

God's faithfulness in times of Adversity

Introduction:

Greetings in the wonderful name of Jesus Christ. Today we will be reflecting on a subject that should resonate with every believer hearing this message today: *God's faithfulness in times of adversity*. To say that life is full of challenges, trials, and uncertainties is probably an under-statement. And, despite what you read in the papers or watch on the news, I promise you that adversity is not unique to South Africa. It may sometimes feel like Adversity is a Proudly South African product but I promise you it is not. Please take courage and be of good cheer: in the midst of it all, you can find solace and strength in the unwavering faithfulness of our Heavenly Father. In good times and in bad times His faithfulness remains unchanging. So, let us explore together the transformative power of trusting in God's faithfulness, even in the face of the most challenging and adverse headwinds.

Difficult times are an inevitable part of the human experience. They can come in various forms: sickness, loss, financial struggles, broken relationships, and yes, spiritual battles too.

Because you are well versed in God's Word I know, that you know, that your battles as a believer are not against flesh and blood; I know that you guys also know that in this life, even as believers, we will have troubles, but our job is to be of good cheer, because we know that Christ has overcome the world:

John 16:33 Amplified Bible

33 I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace. In the world you have tribulation and distress and suffering, but be courageous [be confident, be undaunted, be filled with joy]; I have overcome the world." [My conquest is accomplished, My victory abiding.]

These trials can often leave us feeling overwhelmed, anxious, and even questioning God's presence or plan. However, we must remember that we are not alone during times of adversity. Our God, who is sovereign and compassionate, walks with us through the darkest of valleys.

1. In Times of Adversity Trust in God's Attributes

Trusting God in difficult times begins with an understanding of the attributes of God and I am taking the time to encourage you to look back at the previous series done by Pastor Paul and Pastor Tracy, dealing in detail with the attributes of God. Our God is all knowing, all-powerful, and ever-present. He is a God of love, grace, and faithfulness. The Scriptures repeatedly assure us of His faithfulness, as seen in **Lamentations 3:22-23**:

Lamentations 3:22-23 Amplified Bible

22 It is because of the Lord's loving kindnesses that we are not consumed,

Because His [tender] compassions never fail.

23 They are new every morning; Great and beyond measure is Your faithfulness.

Our God is faithful in times of adversity. The truth of the matter is, in times of adversity, even if everyone else lets you down... God will remain faithful.

2. In Times of Adversity Surrender Fully to God's Will and His Way

Trusting God in difficult times requires surrendering our own, limited, human understanding and false sense of control. **Proverbs 3:5-6** instructs us, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." When we surrender to God's will, acknowledging that He knows what is best for us, we can experience His peace and guidance. Surrendering to God's plan does not mean our struggles will disappear, but it means we can rest in His wisdom and strength.

The universally accepted sign of surrender is arms that are raised up high and palms that are open. You open the palms of your hands to show that you don't hold any weapons in your hands. You cannot surrender and still hold on to the weapon. The law enforcement officer will have every right to interpret your actions as a lack of surrender.

You cannot hold onto and want to lean on your own understanding during times of Adversity, you have to submit your thoughts under those of the Lord. I surrender to His thoughts, His understanding and His way.

3. In Times of Adversity draw Encouragement from God's Promises

The manifold promises of God are Yes and Amen concerning you.

2 Corinthians 1:20 Amplified Bible

20 For as many as are the promises of God, in Christ they are [all answered] "Yes." So through Him we say our "Amen" to the glory of God.

The promises of God serve as an anchor for our trust in difficult times. When we immerse ourselves in His Word, we find comfort, hope, and guidance.

Psalms 46:1 declares, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Romans 8:28 New International Version

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.

These promises remind us that God is in control, working all things together for our ultimate good, even when we cannot see the bigger picture.

Because God is faithful, our response should be to place our confidence, our hope, our trust, our faith in Him; the unchanging, immutable one.

Have faith that God will give you your mountain as your promised inheritance. Have faith that God will be with you.

