial in the full scope of eternity? How horrible is your tribulation? How tough is your circumstance? Are you letting God cultivate you by obeying His will and trusting in what He has waiting for you? Do you trust Him to walk you through and do you reach out to take the hand of Jesus Christ that is extended to bring you out?

*James 1:2-6: “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.”*

Any doubt amounts to that much lack of faith. Faith is belief without doubt. Faith is a secure belief in God and a trusting acceptance of God's will for you. If you died right now would you go to heaven? You should say, “Yes!” with all the fullness of your being with no doubt whatsoever. But if you have doubts, seek God, seek His Word, and seek His Son Jesus Christ! Solidify your faith with Him and in Him so that you can stand firm in that faith.

1. **Rejoice in the Refining**: *1 Peter 1:6-9: “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 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 at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.”*

When gold is refined it is melted down by fire so that all the impurities are removed. God does the same with us, removing our impurities so that at the end of the process we are polished pure and beautiful for the purpose of God’s great glory. We are made gold. We all have our ups and downs, but when you do not worry and let God have full control over the situation, the problem is rectified through the providence of God. He works it all out. According to His will.

Jesus proclaims that He is the only way to the Father, the only way to Heaven, the only truth, the only way to peace in your life, and the only way to climb out of any struggle you are caught up in. That is God’s will for you – stop refusing and disobeying it.

God does allow us to struggle at times – why? Because it turns our focus towards Him. *Joshua 1:9: “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”*

If you are struggling, hurting, or needing guidance – PRAY; Talk to God. He already knows what you need; He is just waiting for you to ask for it. Just remember, patience is a virtue. He will do things in His time, according to His will and not ours. Our biggest problems as Christians is our lack of waiting for God’s timing which is always precise and correct.

1. **Endure it For the Glory of God**: All things are done for the glory of God by true believers. Take heart, have comfort and joy when you are being refined during a trial or an ordeal. No matter how hard it is, stay faithful. It means that you are a child of God and truly loved by Him. *John 16:33: “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”*

When you cry out to God in earnest prayer asking, “God what do I do. Lord why am I going through this, please answer me Lord.” When God answers and tells you to trust Him, or even in divine silence be content with that. He will give you the answer at His appointed time and it will all make sense to you then.

*2 Corinthians 4:16-18: “Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 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.”*

**Message LifePoint**: Remember that every moment and event in your life is meaningful, even if it seems insignificant. If we did not have trials and tribulations, then we would learn nothing. We would not become stronger. Muscles were made by God to be exercised. So is our faith. It is all working for glory in eternity. Our mission is obedience to God’s will, both in our destiny and in the smallest details in life. It all matters!

God's does not always give us the answers to all the questions that come in this life, but in the end, He always delivers His own. In Heaven, all these events in your life will be answered fully. Have faith in Christ with every breath and every sorrow, with every tear and every shout of joy.

Have faith in all things because all things are from God and return to Him for His glory. We must keep Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior first in our lives. Then He will show us the way out of any struggle that we encounter no matter the severity of that trial.

He is the only Way…hear the promise of our Lord in ***Revelation 3:21: “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”***

Keep your eyes on Jesus while in the Refiner’s fire, understand He is making you better, and you will overcome and shine like the purest silver or gold; you will shine like the clearest diamond. Stand firm in love because your reward is coming soon.