

BREAKING FREE FROM THE PAST #3

Learning To Enjoy Life's Hardships

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I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

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 in the here and the now. In this message today I want to share with you that life is actually designed to be full of hardships and 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 its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."*

Many people have a hard time dealing with the struggles in their lives because they are too busy fretting about the future. Their future is tainted with the failure and the problems of the past and as a result they are immobilized in their ability to function in the here and now. Therefore, I want to share with you today the importance of finding joy in life's hardships.

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

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."*

In the world we will have tribulations and troubles -- sicknesses, family tragedies, out of work, financial difficulties, family problems, major calamities eg. earthquakes, floods etc., business failure etc. It is a given, but Jesus says, "be of good cheer". He is saying that we must learn how to find joy in the midst of 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!" But 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. 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 To 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 and 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 of which fully releases the power of the kingdom of God.

Acts 14:22 *...strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."*

The following illustration illustrate to us the importance of the struggles that hardships bring in our lives.

Illustration: Lost Wing Power - A BEEKEEPER once told F.B. Meyer how some of the young bees are nurtured to ensure their healthy development. The queen lays each egg in a 6-sided cell which is filled with enough pollen and honey to feed upon until it reaches a certain stage of maturity. The top is then sealed with a capsule of wax. When the occupant has exhausted its supply of nourishment, the time has come for the tiny creature to be released from its confinement. But what a wrestling, tussling, and straining it endures to get through that wax seal. The opening is so narrow that in the agony of exit, the bee rubs off the membrane that encases its wings. Thus, when it

finally does emerge, it is able to fly! The man telling F.B. Meyer the story said that one time a moth got into the hive and devoured the wax capsules. As a result, the young bees crawled out without any effort or trouble, but they couldn't fly. Soon the mature insects, seeing the pitiful, unproductive state of new arrivals, instinctively proceeded to sting them to death.

Meyer drew from this information a spiritual application. He asks, "Are you congratulating yourself on having an easy time in life with no hardships or difficulties to bear? Then beware, lest you lose your 'wing power' like the handicapped bees, and perish miserably in the dust of defeat."

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

Hebrews 12:27-28 *Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.*

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. **So, too, 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!

III. CONCLUDING REMARKS.

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 *...for this day is holy to our LORD. **Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.***

In the next message we will be looking at specific ways in which we can find joy in the midst of life's hardships. 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.