

WHERE IS YOUR FAITH?

Overcoming Life's Disappointments & Difficulties

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I. Introductory Remarks.

In this message today, I want to talk about having the kind of faith that is necessary to become an overcomer in all of life's situations, so that you don't find yourself becoming so weary that you begin to lose heart and the faith that God has breathed into you.

Illustration: Hard nose Harry: The rain falls on the just and the unjust. Disappointments and difficulties are a part of life.

Luke 8:22-25 *But as they sailed He fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water, and were in jeopardy. And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm. But He said to them, "Where is your faith?"*

In this situation Jesus was demonstrating to His disciples that He had power and authority over every situation in life. If we are to put our faith and trust in Jesus, He will be there for us no matter how difficult or distressing the situations we face seem to be. This is the question I want to ask you today, "Where is your faith in relationship to all that your are going through? Have you reached the point where you can't take it anymore?"



II. Life Situations That Try Our Faith.

What kind of situations and trials are trying your faith and seem insurmountable in your eyes?

Broken relationships
Busy lifestyle
Divine delay in God's promises
Emotional problems
Family problems, children, etc.

Financial problems
God's chastening
Hardness of the way - *Numbers 21:4*
Marital problems
Sickness, health or death.'

In each of these areas we are susceptible to disappointment, difficulty and heartache. Where is your faith in each of these areas? Jesus has given us

authority and power over all the issues of life. He wants us to be overcomers in all that we do and comes our way.

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."*

The problem is that we have an enemy who wants to exploit the areas in our lives that are causing us heartache, disappointment and difficulty. His objective is to make us weary and lose heart.

III. Satan's Objective.

We need to realize that we have an enemy with an objective. We know that he is out to kill, destroy and steal, but he is also trying to wear us out.

Daniel 7:25 *He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute (**wear out**) the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.*

1. Satan's Objective Is To Wear Us Down.

This scripture is speaking of the antichrist, which will be released in the earth in the last days prior to Christ's coming. But it is important to know that the spirit of the antichrist is already loose and working towards these same objectives.

The antichrist spirit that is loose in the world today is trying to wear God's precious saints out with discouragement in the mist of the various trials and hardships of life. His objective is to begin to plant the seeds of apostasy so that when the time comes we will not have any faith to draw upon. His objective is to get as many saints as possible to lose heart and faith which will lead to apostasy. He wants to take as many down with him as he possibly can. The Bible tells us we are not to be ignorant of his devices.

2 Corinthians 2:11 *...lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.*

2. Satan Feeds On Our Vulnerabilities.

Luke 4:13 *Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.*

We know that Satan feeds on our weaknesses and delights in exploiting our vulnerable points, so let's look at these areas once again that have the potential of bringing weariness to our lives. These are all common causes of discouragement that make us weary in well doing.

Broken relationships - Demas *2 Tim 4:10*
 Busy lifestyle
 Divine delay in God's promises
 Emotional problems
 Family problems, children, etc.

Financial problems
 God's chastening - *Hebrews 12:11*
 Hardness of the way - *Numbers 21:4*
 Marital problems
 Sickness, health or death.'

Do you feel in jeopardy in any of these areas? Are you about to perish with the water raging over your head? Are you about ready to drown in your sorrows because of the discouragement or disappointment you are feeling in any of these areas? You must identify the area where you are vulnerable and use the shield of faith and the belt of truth against it. Satan is firing his fiery darts, so you better get your shield up to protect yourself.



Ephesians 6:13-16 *Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.*

IV. How To Apply The Shield Of Faith.

Now that we understand that we have a vicious and unrelenting enemy who is out to get us and to wear us down, what are some practical ways in which we can apply the shield of faith against him?



God's desire for our lives is to take us from tribulation to victory.

1 John 5:4 *For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world; our faith.*

1. Understand Where The Source of Your Faith Is At.

Hebrews 12:2 ...looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The source of our faith is in Jesus Christ and what He has done for us. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith and will always be on our side no matter what. Many times in the midst of life's hardships the accuser of the brethren comes to us and tries to convince us that we are unworthy of God's help in our lives. This is a lie of the enemy to prevent us from receiving the help we really need. You've got to know that if God be for you, who can be against you. This must be in your heart very strongly.

Isaiah 43:1-2 But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you.

Isaiah 40:31 But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

There were many Bible characters, which for one reason or another became weary and despondent over their situations in life, but in the end became overcomers, because they knew where their faith was.

Moses pleaded for God to kill him on one occasion, when the people of Israel began to complain about eating manna all the time. Moses basically said, "If this is the way it's going to be, please kill me here and now, for the burden is too heavy to carry - *Numbers 11:11-15*. Moses' preservation was in the fact that he was taking his burden to the source of his faith.

Joshua the great conqueror was so despondent and depressed at one point that he was ready to quit and give up and wished he was back in the wilderness where there weren't so many enemies. But he took his burden to the source of his faith and was told what to do and how to overcome - *Joshua 7:7*. We must do the same.

