

RADICAL IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

James 1:2-4 New Living Translation (NLT)

2 Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. 3 For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. 4 So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

As we get ourselves into today's word, let me remind you of the definition of radical which we learnt last week

Radical means favoring extreme changes in existing views, habits and conditions in order to remain true to an identity or a reason for being.

- Allow me to say that you need to be radical in order to change the status quo, to change the narrative in your life.
- You cannot live a life of distinction if you follow the crowd – to be distinct it is to be unique; it is to be different from the rest. I am not even talking about living in comparison with others but being the best version of yourself.
- One of the aspects of your life that requires you to be radical is your response to adversity and trials. In that regard, I want to talk to you on the subject **RADICAL IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY**.
- The devil does not want you to fulfill your calling and destiny here on earth. One of doing that is to wear you out with challenges of life – the way you respond to adversity will determine whether yours will be a happy ending or a sad one.
- There is a normal way of responding to your daily challenges and there is a radical way.
- The normal way will lead to more trouble
 - Anger and disillusionment
 - Your love for the things of God can grow cold
 - Taking it out on your family and close relationships – many families are wracked when hit by financial problems
 - Dissociating yourself from the fellowship of believers
 - Loss of faith in God and His character – you can actually be offended by God
- A radical believer will look at trials and respond to them in a different way
- It is a response that is foreign to the day to day way of life – yes, it is a radical way.
- The life of a believer is not one free of trouble but it is one of overcoming trouble.
- We need to have it settled in our minds that at some point things will not go according to our plan.

RADICAL IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take courage; I have overcome the world!" John 16:33

Therefore, since Christ suffered in His body, arm yourselves with the same resolve, because anyone who has suffered in his body is done with sin. 1 Peter 4:1

Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; 13 but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 1 Peter 4:12-13

- James, the brother of Jesus writes to the Jewish people in the diaspora and taught them a radical way of responding to adversity.
- When things don't work according to your plan, James says

James 1:2

The Message (MSG)

Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides

Living Bible (TLB)

2 Dear brothers, is your life full of difficulties and temptations? Then be happy

New Living Translation (NLT)

2 Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy.

- count it all joy,
 - be happy about it,
 - consider it a gift,
- It is quite radical to view adversity light heartedly, to not allow sickness to take away your joy and peace. We respond to adversity with joy because:
 - 1. Every trial and adversity is an opportunity in seed form**
 - Let's look at how adversity is an opportunity

1.1 Adversity tests your faith level

James 1:3 For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow.

- It is times of adversity that you get a chance to apply the word you heard over time.

RADICAL IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

- Any level of testing will reveal the quality of a thing – you will only know the quality of your faith by your response in times of adversity.
- Your faith is the foundation of our relationship with God - the man that stands in such tests gives proof that his relationship with God is sound

1.2 Adversity builds Character

James 1:3 For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. 4 So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

- It is in times of trials that we learn how to operate in the fruit of the spirit – you don't need to have self-control unless there is something that can cause you to lose control.
- You won't grow in your love unless there is pressure to love the unlovable.
- When your faith is tested, you develop endurance and this amounts to inner character – it is the same as the endurance that is developed by an athlete by training.
- It's when you are being tested that you will see your weaknesses – many people are like angles until they are put under pressure.
- The character that comes as a result of trials will make you complete and useful in the hands of God.
- Think about this with me – when you have been through a season of lack and then abundance comes, you will not hold onto the wealth because at some point you lived without. It becomes easy to let go

1.3 Every adversity will show case the power of God

- I have some good news for someone – God will not throw at you what you cannot handle.

1 Corinthians 10:13 The Message (MSG)

13 No test or temptation that comes your way is beyond the course of what others have had to face. All you need to remember is that God will never let you down; he'll never let you be pushed past your limit; he'll always be there to help you come through it.

- This is so comforting to know that God has your back in your darkest moment – right now the night is dark but God is there with you.
- There is no measure of trial or temptation that cannot be dealt with by His grace – He told Paul that His grace is more than enough.
- Troubles reveal that on our own we can't live in a way that honors God.

RADICAL IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

2Corinthians 12:8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- Many people lose the opportunities that are presented to them by way of adversity. You need to know what to do

2. Remain connected during the time of adversity

3.1 Remain in fellowship with God – some people go deeper in God during times of adversity but some get disconnected.

Joh 15:5 "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

- You don't stop praying, you don't stop believing in His character and nature
- Adversity can cause you to get offended by God – Matthew 11:6

3.2 Stay connected with the family of believers

- The easiest thing to do and the prospects are real is to run away from fellowship during your times of adversity.
- This is a tactic that the enemy knows how to use against the people of God. Like they say, there is safety in numbers.
- Your natural family and spiritual family is designed to pick you up when you are down

1 Peter 5: 8 Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

3.3 Keep a disciplined thought pattern – your victory is largely dependent on what goes on in your head.

2 Corinthians 10: 4-5 4The weapons of our warfare are not the weapons of the world. Instead, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5We tear down arguments, and every presumption set up against the knowledge of God; and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ

3.4 Stick it out by enduring the moment

RADICAL IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

Hebrews 10:36 You need to persevere, so that after you have done God's will, you will receive what He has promised.

- Don't quit on God – He has the final say and not the devil. We need to stay the course in order to see the opportunity clothed in adversity.
- It does not matter what you are going through, God works it out for the good of those who love Him – Romans 8:28.
- Wait on the Lord and you will receive strength – Isaiah 40:31