

Incredible Joy In Inescapable Troubles

Text : **Habakkuk 3:16-19 ; James 1: 2-8**

S#1.

A. The world thinks some aspects of Christianity are irrational, perhaps insane.

1. **I Cor. 1: 18** – For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. S#2.

2. Our lesson today is one of those “insane” concepts that the world thinks so foolish. S#3.

B. Christian or not, many quote some version of Friedrich Nietzsche’s saying :

1. *"That which does not kill me makes me stronger"* ***Trials produce a benefit.***
2. Even so, worldly people disdain and lament each adversity that comes upon them.

C. The scriptures instruct Christians not only to expect the trials of life, but to consider them as joyful events.

1. **James 1: 2** – Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,
2. We are to consider trials as “joy” because they yield a spiritual benefit to us.

With this lesson we will exegete this text and in light of related texts.

I. This teaching applies to “my brethren”, that is to say to Christians.

S#4.

A. James was an elder in the Jerusalem church and very influential there.

1. **Acts 12:2** ... The Apostle James had been executed before this writing.
2. When Peter was released from prison, he reported it to James. S#5.
Acts 12:17 – But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had led him out of the prison. And he said, "Report these things to James and the brethren." Then he left
3. **Acts 15: 13** ... At the Jerusalem counsel James spoke for the elders.

B. The book is addressed the Christians who were scattered by persecution.

1. After the stoning of Steven there was a significant persecution in Jerusalem.
Acts. 8: 1 – And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. (Remember .. **Acts 2: 7-11**) S#6.
2. James wrote to those who had been scattered by this persecution.
Vs. 1 – **To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad:**
 - a. Wherever they went the Jews continued to persecute them and then the Romans.
 - b. They were living under constant pressure so James told them to be joyful about it.

3. The Apostles counted it joy when they suffered for Christ's sake.

S#7.

Col. 1: 24 – Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions. (*They were not masochists.*)

II. The trials of life are actually NOT joyful occasions.

S#8.

A. “Consider it all joy” (KJV = count it)

1. This is **not** to say that the trial is actually a joyous occasion.

- a. *hegeomai* 2 to consider, deem, account, think.
- b. The Christian is to place a good value on a bad thing.

2. Jesus set an example of this before us.

Heb. 12: 2 – fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

S#9.

S#10.

B. We often cannot control the events of our life, but we can control our responses.

1. Whatever happens in our life today is just one bump in the long road to Heaven.
2. We may not understand why some things happen, but we know who is in control.

Psa. 34: 8 – O taste and see that the Lord is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! (**I Pet. 5: 7** .. *God cares about us.*)

C. Not only are we to place a value of JOY on trials they are “all joy.”

1. Trials are not just okay, they are to be considered a **total**, an **unmixed** blessing.
2. People who don't know God think this a crazy attitude. *They cannot understand it.*

III. One is not to consider “IF” he will encounter trials, but “when” he will.

S#11.

A. Jesus forewarned all who would follow Him will experience opposition.

S#12.

1. **John 16: 33** – These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.

2. Being a Christian will not make you a popular person.

John 15: 18-19 – If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept ...

S#13.

S#14.

B. The Apostle Paul warns us that being a Christian will bring trials upon us.

1. **I Tim. 3:12** – Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.
2. However, even those who are not trying to live godly will experience troubles.
 - a. **I Cor. 10: 13** – No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.
 - b. Only in Christ can one have assistance in handling his trials.

S#15.

C. Trials are unplanned events which are “encountered” in the course of life.

1. One doesn't have to be looking for trials to encounter them.
 - a. Walking down the road when you are suddenly overtaken by the trials of life.
 - b. KJV ... translates it “when ye fall into divers temptations;”
3. This same word (*peripipto*) is used in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Luke 10: 30 – Jesus replied and said, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. (**Acts 27: 41** .. striking a reef)

IV. Trials come in many sizes and shapes, but never at convenient times.

S#16.

A. The word “trials” carries a variety of implications depending on context.

1. *peirasmos* is translated in several ways in the N.T.
 - a. **James 1** ... Trials
 - b. **I Pet 4: 12** ... Testing
 - c. **I Tim. 6: 9** ... Temptation
2. The meaning always infers to that which **demand a decision** or proves worth.

S#17.

