

Scripture Reading

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. 8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. 9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.



Strength Made Perfect in Weakness

Dealing with Trials & Adversity

Introduction - Profiting from Trials

Corona Virus, Pain, suffering, struggles, death, sickness, tears, etc., Depressing newscasts and newspapers.

FACT: We all are currently facing adversity and will all face trials and adversity from the current situation

Our best success will come from being a new creature in Christ and be a faithful Christian which offers hope, peace and joy

2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Key Facts About Trials

- **Two Important Principles (Jm. 1:2-4):**
 - *Trials will come to YOU.* The greatest of God's people suffered such as Cain killing Abel, Joseph and Potiphar's wife, Lot and his family, Job, Daniel, Jeremiah, David, etc. (Hb. 11:32-38; I Pt. 4:12; Rev. 2:10)
 - *Trials will come in assorted shapes and sizes.* "Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what your going to get." (Forrest Gump's Mama) Some are worse than others (I.e. plane crashes, tornado's, fires, wars, accidents, sickness, COVID - 2019)
- Trials come *quickly* and *unannounced*.
- **Bottom Line:** Trials don't stop because we are Christians, but Jesus provides the guidance for us to "*bear up*" under times like this.

1 Peter 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

Revelation 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

Paul Knows Adversity

- Paul faced and overcame adversity (II Co. 7:4-5).

“I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulations...our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears.”

- What adversity did Paul face? (II Co. 11:23-28)
 - Common sufferings to all people (I.e. long journey's, boat accidents, hunger, cold, bandits, beasts)
 - Disappointments (I.e. vain preaching, rejection, loneliness, broken relationships/promises, lack of appreciation, conflicts in the church)
 - Christian suffering (I.e. persecution, unjust imprisonment, narrow escapes)
 - Unique personal suffering - “*thorn in the flesh.*” (II Co. 12:7)
 - Bottom Line: Few of us will ever taste the same amount of adversity as Paul. If he overcame adversity, so can we too!

Trials Draws Us Closer To Or Further Away From God

- Two possible responses to adversity:
 - Job's wife, *"Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and Die!"* (Job. 2:9)
 - Job's response, *"...shall we indeed accept good from God and shall we accept adversity? In all of this Job did not sin with his lips."* (Job 2:10)
- Paul's response to five types of adversity:
 - *"...I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. **For when I am weak, then I am strong.**"* (II Co. 12:10)
- Many show their lack of faith by questioning God.
 - "Why me?" "Why did God allow this?" "Why now?" "What did I do to deserve this?" "Why does God not answer my prayers?" Why did God allow COVID-19?
- Bottom Line: Our attitude and level of faithfulness is directly linked with how we respond.

Adversity Will Bother Us

- Adversity hurts. It hurt and bothered Paul.

“Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus...”

(II Co. 7:6)

“For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so we despaired even of life.”

(II Co. 1:8)

- We may feel like:
 - We can't take it anymore, but we can.
 - Ending our life, but we don't.
 - Adversity hurts and will challenge every fiber of our being, but we hang on by the thread of faith.
- Bottom Line: Flesh wounds will heal. When we are knocked down, we are not out. Adversity will be painful, but with God's help we will overcome or be with Him in paradise!

Life for the Average Family During the Great Depression

The Great Depression, the worst economic downturn in modern history, profoundly affected the daily life of American families in ways large and small.

Four years after 1929 stock market crash, during the bleakest point of the Great Depression, about a quarter of the U.S. workforce was unemployed. Those that were lucky enough to have steady employment often saw their wages cut or their hours reduced to part-time.



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Even upper-middle class professionals, such as doctors and lawyers, saw their incomes drop by as much as 40 percent. Families who had previously enjoyed economic security suddenly faced financial instability or, in some cases, ruin. The average American family lived by the Depression-era motto: “Use it up, wear it out, make do or do without.”

