

Deuteronomy 8

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[0 : 0 0] Well, good morning. If you turn with me in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 8, found on page 152. We're doing a series this summer in the book of Deuteronomy, and as we've seen, the book of Deuteronomy is Moses' last speech to the Israelites as he's preparing to die, as they're standing on the brink of entering the promised land. They've been in the desert in the wilderness for the last 40 years, and Deuteronomy is all about covenant renewal.

So remembering the promises that they had made at Mount Sinai when God had established his covenant with them as a people, remembering God's promises that he had made even before that to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and that were reaffirmed at Mount Sinai. So Deuteronomy is looking back to these promises, this covenant relationship that God and the people are in, but also looking forward to the future of their life in the promised land, and what it will mean for them to love and be loyal to God above everything else. This morning we're looking at chapter 8, and so we're going to read the whole chapter, and there's a contrast you'll see between their past time in the wilderness and their future in the promised land that runs throughout this chapter. So let's read together Deuteronomy chapter 8, the whole chapter. This is Moses' words to the people of Israel. He says, The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply and go in and possess the land that the Lord swore to give to your fathers, and you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these 40 years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these 40 years. Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, the Lord your God disciplines you. So you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him. For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks, of water, of fountains and springs flowing out of the valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper, and you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. Take care, lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today. Lest when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, then your heart be lifted up and you forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock, who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you to do you good in the end.

Beware, lest you say in your heart, my power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth. You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers as it is this day. And if you forget the Lord your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish. Like the nations that the Lord makes to perish before you, so shall you perish, because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God.

As I said, this morning's chapter has two main themes, Israel's past in the wilderness and their future in the promised land. Or in more general terms, we might talk about adversity and prosperity.

And in particular, and this chapter is about adversity and prosperity and how they affect our relationship with God. Now in particular, this passage shows us that adversity can teach us to depend on God, but prosperity tempts us to do exactly the opposite. And so this morning, we'll consider God's purpose for us, what he's teaching us through both adversity and prosperity, and how we can live wisely in either situation that we encounter. So first, adversity. Adversity teaches us to depend on God. Now imagine what it was like for the children of Israel coming through the wilderness, spending 40 years. They ate the same kind of food every single day for 40 whole years, manna wafers. In fact, it was sort of like mystery food. They couldn't even quite figure out what it is.

[5 : 43] So the word manna means, what is it? Sort of, they're saying, we have whatchamacallit for dinner and breakfast and lunch. They followed the same routine day after day. Every morning, they had to go out and gather their food. They couldn't even gather, except for the Sabbath day, they couldn't even gather enough for more than one day because it would rot and grow maggots. They wore the same clothes day after day. Now I imagine that as they went through the wilderness and as their children grew up, perhaps they did a little trading around, little hand-me-downs, but they had no way of making new clothes, wearing the same stuff that somebody has worn for the last 40 years. They were living on the edge. They were barely surviving.

Verse 15, Moses describes the wilderness as a great and terrifying place with serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground and no water. It was a hot place, much hotter than it ever gets in this building during the summer. Today it's pretty cool, but last week or some other weeks, it can get pretty hot, but it was much hotter than that in the wilderness. And they didn't even have a roof over their heads, and it was inhabited by fierce animals. And then they lived in tents, no permanent dwellings.

They were basically homeless nomads for 40 whole years. But God used that time in the wilderness to teach them to depend on Him. God brings us through adversity in order to teach us how to depend on Him.

And Moses elaborates on this point. He used three verbs to describe God's purpose in the wilderness, how God taught them to depend on Him. He says God used their adversity to test them, to humble them, and to discipline them. And God uses adversity in our lives to test us, to humble us, and to discipline us. So first, God uses adversity to test us. Verse 2, He says, testing you to know what was in your heart, and whether you'd obey His commands or not.