B. James says we should be prepared to face, to “encounter various trials”

1. Trials come in all manner of ways.
 - a. Broken relationships.
 - b. Lost jobs.
 - c. Ill health
 - d. Loss of a loved one
2. Horrible things happen to good people through no fault of their own.
3. *How can any of these things be valued as joy ?*

S#18.

C. We can value them as joy because we know something.**S#19.**

1. **James 1: 3** – Knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance,
2. We may not know why bad things happen, but we know God will use them.
 - a. **Rom. 8: 28** – And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose
 - b. **II Cor. 4: 17-18** For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal **#20.** weight of glory far beyond all comparison, **18** while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.
3. **Luke 16: 19ff** ... Remember the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.
 - * *When gloom comes, look ahead. God is working something good for you.* **S#21.**

D. Trials are ONLY of benefit when endured with the proper attitude.

* *We can't always control what befalls us, but we can control our attitude.*

1. Oysters make pearls by accepting adversity. (*Parasite surrounded by nacre.*)
2. Diamonds are formed when carbon is put under extreme heat and pressure. **S#22.**
3. It takes extreme heat to refine metals out of the ore and to purify it. Refining GOLD

V. Endurance has a work to accomplish.**S#23.****S#24.**

- A. **James 1: 4** – And let endurance have its perfect result, (KJV ... perfect work) so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

B. The word “perfect” does not mean sinless.

1. Perfect (*teleios*) also translated “of full age” 1 brought to its end, finished.
2 wanting nothing necessary to completeness. 3 perfect.
4 *4B1* full grown, adult, of full age, mature. (*Strong's enhanced*)
2. Perfection as in sinlessness isn't attainable, but maturity can be achieved by anyone.

C. Trials expose weak points, but they also serve to strengthen our weaknesses.

1. How does one get to be able to run long distances ? **Start short and progress.**
2. How does one develop the ability to lift heavy weights. **Lift more and more.**
 - III. – *Mike Mahony built big muscles lifting small weights, but couldn't lift heavy*
3. Christians know that every trial we overcome makes us spiritually stronger.
 - a. As Friedrich Nietzsche's said, "That which does not kill me makes me stronger"
 - b. Likewise, any trial we don't allow to destroy our faith serves to make it stronger.

D. God decides what trials you need to accomplish the growth you need. S#25.

1. Remember .. **Job 1-2** .. God monitors what Satan dumps on you.
2. **I Cor. 10: 13** – God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.
3. God has demonstrated His ability to deliver us.
II Tim. 3: 11 – such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me!

E. What if the Lord decides that you are to forfeit all your possessions ? S#26.

1. **Heb. 10: 34** – For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.
2. What if the Lord decides to let the persecution take your life as in Smyrna ? **S#27.**
Rev. 2: 10 – Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.
3. No one on earth can affect our eternal destiny. Even if we die we win. **S#28.**
Matt. 10: 28 – Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.
4. Will we cringe and be silenced by the devils testing ? **S#29.**
I Pet. 3: 14-15 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, ¹⁵ but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence
5. Or will we have the faith of Job ?
Job 13: 15 – Though He slay me, I will hope in Him.

CONCLUSION :

- A. Trials mold us; God's greatest desire is that His children live in Heaven w/ Him.
Our trials are like ingredients in a cake .. individually they are not good, but combined, ...
- B. He gives us what we need to strengthen us to complete the journey.
- C. All who finish the journey receive the crown of life ... **Do Not Grow Weary**

INVITATION : *If you have not started the journey, now is the time.* **S#31.****S#32.** ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :

Habakkuk 3: 16-19

16 I heard and my inward parts trembled, at the sound my lips quivered. Decay enters my bones, and in my place I tremble. Because I must wait quietly for the day of distress, for the people to arise who will invade us.

17 Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, though the yield of the olive should fail and the fields produce no food, though the flock should be cut off from the fold and there be no cattle in the stalls, **18** Yet I will exult in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation. **19** The Lord God is my strength, and He has made my feet like hinds' feet,

James 1: 2-8

2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, **3** knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. **4** And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. **6** But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. **7** For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, **8** being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

“Out of the presses of pain,
Cometh the soul’s best wine;
And the eyes that have shed no rain,
Can shed but little shine.” —A. B. Simpson