

“Handling Adversities” Delivered by E Terry 11/12/17

1st Corinthians 10:1 – 13; Romans 8 18 – 39; James 1: 2 – 18; Psalm 37: 1 - 40 (Sermon)

The dictionary defines adversities as difficult situations, hardships, harsh conditions, misfortunes, and / or bad luck.

So how do you respond to difficult situations, impossible people, and these troubling times we live in?

Several years ago there was a best-selling book entitled “Why Bad Things Happen to Good People”.

This book was popular because it addressed the popular feeling that bad things should not happen to good people.

But Jesus warned us that even His faithful disciples should expect adversities in our life.

Jesus said, “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

We have and we will all continue to experience adversities in our life so we need to remember our God is in control of the universe.

Our God is the God of Miracles.

Our God is all-powerful and our God can turn fear into hope, sorrow into joy, and tragedy into victory.

Our problem is that many times in the midst of adversity we limit God by our lack of faith and our failure to trust in The Lord.

Psalm 37 is King David's testimony and it addressed to man.

David wants to pass on what He has found to be true and helpful. Psalm 37 describes the peaceful state of the Godly person and the short lived prosperity of the wicked.

David gives us some very practical advice for handling adversity.

These seven steps that David gives us are listed in your bulletin insert so I invite you to take out your bulletin insert, take notes, and follow along as we briefly look at David's advice for handling adversity.

The first step to overcoming adversity is in verses 1 & 2 – “do not fret because of those who are evil or envious over those who do wrong”

The word “fret” means to worry or get upset over.

Worry never changed anything and worry does not make the problem go away.

Mark 9:23 tells us all things are possible with God.

Remember Jesus came to earth to destroy sin and evil.

Our God is all-powerful and He will destroy all evil and evil doers in His time.

Our problem is we want God to act instantly.

The second step to overcoming adversity is in verses is in verse 3a – “Trust in The Lord”

Hebrews 11: 6 reminds us; “without faith it is impossible to please God”.

Do you really believe that God will take care of all that is unjust and all of the injustice in the world?

Proverbs 3:5 states: “Trust in The Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding in all your ways submit to Him and He will make your paths straight.”

The third step to overcoming adversity is in verses is also in verse 3a - “Continue to do good”

Jesus said; “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

In James 2:20 we are told faith without works is useless faith.

Jesus said: “Let your light shine before others , that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5: 16)

We are to trust God to right the wrongs and while we are waiting on The Lord we are to continue to do good deeds.

The fourth step to overcoming adversity is in verses 4.- “Take delight in The Lord”

To delight in some one means to experience great pleasure and joy in being in that person’s presence.

The world delights in what they have and as Christians we should delight in the fact that we have Jesus. As the song says; “I am more than a millionaire because I have Jesus”.

Also please notice the promise in verse 4; when we delight in The Lord “He will give you “the desires of your heart.”

Remember your joy and lasting satisfaction comes from The Lord.

The fifth step to overcoming adversity is in verses 4 & 5. “Commit your ways to The Lord”

To commit your ways to The Lord means to turn everything you do and everything you have over to The Lord.

Everything includes our time, our talents, and our treasure.

You have to choose your way or The Lord’s way.

The Lord’s way is love, peace, patience, mercy, forgiveness, and compassion.

There is another promise in verse 5.

Do your part and God will do His. When you do the possible God will do the impossible.

The sixth step to overcoming adversity is in verses 7.

“Be still before The Lord and wait patiently before Him”.

We need to be still in order to hear The Lord speak to us.

We all need to set aside some quiet time each day to spend with our Lord.

We all need to wait patiently on The Lord to answer.

Psalm 46:10 says; “Be still and know that I am God.”

The seventh step to overcoming adversity is in verse 8 - “Refrain from anger and turn from wrath.”

James 1: 19 - 20 says; “Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry, for man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.”

We need to learn not to let people and situations frustrate us.

Romans 12:21 states; “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

In our lesson from James we are told to “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds” (James 1:2).

James is telling us we should rejoice when things go wrong, we should look forward to problems in our life, and we should welcome the impossible situations that confront us.

That is really a really tough teaching.

If we are honest with ourselves many times our first reaction is to get angry and look around to see who or what we can blame.

Then we begin to ask “why me?”, or “Lord this is really not a good time for this situation.”

When we get out of the questioning stage many of us have a pity party.

But James tells us that when troubling situations come we are not to start crying that something terrible has happened to us.

Rather, we are to rejoice and we are to be glad that God is giving us an opportunity to grow spiritually.

God has a purpose for everything.

In verses 3 and 4 James tells us testing develops perseverance or patience, and perseverance is necessary for spiritual maturity.

As you know trials are meaningless unless they have a purpose.

Trials in our lives are meant to produce spiritual growth.

As Christians we can rejoice in the midst of our adversities because we know that God is working in our life to perfect us!

Remember Romans 8:28; “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

When adversities come, Christians should not ask, “Why me, Lord?”

But rather, as Christians we should always ask The Lord what He wants to change in our life.

What does The Lord want me to learn from this situation, and how can I honor The Lord in this situation?

Please note; “consider it pure joy” is a command.

You see the secret to overcoming adversities is your relationship with Jesus Christ.

Knowing God is in total control and living life with an eternal perspective will allow you to be victorious over whatever Satan or whatever this life can throw at us.

As you go through the week remember the advice in Psalm 37.

These seven steps give us God’s divine description for handling adversity.

God clearly tells us in this Psalm if we want to overcome any and all adversities we must trust, delight, and commit our ways to The Lord.

Simply put King David’s advice in Psalm 37 is: “Relax – Don’t act”

“ Trust God because The Lord will take care of everything”

AMEN