

## Learning To Enjoy Life's Hardships -

### BREAKING FREE FROM THE PAST

In this series of messages, we have been looking at **how we can completely break free From our past, *so that we can live successful and productive lives now!!!!!!***

**Living in the past is killing your future!!!!!!**

- You can't drive forward staring into the rear-view mirror...

In **this message today** I want to share with you,

- That life is actually designed to be **full of *hardships***....
- To the degree that we have **successfully let go** of the past
- The more **prepared** we will be to **deal with the present**.

***Matthew 6:34 - Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.***

- *Planning for tomorrow is time well spent...*
- *Worrying about tomorrow is time wasted....*
- *Careful planning is thinking ahead and trusting God's guidance!!!!!!*
- *Worriers, by contrast, **are consumed by fear**. Find it very **difficult** to trust God!*

**When Something bad happens in our lives we have 3 choices!!!!**

1. Let it define us...
2. Let it destroy us....
3. Let it determine us!!!!!!

- We **cannot allow** Hardship's to define or destroy us, we can let them **DETERMINE US!!!!!!**

Considering my past circumstances, my current situation and my future hopes & dreams, what is the wise thing to do? **I choose!**

- To live in victory **NOT** as a victim!!!!!!

Many people have ***a hard time dealing with the struggles*** in their lives because,

- They are too busy fretting (**visibly worried**) about the future.
- ***Their future*** is tainted with the **failure and the problems of the past**....
- As a result, they are **immobilized** in ***their ability to function now***.

Therefore:

I want to share with you today, ***The importance of finding joy in life's hardships!***

**HARDSHIPS & TROUBLES ARE A NECESSARY PART OF LIFE.**

**Helen Keller once said:**

We could never learn to be brave and patient, if there were only joy in the world.

As I begin this message today,

*It's important for us to acknowledge that hardships, trials, tribulations, and troubles are a necessary part of life.*

**John 16:33** *"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."*

- Jesus tells his disciples here to **take courage**....
- In spite of the inevitable struggles they would face....
- They would not be alone!!!!

Jesus does not abandon us to our struggles either...

- The ultimate **victory** has already been won...
- **WE can** claim the peace of Christ.
- In the most troublesome times!!!!

In the world we will have tribulations and troubles: =

sicknesses, family tragedies, out of work, financial difficulties, family problems, major calamities - tornados, floods, business failure.....

It is a given, but Jesus says, "be of good cheer".

*He is saying* that we must learn how to find joy during life's hardships,

- Because He has overcome the world!!!!!!!

James tells us to count all of this joy:

**James 1:2-4** - My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its **perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing**.

*How many of us really take this verse seriously?*

- We laugh and say, "Yea o sure uh huh!"

**The truth is**, if we really desire the liberating power of God's Spirit and kingdom in our lives, **we must find joy in life's hardships**.

Mother Teresa once said: JOY is: a net of love by which you can catch souls!!!

In this message today: I want to give you three reasons why, we need to learn how to enjoy life's hardships!!!!

### 1. *The Storms of Life Help Keep Us On Track With God*

*Psalms 119:67 - Before I was afflicted, I went astray, But now I keep Your word.*

There's a story of a woman who became the victim of amnesia.

- For three months she wandered, But during a severe thunderstorm she suddenly remembered who *she was... & where she was from.*
- A Cleveland, Ohio, police officer said that the storm jolted her memory back!!!!

How often the storms of life bring us back to our senses!

- God sends them not to destroy us but to help us.
- Many people can look back and thank God.....
- **For the storms that brought them back to Him!!!!!!!**

### 2. *It Takes Hardship for God's Kingdom To Fully Emerge In Our Lives*

It takes the pressure and struggle that comes through these hardships,

- *For the kingdom of God to fully emerge* And overpower the kingdom of darkness.
- Struggles and hardships bring forth a clashing of kingdoms...
- Which fully releases the power of the kingdom of God!!!!

Paul and Barnabas return to visit the believers in the cities...

- Where they had been previously threatened and physically attacked!!!!

*Acts 14:22 - strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.*

- They knew the dangers yet....
- They had to encourage the believers....
- No matter how inconvenient or uncomfortable it may be...
- *Our job is to encourage new believers....*
- It was NOT convenient or comfortable for Jesus to go to the cross for us!!!!

***Are you congratulating yourself on having an easy time in life with no hardships or difficulties to bear?***

- Then **beware**, that you don't perish miserably **in defeat**."

**One of the biggest questions a Christian may ask is,**

- **If I am a Christian**, and God loves me and protects me,
- **WHY am I going through hardship and tough times?**

It is important to know that **God does not say**,

- That as Christians we are going to live **happy and perfect lives!!!!**

**In fact, HE through Paul says quite the opposite:**

**Philippians 1:28-29** - without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God.

<sup>29</sup> For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him,

- ***Paul considers it a privilege to suffer for Christ....***
- **We do not** by nature **consider suffering a privilege!**

**Paul lists all of HIS sufferings and hardship's in:**

**2 Corinthians 11:22-28** - <sup>22</sup> Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. <sup>23</sup> Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. <sup>24</sup> Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. <sup>25</sup> Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, <sup>26</sup> I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. <sup>27</sup> I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. <sup>28</sup> Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

- The question is therefore **why do we suffer for Christ?**
- **How do we deal with it?????**

### 3. *Struggles And Hardships Sift Out The Impurities In Our Lives*

**Hebrews 12:27-28** - <sup>27</sup> The words “once more” indicate **the removing** of what can be shaken—that is, **created things**—so that **what cannot be shaken may remain**.

<sup>28</sup> Therefore, since **we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken**, let us **be thankful**, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,

A Christian man **lost his home and mill** when a flood washed them away.

- He was **brokenhearted and discouraged** as he stood surveying his loss.
- Just then he saw *a glittering object* that had been **uncovered by the waters**.
- **It was gold!**

The disaster he thought had made him a beggar had **actually made him wealthy**.

- The Lord often **works through our troubles**
- To **strip away** certain cherished possessions
- To show us **the better treasures of His love and power**.
- How thankful we should be that in *every storm of affliction*.
- We have *the assurance* That **the Lord has a good purpose** in view!

**CLOSE:**

#### **Hardships**

***At some point you will come face to face with your limitations!!!!***

***Your Options:***

1. Whine about it....
2. Lower your expectations to match YOUR abilities...
3. Take your next step by faith.....

**Learning To Enjoy Life's Hardships!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

The more **joy** we are able to find in the midst of **life's hardships**.

- The *stronger and more secure* we will be **as individuals**,
- Who are now able to **walk in victory** and **succeeding in the issues of life**.

***Nehemiah 8:10 - This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.***

**It all boils down to the fact that hardships are a part of life!**

- And there is **no way we can escape** them in our lives.
- **They serve a meaningful purpose,**
- So, we might as well **learn how to enjoy them** rather than fighting against them.
- We will be much **happier and stronger** as a result.

- 1. The storms of life help keep us on track!**
- 2. It takes hardships for God's Kingdom to fully emerge in our lives!**
- 3. Struggles and Hardships sift out the impurities in our lives!**

**Today you may be facing some of these Hardships.**

- **Something bad has happened to you....**
- **Don't Let it DETERMINE YOU TODAY!!!!!!**

**Come face to face with your limitations here at the altar...**

- **DON'T whine or lower your expectation...**
- **TAKE your next step of **FAITH**!!!!!!!**

**DON'T sorrow any longer (Nehemiah 8:10)**

- ***For the Joy of the Lord is yours!!!!!!***

**Our Actions and Reactions authenticate or De-authenticate the authenticity of our Faith!**