



Sermon: Hope in Trials

Text: James 1:2-4, 12-13;

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Date: 07/24/2022

Consider this: Hope is not fully realized without trials

- James 1:2-4 - trials lead to spiritual maturity
- James 1:12-13 - notice that James puts a positive spin on trials
 - V13 - God does not *tempt* people

Where do temptations come from?

- 1. Sin nature - Romans 7:18
- 2. Spiritual forces of wickedness - Ephesians 6:12

References to the works of Satan in 2 Corinthians

- 2:9-11 - Satan seeks to outwit believers
- 2:7 - “excessive sorrow” is a tool of Satan
 - Reconciliation cannot happen without forgiveness
- 4:4 - Satan blinds the minds of unbelievers
- 6:15 - There is no harmony between Satan and Jesus
- 11:3 - Satan seeks to lead our minds astray from our sincere devotion to Jesus
 - Romans 12:2 - renewing our minds (trials into joy)
- 12:1-10 - the thorn in the flesh
 - Paul is talking about himself
 - What did Paul learn? Humility; When we are weak, God is strong
 - Not everything bad in our lives is God giving us a thorn in our flesh

Romans 5:1-5 - suffering produces perseverance which leads to character and hope

Consider this: When you’re going through trials in your life, remember the promises of Jesus

- Going Deeper -

For individual or small group study

1. How is a Jesus perspective of trials in life different from a worldly perspective? (They are definitely different! (2 Corinthians 6:15)
2. *Excessive sorrow* and an *unforgiving spirit* are just two examples of tools that the spiritual forces of wickedness like to exploit in believers (2 Corinthians 2:7). How have you seen this played out in your own life or someone else's life? Why is forgiveness so important when it comes to reconciliation?
3. **READ Romans 12:1-2.** There's a constant spiritual battle that *all* believers face: The battle for our mind. What competes for your attention? How do these things lead us away from a sincere devotion to Jesus?
4. **READ 2 Corinthians 12:1-10.** Why didn't God take away Paul's thorn in the flesh? Have there been times in your life when you prayed for God to take something away but God had other plans? How did that trial impact your faith in Jesus?
5. **READ the following verses and reflect on or discuss the promises of God:**
Matthew 28:20; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, 13:4; James 1:3-5; Romans 5:1-11; Hebrews 4:14-16, 13:5-6
6. **READ Psalm 13.** This is a Psalm of Lament. Laments are prayers that voice our frustrations to God, yet they also focus on His faithfulness and promises. How important is reflecting on God's promises during your trials in life? What promises from God specifically give you hope, especially during times of trial?

Recommended Resources

Books:

- *NIV Faithlife Illustrated Study Bible*, christianbook.com, <https://bit.ly/3kxieXw>
- *Dark Clouds Deep Mercy: Discovering the Grace of Lament*, by Mark Vroegop