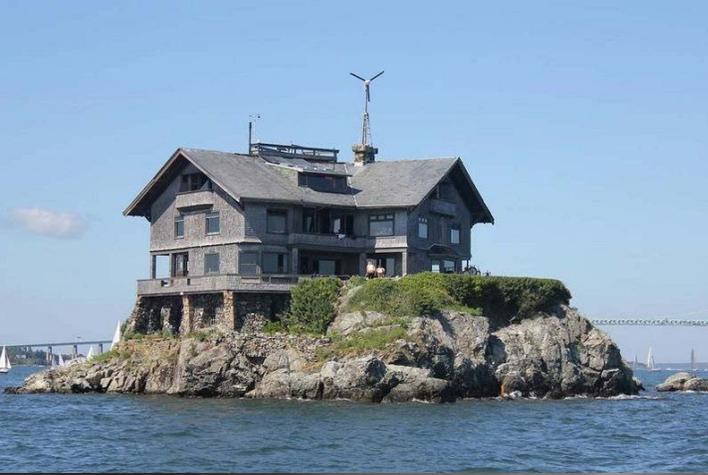


Life for the Average Family During the Great Depression

My great grandmother, Ella Lucas had \$2 to last 2 years and bought garden seed, Grandpa had his car stolen. One of the girls worked all summer for a jersey cow. My grandma and grandpa Kemp sold eggs and chickens.

My Grandma Thelma, one winter out on Putney Ridge was snowed in with no food... chance or providence would have it that bread man got lost and saved them.





Overcoming Adversity Is Based On A Solid Foundation

The foundation of our faith is built on sand or solid rock. Jesus says:

“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded upon the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.” (Mt. 7:24-27)

Adversity is like stormy weather beating against our house. All (wise and foolish) will face the storms of life.

Our house will endure, if it is built on hearing and doing what Jesus says.

Overcoming Adversity Is Based On A Solid Foundation

- Paul's foundation of faith was solidly built on Jesus Christ.
 - Paul's faith was in Jesus and nothing else.

"For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (I Co. 3:11)

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Ga. 2:20)

"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Ph. 1:21)

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Ph. 4:13)

- Bottom Line: If we have a solid foundation of faith based on Jesus, then we can and will weather the storms of life. We will get through this!

Adversity Is Momentary

- When faced with adversity, we must see the “*big picture*.” This too will pass!

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding weight of eternal glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things that are seen are temporary and the things which are not seen are eternal.” (II Co. 4:16-18)

- Keep adversity in perspective. Adversity in this life is temporary, light and brief in comparison to eternity.
- Remember: Death is not the end, but the beginning of life. By Faith, look at the “*big picture*.”

“For we walk by faith, not by sight.” (II Co. 5:7)

Adversity Builds Character

- We must know that adversity will build perseverance.
 - *"knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience." (Jm. 1:3)*
- "What doesn't kill you makes you strong."
 - *"...My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (II Co. 12:9)*
- Adversity is God's classroom. Adversity teaches us:
 - The right priorities in life

"Sorrow is better than laughter, For by a sad countenance the heart is made better." (Eccl. 7:3)

"I press on toward the goal for the prize..." (Ph. 3:14)

- There is nothing worse than a life filled with adversity from which nothing good ever comes. Adapt God's perspective and priorities.

Seek Spiritual Help

- We must allow ourselves to be helped.
 - *“But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also, I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.” (II Tm. 4:17)*
- God offers comfort and help in several ways:
 - God is aware of our suffering and provides comfort.

“...I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows.” (Ex. 3:7)

“...the Father of mercies and all comfort who comforts us in all our tribulation...” (II Co. 1:3)

- Comfort comes from our brethren.

“Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus...Therefore we have been comforted in your comfort. And we rejoice exceedingly more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all.” (II Co. 7:6, 13)

Maintain A Conqueror's Attitude

- Paul suffered much, but he remained faithful in overcoming adversity. We must remember (Ro. 8):
 - God's love transcends all adversity.

"For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God..." (Ro. 8:38-39)

- A godly person is a "conqueror."

"...If God be for us, who can be against us?...Who shall bring a charge against God's elect?...Who is he who condemns?... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?...Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." (Ro. 8:31, 33, 34, 35, 37)

- Conquerors will: Walk according to the Spirit, Set their
- minds on the things of the Spirit, Be lead by the Spirit, and Allow the Spirit to help in our weaknesses. (Ro. 8:4-5, 14, 26-27)
- Our roots must be deep in Christ. Godly people get depressed, might even be afraid but remember that **Christians are conquerors!**

Conclusion

- Strength Made Perfect in Weakness
- We are planted in different and difficult places. Be fruitful where you are planted.

“...when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison...he put them in the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.” (Ac. 16:23-25)

“...Remember my chains...” (Col. 4:18)

- Christians are called to “bear up” under adversity.
- How have you responded to adversity? We will either give up or bear up!