

# In the Hour of Trial

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## INTRODUCTION

*In the Hour of Trial*

**By: James Montgomery**

*In the hour of trial,  
Jesus, plead for me  
Lest by base denial  
I depart from thee.  
When thou see'st me waver,  
With a look recall  
Nor for fear or favor  
Suffer me to fall.*

*With forbidden pleasures  
Should this vain world charm  
Or its tempting treasures  
Spread to work me harm,  
Bring to my remembrance  
Sad Gethsemane  
Or, in darker semblance,  
Cross-crowned Calvary.*

*Should thy mercy send me  
Sorrow, toil, and woe,  
Or should pain attend me  
On my path below,  
Grant that I may never  
Fail thy hand to see;  
Grant that I may ever  
Cast my care on thee.*

*When my last hour cometh,  
Fraught with strife and pain,  
When my dust returneth  
To the dust again,  
On thy truth relying,  
Through that mortal strife,  
Jesus, take me, dying,  
To eternal life.*

*PHSS #411, Words: James Montgomery  
(1834); Tune: Penitence (1873)*

Trials come from within and without. Temptations may arise from the bad behavior of others, or proceed from our own sinful desires. Spiritual crises may occur because of surrounding circumstances, or result from inner conflicts.

Consider Joseph, whose trials were largely external. He was mistreated by his brothers, cast into a pit while they debated his fate, and afterwards sold into slavery. In Egypt, after having faithfully served in the house of Potiphar, he was mistreated by his master, being wrongfully accused and thrown into prison. After interpreting the dreams of the king's butler and baker, Joseph was forgotten and left to languish in unjust and wrongful confinement.

He could have yielded to despair, saying, "It ain't fair! They done me wrong!" Have we ever expressed some similar thought, with or without proper grammar? Have you ever allowed such indignation to become an excuse for wrongdoing? We must not allow the sin of others to excuse our improper attitudes or actions.

Yet, Joseph did not forget God, or blame God. When Potiphar's wife looked with desire at Joseph, a young man handsome in form and appearance, saying, "Lie with me," he refused, remembering his master's personal trust and his God's moral standard (Gen. 39:8-9).

*Genesis 39:8-9 (NASB95) — 8 But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, with me here, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, and he has put all that he owns in my charge. 9 "There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?"*

When his brothers stood before him years later, Joseph could have exacted revenge, their positions having been reversed; instead, he demonstrated mercy and acceptance, saying, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive" (Gen. 50:15-21).

*Genesis 50:15-21 (NASB95) — 15 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong which we did to him!" 16 So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father charged before he died, saying, 17 'Thus you shall say to Joseph, "Please forgive, I beg you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, for they did you wrong." ' And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father." And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. 18 Then his brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants." 19 But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place? 20 "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. 21 "So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.*

## **FAILURE**

In the hour of trial, instead of trusting in God, who said, "I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse" (Gen. 12:1-3), Abraham lied regarding his relationship with Sarah (Gen. 12:10-20).

*Genesis 12:1-3 (NASB95) — 1 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, To the land which I will show you; 2 And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, And make your name great;*

*And so you shall be a blessing; 3 And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”*

*Genesis 12:10-20 (NASB95) — 10 Now there was a famine in the land; so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. 11 It came about when he came near to Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, “See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman; 12 and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife’; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. 13 “Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you.” 14 It came about when Abram came into Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. 15 Pharaoh’s officials saw her and praised her to Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh’s house. 16 Therefore he treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels. 17 But the Lord struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram’s wife. 18 Then Pharaoh called Abram and said, “What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? 19 “Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife, take her and go.” 20 Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they escorted him away, with his wife and all that belonged to him.*

In the hour of trial, instead of trusting in God’s promises, that the older shall serve the younger (Gen. 25:19-26), Jacob and Rebekah plotted to deceive Isaac so that he might receive the blessing (Gen. 27:1-38).

*Genesis 25:19-26 (NASB95) — 19 Now these are the records of the generations of Isaac, Abraham’s son: Abraham became the father of Isaac; 20 and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to be his wife. 21 Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived. 22 But the children struggled together within her; and she said, “If it is so, why then am I this way?” So she went to inquire of the Lord. 23 The Lord said to her, “Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body; And one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger.” 24 When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. 25 Now the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau. 26 Afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau’s heel, so his name was called Jacob; and Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them.*

