
SATAN'S FAVORITE LIES: LIE #7 Pain Should Be Avoided At All Costs

THE ANCIENT LIE

Job 1-2/ Matthew 4:1-10

- Pain and suffering mean God has let me down.
- If there is a way to avoid pain, only a fool doesn't take it.

THE TRUTH ABOUT PAIN & SUFFERING

Romans 5:12/ 1 Corinthians 7:20-21

- Pain & suffering are not God's doing.
- If you can avoid pain ethically, by all means do so.
If you can't – embrace it.

THREE STRANGE (BUT POWERFUL) RESPONSES

❶ A Strange *Attitude*: Rejoice.

James 1:2-3/ Romans 5:3-5/ 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18/ 1 Corinthians 10:10-11/ Romans 12:2

- ✓ We can't control our feelings, we can control our thoughts.
- ✓ There is always something to be thankful for.

❷ A Strange *Response*: Embrace The Benefits.

James 1:3-4 & Romans 5:3-5/ Hebrews 5:7-8/ 1 Peter 1:6-7 & Matthew 5:10-12/ 2 Corinthians 1:3-6

- ✓ Trials build character & confidence.
- ✓ Suffering teaches obedience.
- ✓ Trials reveal the truth about my faith.
- ✓ Suffering creates empathy.

❸ A Strange *Prayer*: Lord, give me wisdom.

James 1:5/ Matthew 26:39-44

- ✓ Ask for deliverance, seek wisdom.

Food for Thought

For the week of July 27, 2008

(Questions and Scriptures for further study)

1. The Bible gives us windows into the lives of many people who experienced great pain, hardship or loss. Read the following Scriptures and take a look at how each person responded to their situation. Pay attention to what they learned or taught as a result of their trials and jot down any observations. Finally, see if you can connect any of your observations to your notes from this week's message.

Job: Job 1:18-22

While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, "Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, [19] when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

[20] At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship [21] and said:

"Naked I came from my mother's womb,
and naked I will depart.

The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away;
may the name of the Lord be praised."

[22] In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing. [NIV]

Job: Job 2:7-10

So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. [8] Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes.

[9] His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!"

[10] He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?"

In all this, Job did not sin in what he said. [NIV]

Paul: 2 Corinthians 11:16-33

I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool. But if you do, then receive me just as you would a fool, so that I may do a little boasting. [17] In this self-confident boasting I am not talking as the Lord would, but as a fool. [18] Since many are boasting in the way the world does, I too will boast. [19] You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise! [20] In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or pushes himself forward or slaps you in the face. [21] To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that!

What anyone else dares to boast about--I am speaking as a fool--I also dare to boast about. [22] Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. [23] Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged

more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. [24] Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. [25] Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, [26] I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. [27] I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. [28] Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. [29] Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?

[30] If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. [31] The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying. [32] In Damascus the governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me. [33] But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands. [NIV]

David: Psalm 27:1-14

Of David

The Lord is my light and my salvation--
whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life--
of whom shall I be afraid?

[2] When evil men advance against me
to devour my flesh,
when my enemies and my foes attack me,
they will stumble and fall.

[3] Though an army besiege me,
my heart will not fear;
though war break out against me,
even then will I be confident.

[4] One thing I ask of the Lord,
this is what I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord
and to seek him in his temple.

[5] For in the day of trouble
he will keep me safe in his dwelling;
he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle
and set me high upon a rock.

[6] Then my head will be exalted
above the enemies who surround me;
at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make music to the Lord.

[7] Hear my voice when I call, O Lord;
be merciful to me and answer me.

[8] My heart says of you, "Seek his face!"
Your face, Lord, I will seek.

[9] Do not hide your face from me,
do not turn your servant away in anger;
you have been my helper.

Do not reject me or forsake me,
O God my Savior.
[10] Though my father and mother forsake me,
the Lord will receive me.
[11] Teach me your way, O Lord;
lead me in a straight path
because of my oppressors.
[12] Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes,
for false witnesses rise up against me,
breathing out violence.

[13] I am still confident of this:
I will see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living.
[14] Wait for the Lord;
be strong and take heart
and wait for the Lord. [NIV]

Jesus: Luke 9:21-27

Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. [22] And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."

[23] Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. [24] For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. [25] What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self? [26] If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. [27] I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God." [NIV]

Peter: 1 Peter 4:12-19

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. [13] But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. [14] If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. [15] If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. [16] However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. [17] For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? [18] And,

"If it is hard for the righteous to be saved,
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"

[19] So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good. [NIV]

2. How is Paul's perspective in 2 Corinthians 1:3-11 contrary to how most of us would normally think when facing physical or emotional challenges?

2 Corinthians 1:3-11

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, [4] who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. [5] For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. [6] If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. [7] And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

[8] We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. [9] Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. [10] He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, [11] as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many. [NIV]

What part of this Scripture is most encouraging for you?

What part is most challenging?

If you are facing a great difficulty or a time of suffering, what would you want someone to do (or not do) in their attempt to comfort or share in your suffering?

3. Psalm 77 is a good example of an honest prayer in the midst of a tough situation. Use this prayer as a guide as you write out your own "psalm" about a tough season in your life or a painful situation. Honestly express your thoughts and emotions to God. Also include a list of the things God has done for you which will help you maintain your trust in Him.

Psalm 77:1-20

For the director of music. For Jeduthun. Of Asaph. A psalm.

I cried out to God for help;

I cried out to God to hear me.

[2] When I was in distress, I sought the Lord;
at night I stretched out untiring hands
and my soul refused to be comforted.

[3] I remembered you, O God, and I groaned;
I mused, and my spirit grew faint.

Selah

- [4] You kept my eyes from closing;
I was too troubled to speak.
[5] I thought about the former days,
the years of long ago;
[6] I remembered my songs in the night.
My heart mused and my spirit inquired:

- [7] "Will the Lord reject forever?
Will he never show his favor again?
[8] Has his unfailing love vanished forever?
Has his promise failed for all time?
[9] Has God forgotten to be merciful?
Has he in anger withheld his compassion?"

Selah

- [10] Then I thought, "To this I will appeal:
the years of the right hand of the Most High."
[11] I will remember the deeds of the Lord;
yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.
[12] I will meditate on all your works
and consider all your mighty deeds.
[13] Your ways, O God, are holy.
What god is so great as our God?
[14] You are the God who performs miracles;
you display your power among the peoples.
[15] With your mighty arm you redeemed your people,
the descendants of Jacob and Joseph.

Selah

- [16] The waters saw you, O God,
the waters saw you and writhed;
the very depths were convulsed.
[17] The clouds poured down water,
the skies resounded with thunder;
your arrows flashed back and forth.
[18] Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind,
your lightning lit up the world;
the earth trembled and quaked.
[19] Your path led through the sea,
your way through the mighty waters,
though your footprints were not seen.
[20] You led your people like a flock
by the hand of Moses and Aaron. [NIV]