

## Afflictions, Refining Influence Of: Stepping Stones

### ~Other Speakers G-L: Sermon Illustrations II:

Years ago a small group of Japanese believers were heckled and abused whenever they assembled to worship the Savior. But the persecutors could not shake the faith of the new converts. Each time the Christians gathered, the mob would throw stones at them, but they still faithfully continued to have their weekly meetings. Eventually the opposition became so great that the outdoor services had to be temporarily abandoned. Later, when a time of relative peace and tolerance had come to the community, many were won to Christ. Returning to the spot where the believers had frequently been attacked, they began to pick up some of the rocks. Using them as part of the building materials, they constructed a small house of worship, rejoicing that God had worked all things together for good. Jesus says that His followers will meet with suffering and heartache, but He admonishes them not to be discouraged. Earth's sorrows are meant to be stepping stones in the process of sanctification. Indeed, we "must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God" (\reference{Acts 14:22}{Acts 14:22}). Glorifying in affliction will turn our troubles into spiritual triumphs!