

The Trial of Your Faith

When you go through hard times you get tougher!

I believe this fact explains the difficulties/stress that the Lord allows into our lives.

We would understand this message more if we could see with our own eyes the famine, the disease, the hunger, the hopelessness, the despair, the war, the destitution that fills many people's lives every single moment of every single day!

Mark 8:31-36 - Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection

31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. 33 But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, "Get behind Me, Satan! **For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.**"

Take Up the Cross and Follow Him -

34 When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 35 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. 36 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"

"A cross was used for a crucifixion!"

"I believe that God is calling us to a toughness!"

Adversity Principle - Comes from the understanding that easy living and prosperity produce certain softness.

- **Animals in the Zoo** - Lie there and yawn and eat.
- Flabby - Not toned up - Not ready for action.
- Because all their needs are met.

There Is Something to Having to Work For It

- There is something about the stress and strain of living in the wild.
- Where if they aren't successful in finding food, they go hungry.

"There is something about adversity that makes a better person."

Adversity means - Difficulties; misfortune.

In the Bible, adversity generally refers to difficult, challenging, or painful circumstances that individuals face.

It encompasses a wide range of experiences, including trials, hardships, misfortunes, and afflictions.

The Bible acknowledges adversity as a common part of life, often linked to suffering, testing, and spiritual growth.

This testing of faith will ultimately result in praise, honor, and glory for believers when Jesus Christ returns.

1 Peter 1:7 - That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

- The trials and hardships Christian's face, though painful - - -
- Serve to purify and strengthen their faith,
- Proving its genuineness and making it more valuable than gold...

"When you go through hard times you get tougher!"

"I believe this fact explains the difficulties and stress that the Lord allows to come into our life."

- *"Resilience in the face of adversity"*

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Psalm 91:1 - This verse uses powerful imagery of shelter, shadow, and the "Most High" and "Almighty" to convey

God's supreme power & His desire to be a place of safety for us who seek Him.

Psalm 91:1 - *Safety of Abiding in the Presence of God* - He who dwells in the secret place of the Most-High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

- This expresses the idea of finding security and protection in God.
- It speaks of a relationship with God characterized by trust and dependence, where one finds refuge and rest in His presence.

Isn't it something – God Would allow “at times” literal chaos to come into our lives that would cause **us** to be pushed to the brink of literal destruction!

Psychologists will tell you that our **emotional stability** is wrapped up **in what we expect from life.**

- I think we feel almost entitled to a life of bliss with **very few frustrations,**
- **Very few inconveniences** and very **little stress** and very **little difficulty.**
- And therefore the “gap” between “life as it is” and -
- “life as we want it to be” sends us into **torrents of emotion and frustration.**

You can see this all around you.

- I don't want to **trivialize** someone's problems today, But I am amazed at times with ***some people's complaints.***
- They are at times **absolutely minor** when you put them up against **other people's situations.**
- In their eyes **no one in the world is** going through what they are going through.

It doesn't matter what it is...

- You can ***have everything right*** in your life, but if **one thing “bugs” you,** it's like **the weakest link** in the chain.
- **That one thing will steal the joy you should have -**
- Because of **all the things that are going right** in our life.

“We have enjoyed so much blessing, that we are **destroyed emotionally** when **the blessing stops even for a second** in our lives.”

I believe we would understand this message more if we could see with our own eyes the **famine, disease, hunger, hopelessness, despair, war, the destitution** that fills many people's lives **every single moment** of every single day!!!

- We ignore the fact that ***much of the world is starving to death*** right now.
- We ignore the fact that other **people's children are dying** right now.
- We are upset when **our electricity is cut off for a few hours** when other people's homes are **obliterated by war.**
- ***We are inconvenienced*** when we must **stand in line at McDonalds for 10 minutes** when some people **walk for days to find food,** only to watch their young and weak **starve to death along the way.**

“But isn’t it something that in the midst of these same regions of the world that I am referring to, there is today one of the greatest revivals going on that the world has ever seen.”

What I am saying today is that adversity breeds “toughness”!
Prosperity like we’ve had for 50 years in this country breeds softness.

It’s a law of nature:

Animal world – those in captivity ***“change”*** they’re not able to adapt or survive in the wild.

Plant world – tree in rain forest – plenty of water – **roots stay on the surface** – doesn’t have to send them down to find water.....***as a result it can be blown over by the first windstorm*** that comes along.

If plant a Maskeet tree in the desert where the roots must go down 30 feet of more to find water.

- It becomes so strong that nothing can blow it over.
- Because it grows in a hostile environment.

If this is true of animals and plants it’s true of us and it’s especially true of us spiritually.