*Genesis 27:1-38 (NASB95) — 1 Now it came about, when Isaac was old and his eyes were too dim to see, that he called his older son Esau and said to him, “My son.” And he said to him, “Here I am.” 2 Isaac said, “Behold now, I am old and I do not know the day of my death. 3 “Now then, please take your gear, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me; 4 and prepare a savory dish for me such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, so that my soul may bless you before I die.” 5 Rebekah was*

listening while Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game to bring home, 6 Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "Behold, I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, saying, 7 'Bring me some game and prepare a savory dish for me, that I may eat, and bless you in the presence of the Lord before my death.' 8 "Now therefore, my son, listen to me as I command you. 9 "Go now to the flock and bring me two choice young goats from there, that I may prepare them as a savory dish for your father, such as he loves. 10 "Then you shall bring it to your father, that he may eat, so that he may bless you before his death." 11 Jacob answered his mother Rebekah, "Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man and I am a smooth man. 12 "Perhaps my father will feel me, then I will be as a deceiver in his sight, and I will bring upon myself a curse and not a blessing." 13 But his mother said to him, "Your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get them for me." 14 So he went and got them, and brought them to his mother; and his mother made savory food such as his father loved. 15 Then Rebekah took the best garments of Esau her elder son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. 16 And she put the skins of the young goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. 17 She also gave the savory food and the bread, which she had made, to her son Jacob. 18 Then he came to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?" 19 Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn; I have done as you told me. Get up, please, sit and eat of my game, that you may bless me." 20 Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have it so quickly, my son?" And he said, "Because the Lord your God caused it to happen to me." 21 Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come close, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not." 22 So Jacob came close to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau." 23 He did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him. 24 And he said, "Are you really my son Esau?" And he said, "I am." 25 So he said, "Bring it to me, and I will eat of my son's game, that I may bless you." And he brought it to him, and he ate; he also brought him wine and he drank. 26 Then his father Isaac said to him, "Please come close and kiss me, my son." 27 So he came close and kissed him; and when he smelled the smell of his garments, he blessed him and said, "See, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed; 28 Now may God give you of the dew of heaven, And of the fatness of the earth, And an abundance of grain and new wine; 29 May peoples serve you, And nations bow down to you; Be master of your brothers, And may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be those who curse you, And blessed be those who bless you." 30 Now it came about, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had hardly gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. 31 Then he also made savory food, and brought it to his father; and he said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that you may bless me." 32 Isaac his father said to him, "Who are you?" And he said, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau." 33 Then Isaac trembled violently, and said, "Who was he then that hunted game and brought it to me, so that I ate of all of it before you came, and blessed him? Yes, and he shall be blessed." 34 When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me, even me also, O my father!" 35 And he said,

*"Your brother came deceitfully and has taken away your blessing." 36 Then he said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob, for he has supplanted me these two times? He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing." And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" 37 But Isaac replied to Esau, "Behold, I have made him your master, and all his relatives I have given to him as servants; and with grain and new wine I have sustained him. Now as for you then, what can I do, my son?" 38 Esau said to his father, "Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father." So Esau lifted his voice and wept.*

In the hour of trial, Achan saw, coveted and took objects from Jericho that had been placed under ban (Josh. 6:17-19). This act of disobedience brought a curse upon Israel, and destruction upon Achan's own house (Josh. 7:1-5, 16-26).

*Joshua 6:17-19 (NASB95) — 17 "The city shall be under the ban, it and all that is in it belongs to the Lord; only Rahab the harlot and all who are with her in the house shall live, because she hid the messengers whom we sent. 18 "But as for you, only keep yourselves from the things under the ban, so that you do not covet them and take some of the things under the ban, and make the camp of Israel accursed and bring trouble on it. 19 "But all the silver and gold and articles of bronze and iron are holy to the Lord; they shall go into the treasury of the Lord."*

*Joshua 7:1-5 (NASB95) — 1 But the sons of Israel acted unfaithfully in regard to the things under the ban, for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, took some of the things under the ban, therefore the anger of the Lord burned against the sons of Israel. 2 Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth-aven, east of Bethel, and said to them, "Go up and spy out the land." So the men went up and spied out Ai. 3 They returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not let all the people go up; only about two or three thousand men need go up to Ai; do not make all the people toil up there, for they are few." 4 So about three thousand men from the people went up there, but they fled from the men of Ai. 5 The men of Ai struck down about thirty-six of their men, and pursued them from the gate as far as Shebarim and struck them down on the descent, so the hearts of the people melted and became as water.*

*Joshua 7:16-26 (NASB95) — 16 So Joshua arose early in the morning and brought Israel near by tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken. 17 He brought the family of Judah near, and he took the family of the Zerahites; and he brought the family of the Zerahites near man by man, and Zabdi was taken. 18 He brought his household near man by man; and Achan, son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, from the tribe of Judah, was taken. 19 Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I implore you, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me." 20 So Achan answered Joshua and said, "Truly, I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel, and this is what I did: 21 when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight,*