And again in verse 16, that He might test and humble you. In any relationship, adversity is a test of loyalty. How do you know whether someone really loves you and is committed to you, or they just treat you nice because they want the stuff that you can give them? The only way that you can learn that is by going through some kind of adversity. Proverbs 17, 17 says, a friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. A few months ago, my wife and I watched the movie The Vow.

[8 : 22] It's about a couple who got married just 10 weeks after their wedding. The wife had a traumatic brain injury and lost her short-term memory. And so she had no memory of this man who is now her husband, no memory of their marriage, no memory of their dating relationship they'd only met about a year and a half or two years ago. And the movie's all about the question, will they stay together or not?

Will he continue to pursue his wife even though she considers him to be a total stranger and wants nothing to do with him initially? Will she, after she sees a video recording of their marriage vows, and other evidence that he actually is her husband, will she stay with him even though she feels no attraction to him? Even though she remembers her ex-boyfriend who she had stopped dating a long time ago? It's a test of their loyalty to their promises to one another. Now, if you just watched the movie, you wouldn't know this because the movie portrays them actually quite differently than in real life.

The movie is based on a true story of a Christian couple who actually stayed together primarily because of their faith in Jesus and their belief that marriage is an unbreakable vow. And this couple has actually been married for about 20 years now. Adversity is always a test of loyalty in any human relationship. And it's the same in a relationship with God. Yesterday, my wife and I attended a wedding of one of her college friends, a woman named Destiny. And Destiny had become a Christian in college. She had been her sophomore or junior year. And before she began to follow Jesus, she had already been in a serious dating relationship with a guy that she had known for some time. And so after she became a Christian, she gradually began to share with this guy about her newfound faith and her commitment to Jesus and what that meant to her and what she was learning and how she was growing.

And after a while, it became evident that while he admired her faith, he didn't share her faith. And this was quite a long process and it was a real struggle for her. But after a long time, she decided that since her primary loyalty was to Jesus Christ above all else, it would compromise her loyalty to Jesus to marry someone who did not share that ultimate loyalty.

And so with great sadness and anguish, she broke off the relationship. Now surprisingly, several months after they broke up, this guy became a Christian.

[10 : 57] And so yesterday they got married. And it was wonderful. It was beautiful. Now I know not every story ends in the same way. Just because you surrender something to God doesn't mean that he'll give it back to you the next day in exactly the same way. But adversity can be a test of our loyalty, where our ultimate loyalties lie.

And it could be a means of God working in our hearts to show us that he is supremely valuable, even above any other relationship. That he's surpassingly valuable above everything else.

Moses says, God led you through the wilderness, testing you to know what was in your heart and whether you would obey his commandments or not. The wilderness for Israel was a test. But actually, it was a test that Israel failed.

Now Moses doesn't say it explicitly here. We'll look at this more next week in chapter 9. But chapter 9, verse 6, he says, From the day you came out of the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you've been rebellious against the Lord.

In other words, the wilderness was a test and you failed the test. You know, if you read the book of Numbers, that's a good summary of the book of Numbers. God leads them through the wilderness. They face at least seven different tests.

[12 : 15] And each time, they disobey and they fail to trust and live according to God's ways. But God used the adversity of the wilderness to expose the idolatry in the people's hearts.

And sometimes, God uses adversity in our own lives in the same way. Maybe you've been through a time of adversity. And you've messed up.

And you know it. You've been unfaithful to God through a time of adversity. And sometimes, God brings adversity into our lives to show us what's in our heart and to remove our false illusions about how good we think we are.

Or in the words of this passage, God uses adversity not only to test us, but also to humble us. That word of curse also in verse 2 and verse 16, right next to testing, to test us and humble us.

Now, being humble doesn't mean walking around all day with a droopy face and... or sitting at home all day feeling worthless. That's not what humility is.

[13 : 28] Humility begins with an honest assessment of ourselves in the light of who God really is. Humility means recognizing our smallness and sinfulness and God's greatness and holiness.

And God uses adversity to humble us, to make us realize that we depend on him, that we are not sufficient in ourselves, that he is the one who carries us.

