

VII. HARD TIMES MEAN WE ARE NOT IN GOD'S WILL.

-- DISCUSSION Q'S: --

INTRODUCTION

While trials can be a great source of pain in our life, we should take heart because through trials and hardship, God shows His love in never leaving us. Through our hardship God continues to love and show His grace, and mercy. We need to be a people who aren't blind to His goodness, but rejoice in Christ always.

DISCUSSION

What was the most recent hardship you've endured? Looking back, do you think it was due to your own sin or God's will?

EXPLANATION

What is a source of encouragement for you during times of hardship?
What examples in Scripture are there of hardship due to God's will?

APPLICATION

Read Romans 8:28 and Genesis 50:20.
How has God used your suffering/hardship for His glory?
Does the fact that God allows for suffering in our lives alter your perception of Him as good and loving?
For the times we must simply endure or wait out hardship, what can we turn to for strength?

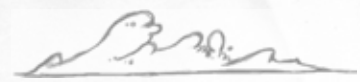
MISSION

Read 2 Corinthians 7:10.
How can we endure hardship in a way that is different from the rest of the world?
How can we encourage non-Christians during periods of suffering?

Read Matthew 7:1-5

HOMEWORK:

What things are you most prone to judge in others?



stupid summer

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TODAY'S VERSES:

1 Peter 4:12
Ephesians 2:1
Proverbs 22:8
Isaiah 53:3
Hosea 1:2
2 Corinthians 7:10
James 4:17
Matthew 5:44
Romans 12:17-21
1 Peter 3:9
Romans 8:28
Genesis 50:20
Philippians 4:4

MY NOTES:

[OURELEMENT.ORG/STUPIDSUMMER](http://ourelement.org/stupidsummer)

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

ourelement.org/events



FANTASY FOOTBALL DRAFT
9/2 - 4pm \$10

MOTORCYCLE RIDE
Saturday, 9/14 - 11am

**WOMEN'S ART & WINE
GIRL'S NIGHT OUT**
Saturday, 9/14 - 4pm

BAPTISMS

Today at 1pm
1371 Solomon Road
Last Name:
A-L - Desserts
M-Z - Salad
or Side Dish



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-- SERMON NOTES --

1 Peter 4:12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

Hardship is a part of life. We will all enter into hardship at some point in time and no matter how big or little the hardship is, it is a big deal to us. Now typically when we enter into some sort of hardship or suffering we turn to God and ask "why?" But rarely are we actually looking for the answer; we are actually accusing God of not keeping true to His promise to us that he would use all things to work together for the good of those who love Him.

Instead of accusing God we first should ask "why am I here?" Typically we will find that we enter into hardship because we messed up or sinned in some way. For instance we spent all our money foolishly and we now we can't afford the things we need and our debt continues to grow. Perhaps the vows we made to our spouse become just words we said years ago and we stop pursuing them and loving them like Christ calls us to and our marriage suffers. Maybe it's that we have developed a sinful habit that has brought guilt and shame into our life and we feel burdened by it. Whatever our hardship may be, it is typically because we have sinned or messed up in some way. So instead of accusing God of messing up, we need to ask "why am I here?" or "how did I get here?".

Every once in a while the answer to "how did I get here," will be; God brought me here. Sometimes God brings us into hardship to teach us, grow us, cultivate us, or break us and lead us to repentance. Hosea is a great example of this, God told him to get a wife out of whoredom. She was not faithful, she continued to run back to her old life, and God tells Hosea to stick with it and pursue her anyways. We look at Job, who

endured massive hardship and was never told why, and all we know is that God allowed it. C.S. Lewis said, "Pain is God's megaphone to rouse a deaf world". God occasionally leads us into hardship.

After we have a better understanding of why we are in this hardship, we should ask; "how should I react or what should I do?" If we are there because of sin the answer is, repent. We need to repent of sin, seek Christ, and turn away from our sin. If we are in this hardship because Christ brought us there, then we need to stick with it. Many times the hardships that God brings into our life, we can wiggle our way out of. Hosea could have divorced his wife and no one would have batted an eye at a man divorcing an adulterous wife. We could repay evil for evil, or somehow get out of our hardship, but James 4:17 says, "So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin." If God brought us into this hardship, then getting out is never the right choice, no matter how easy or convenient it may seem. When God brings suffering into our life instead of running we need to ask, "what are you teaching me?".

The last question that needs to be asked in hardship is; what am I learning? God is a father who is constantly instructing and teaching us, and He will use hardship to do that. Too many times we are so angry and blinded by our rage that we don't see God working in the midst of it all.

While trials can be a great source of pain in our life, we should take heart because through trials and hardship, God shows His love in never leaving us. Through our hardship God continues to love and show His grace, and mercy. We need to be a people who aren't blind to His goodness, but rejoice in Christ always. That we wouldn't be a people who lose hope in hardship, but as Romans says in chapter 5, that our suffering would lead to a hope in Christ.