I believe that God wants His people to be “Tough”!

- Look at **the Children of Israel** in the desert. No water... No food...

They started to complain. Let’s look at ***how God responded*** to their complaints.

Numbers 11:1-3 - Now when the people complained, it displeased the Lord; for the Lord heard it, and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the Lord burned among them, and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp. 2 Then the people cried out to Moses, and when Moses prayed to the Lord, the fire was quenched. 3 So he called the name of the place Taberah, because the fire of the Lord had burned among them.

Jesus in a boat with the disciples - asleep...storm... disciples scared... Jesus rebukes them and says o ye of little faith. Not tough enough!!

Jesus on the night of His betrayal - asks the disciples to watch... they were tired... **they couldn't do it...** Jesus comes back and rebukes them **for not being tough enough** to stay awake as He prayed.

In Hebrews 11, the "faith chapter," the Hebrews of faith endured a wide range of trials and hardships, including persecution, torture, and even death.

Faith Chapter Hebrews 11:13-14 - *The Heavenly Hope* - *These all died in faith, not having received the promises*, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland.

- These people suffered every form of difficulty, and they're called "Heroes"
- Because of the way they suffered.
- Faith is not always rewarded with earthly comfort or ease.

Despite these challenges, they persevered, demonstrating unwavering faith in God and His promises.

This theme runs throughout the bible, because God wants our Faith to be Tough.
WHY???

- Some people respond to adversity by getting tougher
- And some by going to pieces.
- The Lord understands that He knows that.

Old Sermon of mine: Did you know that the same boiling water that softens the carrot will harden the egg.

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Here is what I believe the Lord wants from us: **SPIRITUAL STABILTY!**

This runs very close to emotional stability. Mind - Body – Spirit.

One effects the other, If mind is sick, body is sick! If body is sick, spirit is sick....

Spiritual problems develop out of emotional and physical weakness.

- If you do not have stability emotionally it will affect you spiritually.
- This is why God wants strength from us.

Nothing impresses me more than watching someone claw their way out of tragedy with their faith intact.

November 1994, Chicago Newspaper - In a freak accident Tuesday on a Milwaukee expressway, a minivan carrying a Chicago family burst into flames, **killing five children and critically injuring the parents and another child.**

The accident occurred when the minivan, driven by **Duane Willis**, a minister at a South Side church, ran over a piece of steel that had fallen off a truck.

The 18-inch steel bracket, which holds mud flaps on semitrailer trucks, punctured the van's gas tank and lodged in the tank. Sparks ignited leaking gas from the tank, and "within seconds" the 1994 Chrysler Voyager minivan burst into flames, according to Milwaukee County Sheriff's Sgt.

Trapped in the van and killed in the fire were Peter Willis, 6 weeks old; Elizabeth Willis, 3; Hank Willis, 7; Sam Willis, 9; Joe Willis, 11. Their 13-year-old son, Ben Willis, escaped the fire but died later that night due to burns over 90 percent of his body.

Duane Willis, 47, minister at Parkwood Baptist, and his wife, Janet Willis, 47, escaped the crash with burns to their hands and face.

Many who attended Funeral for the children were in awe of **the parents' ability to make sense of the tragedy by drawing from their faith.**

"They're doing very well," one person said. "I think better than we are."
At a news conference in Milwaukee, **Duane Willis, a born-again evangelical Christian**, told how he and his wife believed that **"God has purposes and God has reasons"**-even for such events **like the explosion that killed their children.**

That strength was apparent at the children's funeral where the parents, gave as many hugs as they received.

"I think if they broke down, other people would break down too," said Lisa Morgan, a relative of the Willis's, after passing by the five caskets that contained the bodies of Willis children.

Another Pastor said, I don't know the family, but I came because ***their strength and faith really impressed me...***

CLOSE: Folks that's tough faith.

Paul encourages believers to stand firm in their faith and relationship with God: Philippians 4:1 - Be Anxious for Nothing; Think These Thoughts - Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.

- This emphasizes the importance of steadfastness in Christ, especially in the face of opposition

This conveys the message of contentment in all circumstances.

Philippians 4:11-13 - 11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned (been instructed & commanded) both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

- True contentment is *an inner peace and strength found only in Christ*.

Where was Paul when He wrote that... *Roman Jail – Rats – Damp – Bugs – Criminals – Chains - Hands and feet in chains - He's an older man by now.*

And he writes – For I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content

- He said, “I have faith that no matter how bad the situation is,
- Or where it takes me,
- I am content that God's love and mercy are with me.”

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Paul understood, Jesus was all he needed.