

## Why They Smell So Good

*Bowden*

“You smell delightfully fragrant,” said the gravel path to a bed of chamomile flowers.

“We have been trodden on,” replied the chamomiles.



“Does that cause you to smell so good?” asked the gravel path. “Treading on me produces no sweetness.”

“Our natures are different,” answered the chamomiles.

“Gravel walkways only become harder by being trodden upon.”

The flowers explained, “When we are pressed down by footsteps and bruised when the dew is upon us, we give forth the sweet smell which you are now smelling.”

Like the trodden upon flowers, a Christian’s trials and tribulations can also make him have a sweet-smelling attitude. After the worst of difficult times, he can be the strongest and shiniest example of God’s grace.

## When God Does the Pruning

*Downname, 1644*

Through God’s infinite mercy, we who were wild branches barren of all good fruit of holiness are grafted into the true Vine, Jesus Christ. Because of Him, we are receiving all God’s grace and sap. We are enabled to bring

forth the pleasant grapes of new obedience.

If we are left alone and allowed to run away with uncontrolled liberty, we would be like the vine which is never pruned. We would return to our old natural wildness. We would bring forth no other fruit than those sour grapes of sin.

However, our heavenly Vintager, for His glory and our good, cuts away the superfluities of our licentious liberty. He prunes us with His knife of affliction and trials that we may become more fruitful in all holy duties.

## Learned Sympathy

*W. M. Taylor*

Wandering the streets of London in disguise, King Henry the Eighth was met by some guards. Because he did not give a good account of what he was doing at night, the king was locked up in Poultry Compter without fire, candle, or food. On being released from his prison, he granted chaldrons of coals and bread for the night prisoners in the Compter.

Experience brings sympathy, as it did to the King. Those who have felt afflictions, convictions, doubts, and temptations will be zealous in consoling those in a similar condition. Our experience of difficult times can help us be a blessing and an encouragement to those that are now facing similar trials.

**The Bible View**



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## ... But God Had Different Plans

*Bill Brinkworth*

We all, at one time or another, have had hard times. Sometimes those difficulties are caused by a group or an individual. It seems that they are in control and changing the direction of one’s life.

However, even if situations are meant to hamper or hurt, there could be a good result in the future. Joseph in Genesis can certainly attest to that.



The young man could not help that his father, Israel, favored him. Israel’s blessings on his son made Joseph’s siblings quite jealous. Their jealousy festered, and their hearts became bitter to the innocent younger brother. It was not long until their bitterness resulted in their

throwing the boy into a pit. An opportunity arose, and they sold their sibling into slavery.

From there, many hardships happened to the teenager. Joseph was sold in Egypt to Potiphar. There he served his master, but “.. the Lord was with Joseph...” (Genesis 39:1). He was in a bad situation, but God had a purpose for the boy.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Romans 5:1-5

*“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”*

### ... But God Had...

*Continued from Page 1*

Later a lie from Potiphar's wife got Joseph thrown in prison. Even in this horrible situation, "... the Lord was with Joseph..." (Gen. 39:21).

While in prison and after some time, God used Joseph. After a series of God-directed events, Joseph became second in command over Egypt.

Joseph spared Egypt and his own family from a consuming famine from his new lofty leadership role. All the terrible happenings in his life were used to place him where God used him to help many.

Those hard times may have been intended to abuse and use him, but the hand of God allowed those circumstances to put Joseph in the place the Lord needed him. As the powerful man stood before his family, Joseph was able to say to his brothers, "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life." (Gen. 45:5) Also: Gen. 45:7, 8. Joseph realized all through his difficulties, God had plans for him.

Others have also found themselves facing unfair treatment, as did Joseph. While wearied and discouraged at the end of their tumultuous trials, they also found

that God used events to put them in a position where God also could use them.

God allowed Satan to do his worst to the godly Job. After perhaps a year of losing possessions and having friends and family turn against the non-waivering child of God, Job was blessed with much more than he originally had.

*"And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before." Job 42:10*

Moses remembered all the years Israel faced hardship and servitude in Egypt but saw how God dealt with Pharaoh and the Egyptians in His timing. Israel then saw that their prayers for freedom were answered as God led them to a land He had for them.

*"... 4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself."*

*Exodus 19:3-4*

God used the hatred of the Jews, the cruelty of Roman soldiers, and the betrayal of Judas to give us eternal hope because of Jesus' death. God's only Son was beaten, mocked, embarrassed, and nailed to the cross so that sinners would have an acceptable payment to cover

their sins. We are blessed because of His sacrifice, and now Jesus sits on the right hand of God.

The apostle Paul also was on the receiving end of unfair treatment. However, what seemed like misfortune on his part, God used those methods to make him a witness in Rome. *"And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." Acts 23:11*

We should also recognize that perhaps something happening in our life is ordered by the Lord. A child of God was bought by the price of His Son's blood. If born-again into His family, we are His. God will use His own as he sees fit.

*"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." I Corinthians 6:20*  
Also: I Cor. 7:23.

So, child of God, first examine yourself if you find yourself in trying times. Are you reaping what you have sowed in sin's field, and maybe you are facing iniquity's consequences? Is it possible that you are not a child of God, and He is using your situation to get you to turn to Him for salvation? If you are sure of your salvation, is God trying to get your attention to change your course?

If self-examination does not reveal any reasons, it may be

quite possible that you are in the same boat as the above heroes of the faith were and so many other Christians have found themselves. It may be God has future plans for you, and He is moving you to the place He can use you.

*"Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established. 4 The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." Proverbs 16:3-4*

Be encouraged, Christian, if you find yourself in a similar situation like so many others before you. You are on the winning side, so be patient, always do right, and wait on the Lord to use you the way He desires.

*"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28*

**"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." John 15:1-2**

**"God's stretching the strings of His violin is only to make the music better." — Watson, 1696**