We not only have the shield of faith to protect us from Satan's fiery darts, but we also have the belt of truth and the sword of the Spirit to apply to our spiritual arsenal.

Psalms 119:24-25 *Your testimonies also are my delight And my counselors. My soul clings to the dust; revive me according to Your word.*

Everyone is susceptible to the various situations that try our faith. None of us is exempt. But we can extend the misery of the situation in our lives when we don't apply the word of God to the situation. On the other hand, when the Word of God is applied it will not only revive our spirits, but it will begin to make the crooked paths straight once again. We must take the word of God and apply it to the situation that is bringing distress in our lives no matter how weak or lethargic we feel.

Romans 10:17 *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Job understood the importance of being revived according to the word. He probably experienced as much hardship and disappointment as anyone and his testimony was that he esteemed God's word more valuable than food itself.

Job 23:11-12 *My foot has held fast to His steps; I have kept His way and not turned aside. ¹²I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.*

3. We Must Find God's Purpose & Build Kingdom Character.

Romans 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

All of the areas mentioned in this message plus others represent opportunities for God's purpose to come forth in our lives in a greater degree. They represent opportunities to build godly character in our lives. When we approach these situations with a kingdom mentality and a heart of faith, God is able to be released to bring forth joy in the midst of the difficulty. The joy of the Lord is our strength, which counteracts Satan's tactic of wearing us down.

Romans 5:3-4 *And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.*

What are some virtues that God wants to develop in our lives in the midst of these trying situations? eg. broken relationships - forgiveness, busy lifestyle - priorities, financial problems - principle of giving and putting the kingdom first, etc.

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.*

Psalms 138:7-8 *Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me; You will stretch out Your hand Against the wrath of my enemies, And Your right hand will save me. The LORD will perfect that which concerns me; Your mercy, O LORD, endures forever; Do not forsake the works of Your hands.*

4. We Must Find Contentment in the Adversity.

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

When we are able to find contentment the shield of faith not only causes the enemy to leave us alone, but it further releases God's hand of provision in the midst of the trial.

Philippians 4:19 *And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*



V. Concluding Remarks.

These are some basic steps to overcoming life's disappointments and difficulties of which you will surely experience from time to time.

If you allow God to work His purpose in your life by going to Him and His word during the time of difficulty you will find yourself in a place of contentment and as a result you will be the kind of overcomer God has destined you to be and you will have defeated Satan's attempt to wear you down. So, let me ask you once again, "Where is your faith in relationship to all of life's difficulties?"

Galatians 6:9 *And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.*

Revelation 2:7 *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." "*

Below are some illustrations you can use with a power point presentation.

Disappointments & Difficulties are Part of Life



"that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. Matthew 5:45

I Can't Take It Anymore



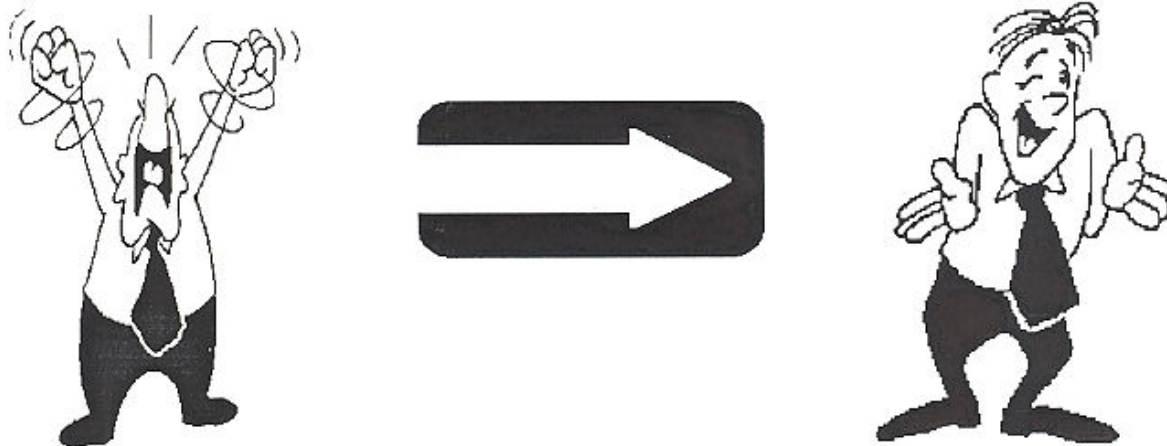
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Sickness, Health or Death

"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."
John 16:33

From Tribulation To Victory



We apply the shield of faith by:

- 1. Understanding where our source of faith is at.**
- 2. Applying the Word of God to our situations.**
- 3. Using the trial to build kingdom character.**
- 4. Learning contentment in whatever state we find ourselves.**

For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. Romans 5:17

