

Sermon Series: “Hands on Christianity”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN----6/5/2005

Title: “When Troubles Won’t Go Away”

Text: James 1: 2-12

Intro.: Ills.: Never Say “Die”

Theme: Looking back over the trial filled days of our lives, we often find little to rejoice over; yet, with lives and minds redeemed by Christ we begin to see the bigger plan and the greater glory in those moments

Why troubles happen in our lives (Print and read James 1: 2-4)

- “**Falling into trials**” in a “**fallen world**” (you face trials of a many-varied nature – vs. 2)
 1. Sin in general in the world causes us to “endure” the spin-off consequences (malice, sickness, destruction, death)
 2. Our own sinful choices result in natural consequences
 3. Sinful selfishness by others unfortunately targets us as recipients of painful attacks
- **Redeemed trials** redesigned to make us stronger
 1. *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. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. Rom 8: 28-30*
 2. Testing turned to tempering (subtle shift between “*testing (tossed by waves)*” and “*proofing (heat tempered)*”)
 3. Endurance builders (*proving of your faith accomplishes staying power. vs. 3*)
 - a. God is “*accomplishing*” eternal character building (God at work sign should be posted over your life)
 - b. **Print and read 2 Peter 1: 4-8**
 4. Perfection maturers (Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be complete (teleos) and perfected (complete))
 - a. **God’s plan**
 - i. *“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ...for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. 1 Peter 1: 6-9*
 - b. **Our aim**
 - i. *“Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.” 2 Corinthians 13: 11*
 - ii. **Ills.: Beautiful mind movie clip “Choosing not to indulge certain thoughts”**

Making the most out of our trying times

- Honing your prayer life on the sharp edge of trials (**Print and read James 1: 5-8**)
 1. God tells us “*if you need something, ASK!*” (vs. 5)
 2. Often “*we have not because we ask not (James 4: 2)*” because we really don’t believe God as we “*believe in*” God
 3. God does not reward that kind of fickle faith with answers and deliverance (vs. 6-8)
 4. God wants us to stand in the grip of grace and pray like that is the only hope that we have
- Developing within your heart a godly and genuine humility (**Print and read James 1: 9-11**)
 1. Let it help you gain perspective on who you are and who God is (vs. 9)
 - a. **Ills.: Edwin Hubble’s problem with self exaltation**
 2. Poor or rich; wise or foolish; strong or weak—we are but temporal mortals in the hands/plans of eternal God (10-11)
 3. *Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. Psalm 90: 12*
- Focusing your eyes on what really matters (**Print and read James 1: 12**)
 1. Often the trials of life only touch the temporal things which will not last

- a. **Ills.: *Ain't nothin' but a thing***
 - b. We give up too soon over things that won't be around next year
 - c. *"Neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom 8: 39*
2. Being blessed is a state of being already begun and completed in heaven
 - a. **Ills.: *Golfer waits for better light***

Never Give Up

Seo Sang-moon figured he would eventually be able to pass his driver's license examination. And indeed, he did—on his 272nd attempt. After clearing one more regulatory hurdle, Seo will have his first driver's license, even though he is nearly 70. Seo, from a rural area of South Korea, had no chance to pass a written examination because he is illiterate. So he took oral examinations as often as possible in order to learn the rules of the road. Now, after spending nearly \$1,000 in fees, he has reached his goal. Now all Seo has to do is pass the road test. He admits this part of the process will be difficult, but he is not afraid: "After trying 271 times to pass the oral exam, what do I have to be afraid of?" **Citation: Lee A. Dean, Griffith, Indiana; "Daily News," www.Yahoo.com (4-15-05)**

Golfer Waits for Better Light

Unhappy fans voiced their displeasure when Scott Hoch refused to hit his 9-foot birdie putt on the second playoff hole of the 2003 Ford Championship at Doral in Miami, Florida. As darkness fell, Hoch was unsure about the lay of the green. So the tournament's sudden-death finish was delayed until the next morning, when many fans could not attend. Hoch, 47, sank his putt the next morning and then birdied a third playoff hole to win \$900,000. Had Hoch tried to finish the tournament on Sunday, he probably would have lost. In the dwindling light, Hoch, who has had five eye operations, thought the putt would move left. His caddie saw it the other direction. The morning light proved the caddie right. **Citation: Based on information from an Associated Press article by Doug Ferguson (3-11-03).**

Choosing Not to Indulge Certain Thoughts

In 1994 Thomas King from the Nobel Committee met with schizophrenic John Nash to assess his mental state and determine if he would be a suitable Nobel laureate. Nash says, *"I am crazy but I take the newer medications, but I still see things that are not here. I just choose not to acknowledge them. Like a diet of the mind, I just choose not to indulge certain appetites."* **Citation: A Beautiful Mind (Dreamworks, 2001), rated PG-13, directed by Ron Howard, written by Akiva Goldsman; Elapsed time: This scene begins at 2:08:00 and lasts approximately 30 seconds.**

Pride's Falsehood diminishes God's Greatness within Us

Few people have had as many natural endowments or achievements to feel proud of as Edwin Hubble, the astronomer for whom the Hubble Space Telescope was named. Hubble was a gifted athlete. In a single high school track meet in 1906, he won seven events. On top of his athletic gifts, Hubble was extremely good-looking. One person described him as "handsome almost to a fault." If that weren't enough, Hubble was intellectually gifted. He studied physics and astronomy at the elite University of Chicago, and he was selected to be one of the first Rhodes scholars at Oxford. When Hubble began his career as an astronomer at Mount Wilson Observatory in California, in 1919, only one galaxy was known: the Milky Way. But Hubble showed in a landmark paper in 1924 that the universe contained many galaxies. Then Hubble proved that the universe was expanding, an idea no physicist or astronomer had conceived of before. Either one of these achievements would have guaranteed Hubble a place in history. Yet for Hubble all of this was not enough. Hubble claimed he spent most of his late 20's and early 30's as a prestigious lawyer in Kentucky. Actually, he spent those years as a high school teacher in Indiana. Hubble boasted that in World War I he had bravely led "frightened men to safety across the battlefields of France." The truth was, he arrived in France only one

month before the Armistice and probably never heard one shot fired. Hubble told people how he had daringly rescued drowning swimmers. But that story never happened. Hubble bragged about how he had taken on an exhibition bout with a world-class boxer and surprised the champion with an amazing knockdown punch. That, also, was too good to be true. What is it in human nature that makes us willing to lie to enhance our image? **Citation: Kevin A. Miller, Carol Stream, Illinois; source: Bill Bryson, *A Short History of Nearly Everything* (New York: Broadway Books, 2003)**

James 1:2-12

²Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. ⁵But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, ⁸being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. ⁹But let the brother of humble circumstances glory in his high position; ¹⁰and let the rich man glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. ¹¹For the sun rises with a scorching wind, and withers the grass; and its flower falls off, and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away. ¹²Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (NASB)

2 Peter 1:4-8

⁴Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. ⁵For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. ⁸For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.