

Having considered the three phrases in v11 together last week—it's my desire, in a similar way—to consider the three phrases in v12 together this morning—now I have to be honest—I struggled with whether or not to consider them separately—but the more I pondered them—the more I was convinced—there exists an intimate and intentional connection between them—thus I first want to explain each phrase, and then show their connection, byway of three broad and general observations...

The close relation that exists between these three phrases is captured by several of the commentators, for example, Lenski—"Joyful hope lifts us over present affliction, and patient endurance is maintained by steadfastness in prayer" Geoffrey Wilson—"The summons to be 'patient in tribulation' is significantly sandwiched between the call to rejoice in hope and to continue instant in prayer. The Christian does not sink under present trials, because he is buoyed up by the hope of future glory and the divine strength which is imparted to him through prayer..."

- I. The Text Examined—byway of three considerations
- II. The Text Expanded—byway of three observations

I. The Text Examined—byway of three considerations

A. Rejoicing in hope

1. Here—I want to answer two questions—[1] what is meant by hope, and [2] what is meant by rejoicing in hope...
2. [1] What is meant by hope—most of you know that the Scriptures use the concept of hope different than we do...
3. For example—you might hear someone say—I hope it doesn't rain today, or I hope my car doesn't break down...
4. This is not how the Scriptures use the concept of hope—simply put—Christian hope means—a confident expectation...
5. That is—a confident expectation that we are going to live with Christ forever, with a glorified body, on a new earth...
6. Thus—essential to the meaning of Biblical or Christian hope—are the two concepts of—confident expectation...
7. Job 8:13-14—"The hope of the hypocrite shall perish, whose confidence shall be cut off, and whose trust is a spider's web..."
8. That is—the hypocrites hope is one and the same with his confidence and trust—there one and the same thing...
9. Thus—native to Christian hope is the concept of trust or confidence—but there's also the concept of expectation...
10. Prov.10:28—"The hope of the righteous *will be* gladness, but [in contrast] the expectation of the wicked will perish..."
11. Thus—Christian hope is the confident expectation—that we shall be finally saved and live with Christ forever...
12. In short—Christian hope concerns future salvation and the glories of heaven—the enjoyment of our inheritance...
13. Rom.8:22-25—"For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for *it* with perseverance..."
14. [2] What is meant by rejoicing in hope—to rejoice in hope—is to rejoice in the prospect of what we hope for...

15. That is—it's to allow what we are waiting for—to have a PRESENT impact upon the way we think and feel...
16. Thus—the apostle commands us to—rejoice in the prospect of what we hope for—we are to be filled with joy...
17. Now—here I have to digress for a few minutes and address a common error—which concerns the nature of true joy...
18. First of all—let me state the obvious—we are commanded to rejoice—thus joy is more than circumstantial...
19. That is—true joy isn't built upon our circumstances—but upon the never-changing realities of the Scripture...
20. Alexander Maclaren—"True joy is not a matter of temperament, so much as a matter of faith. It is not a matter of circumstances..."
21. Thus—I suggest that if we're to rejoice in hope—two things are necessary—[a] confidence, and [b] expectation...
22. [a] Confidence—that is—we will never rejoice in hope of future salvation—unless we are confident of future salvation...
23. Ps.130:5—"I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in His word I do hope"—that is—in His word I trust...
24. This is what our hope is built on—on God's word—and specifically—on God's promise concerning Christ...
25. Dear brethren—where is our hope found?—not in ourselves, not in our merit, not in our works—but in Christ...
26. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness—which we learn about in God's word...
27. My Christian friend—do you want more joy—then you must stand more firmly upon the Christ the solid Rock...
28. Robert Haldane—"This hope is founded on the unchangeable promise of God—on His promise accompanied by His oath—on the blood of Christ with which He has sealed His promise—on Him who was not only dead, but is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for His people. This hope, then, is both sure and steadfast, and enters into that within the veil, whither the forerunner, even Jesus, is for us entered..."
29. [b] Expectation—that is—we must anticipate future salvation—we must set our affections on things above...
30. This is another reason why so few Christians rejoice in hope—because we fail to contemplate what we hope for...
31. Or—put another way—we're so earthly minded—that it's nearly impossible—to rejoice in the hope of salvation...
32. Oh brethren—if we are to rejoice in hope—then we need to be looking for those things we are hoping for...

B. Patient in tribulation

1. Here—I want to answer two questions—[1] what is meant by tribulation, and [2] what is meant by being patient in tribulation...
2. [1] What is meant by tribulation—this Gk word literally means—to press together, squeeze, or, to pressure...
3. Fundamentally—it refers to various hardships that press up against the soul—that lay pressure upon our soul...
4. Thus—it simply refers to affliction, hardship, and persecution—that results from living godly in a godless age...
5. It includes both external and internal pressures—that is—the external troubles and suffering at the hands of enemies...
6. But also—the inward troubles that are often self-imposed as we encounter various external trials and troubles...

