

Sermon Notes

Practical Lessons for Understanding the Word of God



微察忠難

An Intimate Look at Adversity

林後十一:23-28: Paul's adversity

太廿:46 可五:34

KEY PASSAGE: 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE: Matthew 27:46 | Mark 15:34

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 | Galatians 6:7 | Hebrews 13:5

林後十二:7-10 加六:7 來十三:5

02/21/16

SUMMARY

The world in which we live is characterized by adversity. difficulties, trials, hardship, pressure, heartaches

Everywhere we look there are disasters, tragedies, trauma, misery, suffering, and loss. But what happens when our view of adversity becomes up close and personal? How does the Lord want us to respond when we come face to face with trials? And what is He trying to teach us through our difficulties?

how you respond!

SERMON POINTS

In 2 Corinthians 11:23-28, the apostle Paul described the various forms of adversity he experienced in his service for Christ—imprisonments, beatings, shipwrecks, exposure, hunger, thirst, and other dangers. Why would the Lord allow Paul, the man who introduced the Roman world to Jesus Christ, to suffer like this and be killed?

來十三:5, 林後十一:23-28

All adversity is not bad.

From a human perspective, Paul's suffering may seem unfair, but God used his hardships and pain to accomplish His will. During his imprisonment in Rome, Paul wrote Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. And his letter to the Philippians was filled with joy because he understood that through adversity God accomplishes His divine purposes and works for our ultimate good.

No bitterness, be positive

Characteristics of Adversity

患難沒有歧視

- Adversity is universal. It's everywhere and can affect any area of our lives.
- It's impartial. Trouble comes to all of us, even believers.

林後十一:9 他(主)對我說:「我的恩典夠你用的,因為我的能力是在人的軟弱上顯得完全。」所以,我更喜欢誇自己的軟弱,好叫基督的能力覆庇我。

- It's impartial. Because we live in a fallen world, trouble comes to all of us—even believers—no matter what our financial or educational status.
- Adversity is painful. The pain can be physical, emotional, or relational, but whatever the source, it hurts.
- Sometimes adversity comes suddenly. Life could be going on as normal when an accident or a negative report from the doctor leaves us unexpectedly devastated.
- Times of adversity may be prolonged. Sometimes the emotional or physical pain continues for years.
- It may be intense. We may hurt so badly that even those who try to bring comfort feel the pain.
- Adversity is often beyond our control. We may feel helpless and have no answer for why God would allow us to go through it.

患難來之急速不可測,可長可短,總是令人痛苦,不能掌控! 信徒唯有信靠神,渡過!

Questions Regarding Adversity

When adversity leaves us confused, we often ask two primary questions: 我們常問:為什麼? 為什麼是我?

- Why? Even Jesus asked this question when He was hanging on the cross, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?" (Matt. 27:46). The Lord is compassionate toward our pain and understands our limited perspective and confusion, but He also knows the good He intends to accomplish through our adversity because He sees the future. Sometimes He reveals His purpose to us, but often we won't understand until we're in heaven. However, in the meantime, we can trust Him, knowing He always works for our best. He knows why you ask why. 基督耶穌的人性 直到見主面, 對我們可憐, 答案!
- Who? We usually want to know who caused our trouble or pain, and there are three possibilities.
 - Often the "who" is me. God has established the principle of sowing and reaping. If we sin

the hymn "By and By" 主知道答案, 主能解決。

against the Lord or others, adversity may be the consequence of our choices. The decisions we made in the past have led us to where we are today.

- **Satan.** He hates God's people. The book of Job reveals that he could be causing our distress.
- **God.** The Lord is sovereign and He controls all adversity in our lives. That's why it's important to remember how much He loves us. If He allows us to go through pain, suffering, or loss, then He has something good He wants to accomplish in us. When the apostle Paul understood that his "thorn in the flesh" was designed to keep him humble and dependent on Christ, he was able to say, "Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me" (2 Cor. 12:9).

神的心意

讓我謙卑
林後12:9

Adversity is God's most powerful tool to strengthen our faith.

Responses to Adversity

遇到苦難時，
我們常：
抱怨
逃避

Depending on our response, hardships and suffering will either drive us to the Lord or away from Him.

- **Blame.** We could respond by looking for someone to blame, but this approach only intensifies our anger until we become bitter.
- **Escape.** Another option is to try to avoid pain and problems by dulling our senses. Although drowning our sorrows with alcohol, taking drugs, or engaging in sexual affairs may seem like the answer, it only complicates our lives and leads to more problems.
- **Denial.** If we claim that all is well when it isn't, we will continue to suffer internal hurt and anger.
- **Self-pity.** A pity party never accomplishes anything positive. It simply displays an unwillingness to take responsibility for the situation and our response to it.
- **Seek the Lord.** We ought to come to God with our confusion and pain, asking Him to help us trust Him. He doesn't take delight in our suffering, but wants to use it to achieve what's best for us.

