

The Trouble With Adversity - 1/15/23

TEXT – 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 *For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

INTRO – No one wants to face adversity. We have a tendency to wish for a fairy tale environment, but in this world, there is poverty, pain, suffering, war, and trouble. There are many Bible characters who faced adversity and failed. Such as Samson. Samson was a man with great strength, but he allowed his pride to get the best of him.

Another person who failed in the face of adversity is King Saul. Saul was anointed by God to be the first king of Israel, but he disobeyed God on multiple occasions. As a result, he was removed from power.

What can we learn from their failures?

First, we all face difficult challenges in life.

Second, we must trust in God's strength, not our own.

Third, we must be careful not to let our pride control us.

Romans 8:28 *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.*

“Adversity can take us to places we could not reach any other way!”

Genesis 50:19-20 *And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? 20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.*

5 LESSONS FROM TOUGH TIMES AND PEOPLE IN THE BIBLE

I. Job

He had everything that anyone living in that time would want – a big family, good health and plentiful wealth.

- Later, in the midst of Job's suffering, his friends accused Job of sinning, saying that his suffering was God's punishment.
- Job protested his innocence to his friends, and eventually asked God to explain Himself.
- God then spoke to Job in a storm. Instead of answering his question, God asked Job if he understood the workings of the complex universe like He does.
- Humbled, Job confessed he did not possess a wide enough perspective to judge God.

- He then accepted that trusting God through it all was enough.

Here is a lesson we can learn from Job: we can trust in God's wisdom even when we do not understand.

Even though we may never understand why bad things happen, trusting in God helps us to move forward in the best way possible.

II. Moses

- Moses ran to the wilderness to flee from the Pharaoh.
- Later, Moses returned to Egypt to convince the new Pharaoh to free the Israelites, risking his life.
- With God's help, Moses successfully led the Israelites across the Red Sea and away from Pharaoh's army.
- After three days they could not find drinkable water. If their situation did not change, they would all perish.

So what did Moses do? He cried out to God. Exodus 15:25 *And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,*

From Moses, we learn to turn to God for help.

While it is easy to focus on earthly solutions during difficult moments, God is capable of helping us in ways we may never imagine.

We can trust in God's wisdom even when we do not understand... we should remember to turn to God for help.

III. Esther

We do not have to be in harsh environments to encounter difficult times.

They can happen even when we are surrounded by comfort.

That was what happened to queen Esther.

- She faced a difficult trial: a man named Haman convinced the king to enact a decree, ordering the killing of all Jewish people.

While queen Esther was Jewish, she had been hiding her identity. Mordecai, Esther's cousin and adopted parent, pleaded for her to talk to the King.

Esther 4:11 *All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre that he may live but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.*

Esther was motivated to act. She declared: *“If I perish, I perish”*.

Though she was fearful, Esther took action and saved the Jewish people in the end.

We can all learn from her courage – to act despite our fears during times of trouble.

Charles Spurgeon's wife, though an invalid, distributed his books to young preachers. There are more of his writings than almost any other preacher.

IV. David

King David was the hero who defeated Goliath, successful in war and had the love of the people.

- King Saul became jealous, and he eventually tried to kill David.
- David ran into the wilderness to escape and during this time,
- David refused to kill Saul.
- David had the “solution” to his problems in his own power but refused to do it
- David waited on God's timing

We must not compromise when faced with “solutions” which we know are wrong.

V. Paul

- Paul was imprisoned multiple times throughout his ministry.
- In Philippi, Paul was accused of anti-Roman teachings and got thrown in prison. There, Paul sang to God in worship, until a violent earthquake occurred.
- It broke all the chains and opened the doors of the prisoners!
- The jailer was about to take his own life, believing the prisoners had escaped, but Paul managed to stop him, assuring him that all the prisoners were present and accounted for.
- The jailer then took Paul to his home to wash his wounds. Paul preached God's word to the jailer and his family, and the whole household accepted Jesus.
- In another incident, Paul was falsely accused of bringing Gentiles into the synagogue. While the governor did not believe Paul was guilty, he kept Paul in prison for two years, hoping someone would give him a bribe for Paul's release.
- Paul was then transferred to Rome and placed under house arrest for another two years. During this time, he actively preached the word of God to the people who visited him.

Paul focused on bringing people to God even while imprisoned.

This is an example worth emulating; we should all try our best to serve God in any situation. In fact, it may even be more effective to serve during periods of struggle!

It is never easy to make it through difficult phases of life.

God is with us through it all.

CONCL - So let us all trust in God and turn to Him. We can act without fear or compromise, serving Him through every moment in our lives.