Sometimes God humbles us simply through our basic creaturely limitations. Our daily needs for food and water and sleep and shelter.

Daily reminders that we're not self-sufficient. Every time we get sick and need somebody else to care for us. Every time we get tired and can't function any longer without sleep.

It's a reminder of how finite, how limited, and how mortal we are. And how we're not in control. You know, the only way that you can sleep is by letting go of control.

[14 : 35] There's no way that you can be asleep and in control of what's happening around you at the same time. By definition, sleep means you're not in control. It's a daily reminder from God that we're not ultimately in control.

Every time we get hungry and eat some food, it's a sign that we're constantly dependent on something outside of ourselves.

Taking in something outside of ourselves for our very survival. Verse 3 says, God, he says, he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, that he might make you know that man does not live on bread alone, but by every word or literally by all that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

See, in the wilderness, the children of Israel had nothing else to rely on. They had nothing else to turn to. Nothing else that they could see and touch and feel and hold on to except God himself.

Every day they faced their own needs. And every day they saw God's faithfulness. And God's love. And God's provision. And that God did not abandon them.

[15 : 50] God used the wilderness to humble them. And he uses adversity to humble us. So God uses adversity to test us and to humble us. And third, he uses adversity to discipline us.

Verse 5 is a key verse in this chapter. Moses begins by saying, no then in your heart. In other words, take notice of what I'm about to say. And take it to heart.

As a man disciplines his son, so the Lord your God disciplines you. God compares his relationship to Israel with that of a father to a son.

And we see this throughout the Old Testament. It begins back in Exodus chapter 4, verse 22. And God sends Moses to Pharaoh. And he says, Moses, say this. Thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son.

So let him go so that he may worship me. God rescues the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt.

[16 : 49] He redeems them. And in a sense, he also adopts them and counts them to be his, as a people, his son. In Deuteronomy 1.31, Moses said, in the wilderness you've seen how the Lord your God carried you as a man carries his son all the way that you went.

You see, the God of the Bible is not only a transcendent and sovereign and holy creator. He's also a father who cares for his people with steadfast love.

A father who disciplines his children. Now, that word discipline doesn't just mean punish. It includes the idea of correction or rebuke.

But more broadly, it means teaching or training. The wilderness wanderings were partly a punishment for Israel's rebellion. They stayed in the wilderness a lot longer than they originally had to because of their rebellion.

But still, the only way to get from Egypt to Canaan is to take a long walk through the desert. It was part of God's purpose for the people of Israel from the beginning to lead them through the wilderness, to teach them through adversity.

[18 : 04] It was a period where God was parenting them, if you will, and trying to help them grow up and mature. If you're a parent, don't try to shield your kids from every adversity.

It's necessary to endure hardships in order to mature. So walk with them through adversity. Talk with them about what they're experiencing. Pray for them and with them.

But don't wish for them and don't try to construct for them a trouble-free life. God uses adversity as part of his training, his loving discipline of his children.

In the New Testament, Hebrews 12 uses the same language. The Lord disciplines. Hebrews 12, 4, 10, and 11. The Lord disciplines those he loves.

He disciplines us for our good that we may share in his holiness. For the moment, all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant. But later, it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

[19 : 07] If you've ever played a sport or learned a musical instrument, you know that practicing or training can often be painful. When I was in middle school, my younger sister started taking violin lessons.

It was painful to listen to her practice for about two whole years. Squeak, squeak, squeak. You know, if you start training to run a marathon, initially, you'll probably feel worse rather than better.

You'll feel weaker rather than stronger. You'll realize how out of shape you are. But the only way to success is through discipline. That's actually, and there's a spiritual analogy.

The way that God is strengthening us is often through our times of weakness. Discipline initially seems painful, but in the end, God says it's for our good.

Moses says in Deuteronomy 8, 16, He led you through the wilderness to do you good in the end. The only way to spiritual maturity is through adversity.

[20 : 17] And many Christian leaders throughout history have testified to the importance of this. So Martin Luther, the 16th century reformer and scholar, said, Affliction is the best book in my library.