否認
自憐
靠神

Principles to Help Us Through Adversity

If we're confident of the Lord's love for us and understand how He uses adversity in our lives, we will be able to trust Him and respond in a way that benefits us.

神愛我，但祂允許苦難發生在我身上，
讓我更認識祂，信靠祂，追隨祂。

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■ **Adversity is one of God's most effective tools for strengthening our faith.** If we focus on the ways He is working within us and enabling us to endure affliction, our trust in Him will grow even if our circumstances stay the same.

增加我們對主的信心

■ **The Lord sends adversity to help us, not to hurt us.** God's purpose for allowing pain is to achieve something good. He may be trying to correct us or produce godly character in us. In the case of the apostle Paul, God protected him from pride and taught him to depend on Christ (2 Cor. 12:7-10).

神是幫助我們，不是傷害我們

■ **God is always with us.** We may not feel His presence, but He has promised to never leave or forsake us (Heb. 13:5). As believers, we have been united with Christ, and His Spirit lives within us.

神與我們同經歷

■ **Adversity can be a precious gift from the Lord.** Pain and hardship are the instruments He often uses to correct our thinking, turn us around, and guide us onto His path.

神要我們改變成更好，有得看，歸回主的正道

The Guidebook for Adversity

The Word of God shows us how to walk through times of adversity. It reminds us of His love, tells us about His purposes for trials, encourages us to endure, and strengthens us in the process. One of the primary reasons we struggle in adversity and give in to despair and hopelessness is ignorance of the Scriptures. The Lord wants to help us through affliction, but we must open His Word to receive His guidance, comfort, and assurance.

歸回聖經

思想主的愛，主的屬性與美

RESPONSE

- As you look back at past adversity, what greater understanding have you gained about God's character, promises, and purposes?
- What principles have you learned from God's Word that will help you respond to your trials as He desires?

思想上帝的屬性，並尋求我身上的目的，我學到了甚麼功課？！

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主的恩典夠我用！

God's mercies are sufficient for me!

Sermon Notes

Practical Lessons for Understanding the Word of God



在患難中成長 Growing in Our Adversity

KEY PASSAGES: 弗四:15 | 彼後三:18 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE: Psalm 32:8
Romans 5:3-5; 6:23; 8:28 | 2 Corinthians 1:3-7; 12:7-10 | 1 Peter 1:6-7

弗四:15 彼後三:18
羅五:3-5; 六:23; 八:28 林後一:3-7; 十二:7-10 彼前一:6-7

02/28/16

SUMMARY

When a child is born, we naturally expect him to grow, and if he doesn't, there's a major problem.

This same principle applies to the Christian life as well. Salvation is the beginning of our relationship with Christ, but God doesn't want us to stay immature. After being born again through faith in Jesus, we should continually grow in the grace and knowledge of Him (2 Pet. 3:18). By reading the Bible, praying, and observing how the Lord works, we will increase in Christlikeness and obedience. But the Lord also uses a surprising means to bring us to maturity. Adversity is the universal experience of mankind, and it can either hinder or accelerate our spiritual growth—it all depends on how we respond.

虽是生命
正常的成長

SERMON POINTS

Adversity is a condition of suffering and hardship involving anguish, pressure, trials, heartaches, or disappointments.

患難的定義
如何面對及應對才重要

It may be physical or emotional in nature, and either long or short in duration, but it always causes pain. Although none of us want hurt or trouble, if it comes, we have two options. We can waste our sorrows or grow in our relationship with the Lord.

而至的因際增長

Spiritual growth in adversity depends upon two factors.

Our understanding of God's purpose for it. He allows adversity in our lives for specific reasons.

患難中
神的目的

- **To get our attention.** When life is running smoothly, it's easy to ignore the Lord; but in adversity, He suddenly has our undivided attention.

擴張注意

- **To conquer pride.** If we're doing well, we might be tempted to look down on those who are struggling, but adversity humbles us. The apostle Paul was given awesome privileges and insights, but along with them came a "thorn in the flesh" to keep him from exalting himself (2 Cor. 12:7-10). God allows humbling pain because He knows that pride prevents us from being used by Him.

戰勝驕傲

- **To remind us of our weakness.** A sense of personal strength and adequacy keep us self-sufficient, but the Lord knows how to weaken us with affliction so we'll turn to Him for direction and strength.

