

## It's Only a Season – Turning 40

*by Beth Perez*

This month I turn 40. It seems weird to me because in my head, I still feel 20, but my body lets me know I am definitely NOT in my 20's! But there is something different about me as I turn 40 as I look back to my younger years as a Christian single person, a wife with no children and then and now a wife with children. I am more confident in whom I am in Christ than I ever have been and it is mostly due to walking through many heart breaking seasons of life. A season where I thought the Lord was calling our son home too early, a season of miscarriage, seasons where our marriage was under attack, seasons of financial struggle, a season of a friend's betrayal, seasons of surgery and recovery, seasons of death, seasons of being at the end of hurtful gossip, seasons of depression, but something these seasons have in common is that they are SEASONS. They didn't last forever! They felt like they would never end walking through them, but looking back, I'm so in awe of how the Lord carried me through. The past 20 years also included many seasons of peace, good health and joy, but I definitely learned more and was strengthened more during our hard and painful seasons. We still face seasons of trial, but the difference is that these trials no longer define me and I have learned (and am still learning) to find joy and peace in the midst of the hard stuff called, "life".

I understand better, scripture that touches on trials, ***James 1:2-4 "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing." 1 Peter 1:6-8 "In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ: and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory .. " 1 Peter 4:12-13 "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation."***

In every past trial the Lord allowed me to face during this faith journey, I am able to look back at every season and see His hand in some way. This gives me confidence that He will be there for the next season ... and the next.... Some believers unfortunately allow trials to bitter them toward life, GOD and His church, as if GOD owes them because they are Christian. If you study GOD's Word, you learn that He never promises the Christian an easy life, but promises that storms will come for both the believer and non-believer equally. He does, however, promise to guide us through the storms and to hold us steady! (Luke 6:46-49) I never thought on this side of the trials I've experienced that I would actually say I am thankful for them, but here I am. They have grown me, tenderized my heart and have allowed me to come along side and empathize with others who are walking their own painful seasons of their faith journey. I will by no means say I am living it out perfectly – we are all a continued work in progress until our faith journey is finished here on Earth and the Lord brings us to our true home in Heaven. Beloved, we are not home yet and what you are currently facing is a season in your faith journey that the Lord will see you through.