

THE DAY OF ADVERSITY

PROVERBS 24:10

Text: Proverbs 24:10

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¹⁰ *If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.*

Introduction:

Adversity can be our greatest motivation for growth, or our deadliest means of discouragement. The difference depends on our understanding of God's purposes.

It is inevitable that each of us will experience Adversity and Trouble. Our initial response is usually negative and perhaps critical. We are prone to view trouble through the glasses of our own perspective and plans. When God was working behind the scenes to get Jacob in Egypt, Jacob's response was:

Genesis 42:36

³⁶ And Jacob their father said unto them, *Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.*

God's word assures us that "all things (including adversity) work together for good.

Romans 8:28

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.

Note:

1. OUR NATURAL RESPONSE IS TO REMOVE THE SOURCE OF ADVERSITY – GOD MAY WANT TO USE IT TO REVEAL WHERE GROWTH IS NEEDED

Someone once said:

“No pain, no palm; no thorns, no throne; no gall, no glory; no cross, no crown.”

A. God Uses Adversity to Catch Our Attention

Amos 4:12

¹² Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: *and* because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.

- The cares of this world tend to distract us from the world to come

Matthew 13:18-23

¹⁸ Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. ¹⁹ When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked *one*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. ²⁰ But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; ²¹ Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or

persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. ²² He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. ²³ But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth *it*; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

- When troubles come, it is often a reminder to look to God

Psalm 25:1-2

¹ Unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul. ² O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.

Psalm 119:67

⁶⁷ Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.

Psalm 119:71

⁷¹ *It is* good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.

- It often takes pain to get us to change

Illustration: Prodigal Son (Luke 15)

B. God Uses Adversity to Confirm His Love

Hebrews 12:6-13

⁶ For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. ⁷ If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? ⁸ But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all

are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? ¹⁰ For they verily for a few days chastened *us* after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness. ¹¹ Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. ¹² Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; ¹³ And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

- God cares enough to confront us and conform us to the image of His son.

Romans 8:28-29

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. ²⁹ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

C. God Uses Adversity to Call Us to Self-Examination

1 Corinthians 11:31-32

³¹ For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. ³² But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

Remember:

It is trial that proves one thing weak and another strong. A house built on the sand is in fair weather just

as good as if was built on a rock. A cobweb is as good as the mightiest cable when there is no strain upon it.

D. God Uses Adversity to Conquer Our Pride

Proverbs 8:13

¹³The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

- Pride is at the root of many of our conflicts

Proverbs 13:10

¹⁰Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised *is* wisdom.

- Pride puts us at odds with God

James 4:6-7

⁶But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. ⁷Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

E. God Uses Adversity to Help Us Consider our Weakness

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

⁷And 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. ⁸For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. ⁹And 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. ¹⁰Therefore 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.

- We are prone to forget our frailty and work for God in the power of the flesh
- Adversity reminds us of our weakness and helps us to draw from God's strength
- God often puts us in situations that are too much for us so that we will learn that no situation is too much for him
- It doesn't matter how great the pressure is. What really matters is where the pressure lies- whether it comes between you and God or whether it presses you nearer his heart

Illustration:

The Development of the Diamond

Must go through extreme heat and pressure

F. God Uses Adversity to Cause us to Cry Out to Him

Psalm 34:7

⁷The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

Psalm 86:3

³ Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily.

Psalm 50:15

¹⁵ And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

David stated 53 times in Psalms that he cried out to God.

2. OUR NATURAL RESPONSE TO ADVERSITY IS TO REACT TO PEOPLE OR PROBLEMS – BUT GOD WANTS US TO RECOGNIZE TO WORKING OF UNSEEN POWERS

A. Adversity Is a Reminder of Spiritual Warfare

Ephesians 6:11-18

¹¹ Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. ¹³ Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; ¹⁵ And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: ¹⁸ Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

- Adversity is One of the First Weapons Satan Uses to Weaken the Believer

2 Corinthians 12:7

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.

- Adversity Doesn't Mean Defeat

2 Corinthians 4:7-10

⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. ⁸ *We are* troubled on every side, yet not distressed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

B. Adversity Is a Requirement for Purification

1 Peter 1:6-7

⁶ Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: ⁷ That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

Isaiah 48:10

¹⁰ Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.

Illustration:

A saint's life is in the hands of God as a bow and arrow in the hands of an archer. God is aiming at something the saint cannot see; he stretches and strains, and every now and again the saint says, "I cannot stand any more." But God does not heed; he goes on stretching until his purpose is in sight, then he lets fly. We are here for God's designs, not for our own.

“Adversity is the diamond dust heaven polishes its jewels with.”

C. Adversity Helps Us Re-Evaluate Our Priorities

Matthew 6:33

³³ But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

D. Adversity Reveals the True Nature of Our Life and Works

Matthew 7:24-27

²⁴ Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: ²⁵ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. ²⁶ And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: ²⁷ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

E. Adversity Removes Shallow Friends

Proverbs 17:17

¹⁷ A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

- David's adversity became the proving ground for life-long companions
- Paul's adversity became the sift to separate Demas (Timothy and Luke stayed.)
- Jesus' adversity became the sift to remove Judas

1 Corinthians 13:3-8

³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. ⁴ Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, ⁵ Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; ⁶ Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; ⁷ Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. ⁸ Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away.

3. OUR FINAL RESPONSE TO ADVERSITY SHOULD NOT BE TO “COPE” WITH IT IN OUR FLESH – BUT TO “CONQUER” THROUGH CHRIST

Romans 8:37

³⁷ Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

A. Adversity Enables Us to Identify With the Lord

Philippians 3:10

¹⁰ That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

Galatians 2:20

²⁰ I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

B. Adversity Encourages Us to Become Accountable

Hebrews 10:23-25

²³ Let us hold fast the profession of *our* faith without wavering; (for he *is* faithful that promised;) ²⁴ And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: ²⁵ Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

C. Adversity Equips Us to Comfort Others

1 Corinthians 1:3-5

³ Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; ⁵ That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and *in* all knowledge;

God could have kept Daniel out of the lions' den. . . he could have kept Paul and Silas out of jail. . . he could have kept the three Hebrew children out of the fiery furnace. . . but God has never promised to keep us out of hard places . . . what he has promised is to go with us through every hard place, and to bring us through victoriously.