

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).

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).

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).

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).

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).

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).

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).

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).

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.