7. 2Cor.7:5—"For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears..."
8. That is—he endured trouble from without—but also trouble from within—or, external and internal opposition...
9. In other words—we not only have enemies without us—but also, enemies with us—both must be endured...
10. [2] What is meant by patience in tribulation—the Gk word rendered "patient" literally means—to stay behind, wait, or endure...
11. It fundamentally means to endure through something without fleeing or quitting—to remain within a condition...
12. Here—it refers to—remaining, enduring, bearing, or persevering within a state of tribulation—without quitting...
13. That is—it necessarily implies opposition and resistance—to endure through tribulation, suffering, and hardship...
14. Matt.10:22—"and you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved..."
15. That is—he who patiently endures or perseveres through the tribulation—caused by this world's hatred of Me...
16. Thus—the patience that Paul speaks about is not merely passive but active—it actively endures through tribulation...
17. Thus—to patiently endure or persevere in tribulation entails that you—continue through it—trusting and loving God...
18. [a] Trusting God—that is—trusting that God is good and is using the tribulation as a means to purify you....
19. [b] Loving God—that is—we refuse to grow bitter against God and entertain hard thoughts about and against God...
20. This is what it means to be patient in tribulation—to endure or persevere through tribulation—trusting and loving God...
21. Perhaps I can best explain this—by using an example—what person, within Scripture, is best known for his patience...
22. James 5:11—"You have heard of the patience of Job"—that is—the patience, endurance, or perseverance of Job...
23. Most of us are familiar with the account of Job—he underwent great and prolonged tribulation and suffering...
24. Job 13:15—"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him"—that is—I will trust His purposes and love His person...
25. This is what it means to be patient, endure, or persevere in tribulation—to continue trusting and loving God...

C. Continuing in prayer

1. Here—I want to answer to questions—[1] what is meant by prayer, and [2] what is meant by continue steadfastly...
2. [1] What is meant by prayer—simply put—prayer is speaking to God—it entails adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication...
3. Here—it seems evident that it's the latter of these, supplicating or petitioning God—that's primarily meant...
4. John Murray—"Prayer is the means ordained of God for the supply of grace sufficient for every need and particularly against the faintheartedness to which affliction tempts us..."
5. [2] What is meant by continue steadfastly—the NKJV uses two English words to translate this single Gk word...
6. Fundamentally—the word means—to be devoted, constant, diligent, consistent, or continual in something...

7. 1Thess.5:17—"pray without ceasing"—that is—pray regularly and continually—without ceasing or stopping...
8. Again—there is the implication of opposition—oppositions that may arise from without or else from without...
9. Col.4:2—"Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving [that is, being alert or watchful]..."
10. Thus—we learn—we can only rejoice in hope and endure through tribulation—in so far as we continue in prayer...

II. The Text Expanded—byway of three observations

A. Christians enter the kingdom of God through great tribulation

1. Now—let me say on the front end—that we as Western Christians have a difficulty in understanding this point...
2. That is—we have convinced ourselves that we, unlike Christians of previous generations, are immune to tribulation...
3. In fact—there's an entire theological system—that affirms that doctrine—that Christians shall escape tribulation...
4. I suggest two reasons for this—[a] because we presently live in a land, where religious freedom is known...
5. [b] Because we live too similar to this world—and thus largely fail to elicit from the world—hatred and disgust...
6. But—oh my young and old friend—let us be reminded—there is no way to heaven but through great tribulation...
7. [1] All Christians experience tribulation—every Christian endures tribulation in some degree and duration...
8. Jn.16:33—"In the world you will have tribulation" Acts 14:22—"we must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God..."
9. [2] Christ Himself experienced tribulation—that is—he endured tribulation from an opposing and hostile world...
10. Heb.12:3—"For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls..."

B. Christians have reason to rejoice in the midst of great tribulation

1. That is—though this world is filled with diverse troubles—the hope of glory—is a cause of present rejoicing...
2. Let me illustrate—let's say I tell my children that we're going to spend the afternoon raking and bagging leaves...
3. Such work will be difficult and cause pain—it will be dirty and tedious work—it will take four or five hours...
4. But—afterwards—we will go to the ice-cream shop and get banana-splits—this prospect lightens the load...
5. Thus—I suggest—Christians are not only able to endure through tribulation—but rejoicing in the midst of it...
6. Dear Christian—do you desire to rejoice in the midst of all forms of tribulation—then look to what's coming...
7. Rom.8:18—"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us..."
8. 2Cor.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. 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..."

C. Christians have a provision of grace to assist them in tribulation

1. Now—here I want to underscore something—that I have underscores and emphasised many times before....
2. In fact—the other day I was explaining what I was preparing to preach on this morning to one of my daughters...
3. In coming to this point of the sermon, she said—Haven't you said something like this recently in another sermon...
4. I told her—yes sweetly, I have—and I likely will say something very similar to it—in every sermon I ever preach...
5. And that is—if your or I—am ever to obey the moral commands of God—two things are absolutely necessary...
6. First—we must be convinced that in ourselves we have no strength, and secondly, that in Christ we have abundant grace...
7. Now—how do we get that grace that has been given to us in Christ—I suggest our text tells us—continue in prayer...
8. [1] We must ask **FEELINGLY**—that is—painfully and utterly aware of our own native weakness and neediness...
9. [2] We must ask **BELIEVINGLY**—that is—we equally pray conscious of God's provision for us in Christ...
10. Ps.28:2, 6-7—"Hear the voice of my supplications When I cry to You, When I lift up my hands toward Your holy sanctuary...6 Blessed *be* the LORD, Because He has heard the voice of my supplications! 7 The LORD *is* my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart greatly rejoices, And with my song I will praise Him..."
11. Lk.11:9-13—"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 11 "If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if *he* asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? 12 "Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13 "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!..."
12. Heb.4:14-16—"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. 15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need..."