

## **Romans 5:1-11 What's the Worst that can Happen to Christians?**

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Grace and peace from God our Father and from our loving Lord and Savior, who is with us at all times! In Romans 5:1-11 Paul encourages believers living in troubling times to hold to their loving Savior. These are Your Words heavenly Father to remind us to trust in You at all times through Christ.

Dear Fellow Sufferers, in our victorious Christ,

Sometimes if people are unsure about something they may say, "What's the worst that can happen?" If the stock market looks shaky, the worst thing is that investors can lose money for while! If someone breaks into your house while you are on vacation, the worst that could happen is that some of your property will need to be replaced. Students, if you do badly on a test in school, the worst that could happen is getting a lower grade so you will need to work harder to improve it. Thinking about the worst is a coping mechanism. People think that if they can accept the worst, they deal with the lesser troubles of life. Jesus' future was not uncertain. He came into this world as one of us knowing the worst that would happen to Him. Jesus had no sin, but He suffered the torment of hell for our sins and of the whole world. He paid the wages of all sins with His life. Because of His sacrifice, we can positively think of our future with the question:

### **What's the Worst that Can Happen to Christians?**

**First, we will all go through troubling times with Jesus beside us.** We hear of Christians suffering and dying around the world especially at the hands of Isis fighters. We hear of Christians being persecuted in our own country for standing up to what is right. We may wonder as our country becomes increasingly anti-Christian what will happen to us? Paul lived in troubling times, too. He and many of his Christian friends had suffered beatings or imprisonment for speaking about Christ. Yet Paul wrote, "*We rejoice in our sufferings.*" (v.3) What kind of sufferings is Paul talking about? Generally, there are three reasons why people suffer. One is for doing wrong. Peter wrote that if we do wrong, we should expect to suffer for it. (1 Peter 2:20) Second, we can suffer because we live in a sinful world. Jesus told His disciples, "*In this world you will have trouble.*" (John 16:33)

We suffer from the general effects of sin: injuries, sickness, barns burn down by accident, and emotional strains. Third, Paul is describing suffering because we are Christians. The devil, once he was cast out of heaven, has been venting his rage against God's people. He was behind the problems that Job experienced as a believer. (Job 1) The devil has allies in the world: unbelieving people who cannot stand the truth of God's Word especially about Jesus. We may not always hear about it, but more Christians have suffered or died by persecution in the last century than the previous 19 centuries combined. It is a part of life that believers experience in the world. Jesus said, "*No servant is greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.*" (John 15:20) But, He also said, "*I have overcome the world.*" (John 16:33)

God has a good purpose in allowing Christians to suffer. Paul wrote, "*We know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*" (v. 3-5) Suffering for any reason with help Christians look to Jesus more often. We greatly realize our need for help as sinners in a sinful world. We walk in danger all the way to heaven. But, we are not walking alone! We have a Savior walking with us. The Bible states, "*We have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*" (Hebrews 4:15-16) Paul wrote, "*I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed.*" (Romans 8:18)

**Second, Jesus gave His life so we can forget the worst that could happen and think of the best that will happen!** Paul wrote, *“At just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* (v.6-8) The first thing that Paul wants us to remember is that God’s love remains solid. He loves us when we suffer or have problems. He loves us when we are nearing death. Loving parents are willing to risk their lives to save their child, like donating blood or a kidney. But, for just a friend, how many would actually give up their lives? Jesus did more. While we were still sinners living in rebellion He died for us. While God saw us as enemies He sent His Son to reconcile us that we might become His children! That’s a love that will stand by us forever no matter what happens to us in life!

Because of God’s love in Christ, we have confidence in Him. When we realize the trouble that we can get ourselves into and the terrible consequences of our sins, can daily confess, *“God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”* (Luke 18:13) We rejoice daily that Christ gave His life to save us so that God declares us innocent in His sight! Paul wrote, *“Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* (v.1) God is at peace with us as His own dear children in even the most troubling situations of life. So, we will live boldly as His children, even if it means that we may suffer for it.

We also live joyfully. On one hand, during Lent we think of the sufferings and death of Jesus and it makes us sad. But, on the other hand, we have joy knowing that when He gave up His life He guaranteed a place for us in heaven. Nothing stands between us and our loving God. Everything that happens in our lives, no matter how bad it may seem to us at the time, God allows to happen for our eternal good. We live in Christian hope knowing that the worst that can happen to us here in the world is death! But in Christ, not even death can separate us from the love of God! Paul wrote, *“We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”* (v.3) No matter what happens to us in life, the best will happen to us in heaven. When we die, we who believe in Christ will reign with Him. Even as Jesus has risen from death, so we who die will rise to eternal glory where we will never have a problem, a pain, a sickness, or dying again.

Because we have been so blessed in Christ, we want others to have this certain hope, too. The Bible states, *“Jesus Christ gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good.”* (Titus 2:14) God considered the lives of all people valuable enough to send Jesus to save them. We should value them, too. Just as Jesus loves all people, so should we. Just as Jesus helped us when we were in need, we can help others. We can give people true hope through the good news of Christ and change their outlook from looking at the worst that can happen, to be sure of the best that will happen through Christ!

It’s time as Christians to stop asking, “What’s the worst that can happen?” The worst already has happened to Jesus when He suffered and gave up His life for us on the cross. The best is now ahead for us and for all who believe! In Jesus we will live in perfect peace with our loving God forever. Amen.