Joshua 14:7-14 (NKJV)

7 I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as it was in my heart. 8 Nevertheless my brethren who went up with me made the heart of the people melt, but I wholly followed the Lord my God. 9 So Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children's forever, because you have wholly followed the Lord my God.'

10 And now, behold, the Lord has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the Lord spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. 11 As yet I am as strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength was then, so now is my strength for war, both for going out and for coming in.

12 Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the Lord spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fortified. It may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall be able to drive them out as the Lord said."

13 And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance.

14 Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel.

4. In Times of Adversity, let the Lord be your shield

Psalm 33:20 (NKJV) Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield.

5. God shows himself Trustworthy when we Go Through difficulties

Isaiah 43:2 (NIV)

"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze."

The important thing to remember about going through difficulties or challenges or opposition or trial or tribulation is that God is taking you Through. His plan and purpose are not for you to remain there and set up camp and build an altar but to demonstrate how He takes you through and over to the other side.

In **Isaiah 43**, God is telling the Jewish people that He will be with them in their most troubling times, supporting them through those difficult times and giving them the strength to move beyond these difficulties and delivering them out of danger without harm.

The Jewish people were in captivity in Babylon. They faced many afflictions and were persecuted by men, who are represented in this passage of scripture by the waters, rivers, and fire.

The scripture reads **“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you...”**

Pastor Tracy ministered two weeks ago concerning **Exodus 14:13-14**

Exodus 14:13-14 New King James Version

13 And Moses said to the people, **“Do not be afraid. Stand still**, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. 14 The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.”

In **Exodus 14:21-22** God opened up the Red Sea to allow the Israelites to walk on dry land through the sea. God allowed the walls of the sea to close and destroy Israel’s enemies. He did this to encourage the unbelieving Israelites to trust in Him in their time of Adversity.

“...and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.”

God dried up the Jordan river as a band of priests carrying the ark of the covenant stood at the river’s edge (see **Joshua 3:14-17**). It was during the time of harvest in the springtime when the Jordan would typically overflow its banks from the melting snow coming in from Lebanon. The ark represented the presence of God. God piled up the water to reveal a dry riverbed so that His people could walk through and go into Canaan and end their long wanderings in the wilderness.

“When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.”

We all know how God protected Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the fire and flames. Nebuchadnezzar had his soldiers throw them into a furnace after they refused to worship any god but the Father. The furnace was so hot that the soldiers who threw them into the furnace were killed by the flames of fire. Yet Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego emerged from the furnace completely unsinged

Daniel 3:27-28 Amplified Bible

27 The satraps, the prefects, the governors and the king’s counselors gathered around them and saw that in regard to these men the fire had no effect on their bodies—their hair was not singed, their clothes were not scorched or damaged, even the smell of smoke was not on them.

28 Nebuchadnezzar responded and said, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent His angel and rescued His servants who believed in, trusted in, and relied on Him! They violated the king’s command and surrendered their bodies rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.

WHEN YOU ARE GOING THROUGH THE STORM, IF YOU ARE STILL ASKING WHY IT IS THAT GOD IS ALLOWING YOU TO GO THROUGH THE STORM, YOU ARE MOST LIKELY FOCUSING ON THE MANIFESTATION OF THE STORM, RATHER THAN BEING FOCUSED ON THE FACT THAT GOD IS TAKING YOU THROUGH.

When you go through the storm you have to decide what to focus on.

Storms by their very nature are distracting, they come with howling winds; crashing waves; rolling thunder and flashing lightening bolts; trees are uprooted in a storm; steel cars are tossed too and fro like feathers; the ground turns to mud; your clothes get soaked; your hair goes frizzy; your make up starts to run in the middle of the storm as the rain beats down on you.

You can't look cute when you are going through a storm; it's probably going to get ugly before it gets better; you may have to do the ugly cry more than once before the storm is over. The secret is not to get distracted by the noise, the sights and the sounds of the storm; rather **focus on the fact that your God is taking you THROUGH** and over to the other side. Unharmful. Unsinged. Unburnt. Pressed but not crushed. Persecuted but not abandoned. Struck down but not destroyed. **Set your sights on Jesus.**

Hebrews 12:2 New King James Version

2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.