*then I coveted them and took them; and behold, they are concealed in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it.” 22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and behold, it was concealed in his tent with the silver underneath it. 23 They took them from inside the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the sons of Israel, and they poured them out before the Lord. 24 Then Joshua and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the mantle, the bar of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent and all that belonged to him; and they brought them up to the valley of Achor. 25 Joshua said, “Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day.” And all Israel stoned them with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. 26 They raised over him a great heap of stones that stands to this day, and the Lord turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the valley of Achor to this day.*

## **SUCCESS**

Achieving success during the hour of trial requires courage and conviction (Deut. 31:6). Consider the earlier example of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego (Dan. 3:16-18), and the later example of Peter and John (Acts 4:13-20; 5:27-32).

*Deuteronomy 31:6 (NASB95) — 6 “Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you.”*

*Daniel 3:16-18 (NASB95) — 16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. 17 “If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. 18 “But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”*

*Acts 4:13-20 (NASB95) — 13 Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus. 14 And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in reply. 15 But when they had ordered them to leave the Council, they began to confer with one another, 16 saying, “What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. 17 “But so that it will not spread any further among the people, let us warn them to speak no longer to any man in this name.” 18 And when they had summoned them, they commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; 20 for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.”*

*Acts 5:27-32 (NASB95) — 27 When they had brought them, they stood them before the Council. The high priest questioned them, 28 saying, “We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.” 29 But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men. 30 “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. 31 “He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. 32 “And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.”*

Achieving success during the hour of trial requires confession: we must be willing to confess Christ before men, acknowledging His Lordship and our servitude (Matt. 10:32-33; Luke 12:8-9). May we emulate the boldness of the saints at Pergamos (Rev. 2:12-13), rather than the cowardly parents of the blind man (John 9:18-23) or those rulers of Israel who believed in Jesus but feared to confess Him (John 12:42-43).

*Matthew 10:32-33 (NASB95) — 32 “Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. 33 “But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.*

*Luke 12:8-9 (NASB95) — 8 “And I say to you, everyone who confesses Me before men, the Son of Man will confess him also before the angels of God; 9 but he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.*

*Revelation 2:12-13 (NASB95) — 12 “And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this: 13 ‘I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.*

*John 9:18-23 (NASB95) — 18 The Jews then did not believe it of him, that he had been blind and had received sight, until they called the parents of the very one who had received his sight, 19 and questioned them, saying, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? Then how does he now see?” 20 His parents answered them and said, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 21 but how he now sees, we do not know; or who opened his eyes, we do not know. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself.” 22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue. 23 For this reason his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”*

*John 12:42-43 (NASB95) — 42 Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.*

Achieving success during the hour of trial requires Christlikeness. When tempted in the wilderness, Jesus overcame the devil by relying upon the word of God, repeatedly saying, "It is written... It is written... It is written..." (Matt. 4:1-11). When tempted in the garden, Jesus yielded to the will of God: "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." (Matt. 26:36-46).

*Matthew 4:1-11 (NASB95) — 1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. 3 And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." 4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'*

*Matthew 26:36-46 (NASB95) — 36 Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." 37 And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. 38 Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me." 39 And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." 40 And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour? 41 "Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." 42 He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done." 43 Again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. 44 And He left them again, and went away and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more. 45 Then He came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46 "Get up, let us be going; behold, the one who betrays Me is at hand!"*

## **CONCLUSION**

In the hour of trial, we need the intercession of Jesus Christ: *“In the hour of trial, Jesus, plead for me lest by base denial I depart from thee. When thou see’st me waver, with a look recall, nor for fear or favor, suffer me to fall.”*

In the hour of trial, let us recall the garden of Gethsemane and the hill of Calvary: *“With forbidden pleasures should this vain world charm, or its tempting treasures spread to work me harm; bring to my remembrance sad Gethsemane, or, in darker semblance, cross-crowned Calvary.”*

In the hour of trial, may we lean upon the Lord: *“Should thy mercy send me sorrow, toil, and woe, or should pain attend me on my path below; grant that I may never fail thy hand to see, grant that I may ever cast my care on thee.”*

In the hour of trial, may we rely upon the truth of God’s word: *“When my last hour cometh, fraught with strife and pain, when my dust returneth to the dust again; on thy truth relying, through that mortal strife, Jesus, take me, dying, to eternal life.”*

Source: *“In the Hour of Trial,”* by James Montgomery (1834), published in *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs*. Munfordville, KY: Sumphonia Productions, 2012. Song #411.