提醒我的弱點

- **To increase our hatred of sin.** The suffering that comes with disobedience reminds us of the awful impact of sin. God sometimes disciplines us with adversity so we will learn to hate sin and practice righteousness.

痛恨罪惡, 義踐公正

- **To demonstrate His faithfulness.** Only in our greatest need will we understand how dependable and trustworthy the Lord is. Pain and hardship drive us to seek Him for help, and in the midst of our suffering, we discover that He is always faithful.

彰顯神的信實

- **To equip us to comfort others.** When God comforts us in our affliction, we become a spring of comfort to others (2 Cor. 1:3-7). Having gone through pain, we are better able to sympathize with those who are going through a similar situation.

裝備我們使我們未來能去醫傷心人

- **To prepare us for service.** Experiencing hardship and suffering equips us to serve the Lord in various ways and meet the needs of others.

預備我們服事主

- **To express His love for us.** Because God loves us so much, He sends adversity to rescue us from dangers we don't see and to draw us into the safety of a life fully surrendered to Him.

主愛顯明在我身

• **To change our direction.** God uses adversity to stop us from going astray and to redirect our path into His will.

■ **Our response to adversity.** To grow spiritually from the trials in our lives, we must respond as the Lord desires, and He has promised to teach us the way we should go (Ps. 32:8).

• **See it as coming from God.** Our first response should be to read God's Word in order to view our situation from His perspective. According to Romans 8:28, He "causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." If He's allowed suffering, He has something good to achieve through it.

• **Ask the Lord to reveal His goal for the adversity.** The painful situations in our lives are not random events but learning opportunities. If we glean the most from our suffering, the truths we learn will be worth the pain we experienced.

• **Surrender to God's will.** Even if we don't fully understand why we're suffering, the right response is to yield ourselves to whatever the Lord is doing, knowing that He only works for the best in His children's lives.

• **Rest by trusting in His faithfulness.** The Lord always does what He's promised and is trustworthy in every situation. Even in our pain, we can rest in His faithfulness to bring us through our adversity in a way that pleases and honors Him.

Biblical truths affirm that God's goal for our adversity is our spiritual growth.

■ **Adversity is the Lord's most effective way of deepening our faith and commitment to Him.** After He has brought us through it, the foundation of our trust in Him is strengthened (1 Pet. 1:6-7). And with each trial, our confidence in Him increases as we look back and see how He was faithful.

■ **The area of adversity in our lives is where God is working to bring us to spiritual maturity.** The Lord has a goal in mind and knows exactly how to achieve it. He is in the process of maturing us from the inside (Rom. 5:3-5). This cannot be

accomplished academically, but must be taught through the experience of suffering.

Our responses to adversity reveal something about ourselves.

■ **Our view of God.** Do we think He's trustworthy?

■ **Our view of ourselves.** Do we see ourselves as God's beloved children?

■ **The importance of things in our lives.** If the Lord removes something we want to keep, our response reveals its priority in our hearts.

■ **Our strengths and weaknesses.** It's in the difficulties that we discover how strong or weak we truly are.

■ **Our capacity for endurance.** Do we have a firm foundation of faith, which enables us to endure, or do we quickly give up?

■ **Our faith in God.** How much do we trust the Lord and believe that He uses adversity for our good?

Our spiritual growth is determined by the way we view adversity.

We either see it as an obstacle in our lives or as an opportunity to grow in our relationship with the Lord. In every trial, His goal is that we increase in our knowledge and understanding of His ways, and trust in His faithfulness.

RESPONSE

■ Do you view adversity as an obstacle or an opportunity for spiritual growth? Why do you see it this way?

■ What keeps you from surrendering to God's will in the midst of pain, disappointment, or loss?

■ How has God worked in your life through adversities? What sins has He revealed? What lessons has He taught you? How has He trained you for service?

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神值得信賴
我們是祂的兒女
主屈前位
我真軟弱
對主的信心使我
能堅守, 承受患難
相信祂說, 祂會
万事都互相效力
叫愛神的人得益處

困難是神所預備給我的機會:

更親近
相信及依靠祂

Spiritual godliness, maturity and faithfulness

正確地應對患難:

神允許及可教事自於神...

神啊, 我當如何行並降服於祂?

相信上帝的信實
並單單信祂

聖經中明確地記載:

患難是機會還是
攔阻?

降服於神, 或
降服於困難?

認罪, 悔改, 從祂得力, 依靠信從上帝!

All the way my Savior leads me
全路程主救主引領我!

羅五:3-5
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Turn your eyes upon Jesus...