Martin Luther spent years studying, translated the whole New Testament from Greek into German. He said, Suffering is the best book in my library, the most valuable resource I have for growing and understanding.

Charles Spurgeon, 19th century English Baptist preacher. He became known as the Prince of Preachers, but he also struggled with severe depression throughout his life.

And he wrote, Dr. Affliction is the best expositor of Scripture. If you want to understand the Word of God, you must go through the school of trial. And he went on to say, I'm afraid that all the grace that I've got out of my comfortable and easy times and happy hours is hardly worth a penny.

But the good that I have received from my sorrows, pains, and griefs is altogether incalculable. George MacDonald, who later influenced C.S. Lewis, wrote, Most of the epistles were written in prison.

- [21 : 27] The greatest poets have learned in suffering what they taught in song. So take comfort, afflicted Christian, when God is about to make preeminent use of a man, He puts him in the fire.

God uses adversity to test us, to humble us, and to discipline us, to train us as His children. But that's only the first half of this passage. God had brought the people through the wilderness, but then He's about to bring the people into the promised land, a place of unparalleled prosperity.

Moses describes this land, verses 7 through 9 and verses 12 through 13, as the exact opposite of the wilderness. He says, instead of dry ground, there'll be springs of water and rivers and brooks.

Instead of daily rations of the same food, there'll be storehouses of grains and fruits and oil and sweets. Instead of shabby tents, they'll live in solid houses.

Instead of scarcity, they'll enjoy abundance. Verse 10 says, you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land that He has given you.

- [22 : 35] It's a good gift from God. Now in the New Testament, God doesn't promise an earthly promised land, and He doesn't promise earthly wealth to His people, but the same principle still holds.

That prosperity is a gift from God. 1 Timothy 4.4, everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.

1 Timothy 6.17, God richly provides us with everything to enjoy. God gives us more than we need and far more than we deserve, simply because of His overflowing kindness and generosity.

And so we can receive material blessings with thanksgiving and joy as gifts from God's good hand. But at the same time, Moses gives a strong warning.

He says this prosperity, it's a good gift from God, but at the same time, it's also a great spiritual danger. It brings, prosperity brings with it the temptation to forget all the important lessons of the wilderness.

- [23 : 39] It brings with it the temptation to forget God. You see, the book of Deuteronomy, it doesn't have a simplistic view of wealth and possessions.

It doesn't say renounce them all because they are evil, but it also doesn't say prosperity is a sign that God is especially pleased with you. It's a good gift, but it's also a great danger.

Abraham Lincoln said nearly all people can stand adversity, but if you want to test a person's character, give him power. God uses adversity to teach us to depend on Him, but prosperity tempts us to do exactly the opposite.

And so five times in this chapter, verse 2, verse 11, verse 14, verse 18, verse 19, Moses says to the people, remember your time in the desert.

Don't forget the Lord by disobeying His commands. Take care lest your heart be lifted up in pride and that you forget the Lord.

- [24 : 40] Remember the Lord. And he ends with a warning. If you forget the Lord, you will perish. And this theme of remembering runs throughout Deuteronomy. Seven times the people are commanded to remember the Lord and what He's done for them.

Fifteen times they're warned. Don't forget. Forgetting is usually a gradual and almost unnoticed process.

Almost no one actually sets out intentionally trying to forget something. If you intentionally try to forget something, it might make you remember it all the more because you're bothered by it.

But forgetting is usually a gradual process like sitting in a boat without an anchor and gradually drifting down the river with the tide.

Or even being in a boat in the middle of the ocean with a small leak deep at the bottom of it that gradually begins to sink the ship almost imperceptibly.

[25 : 41] And that's the danger that Moses is warning against of prosperity. In the midst of adversity, there's nothing else to turn to except God. But in the midst of prosperity, we're surrounded by distractions.

Now right now, all of us live in one of the most prosperous nations in the history of the world. So think about the things that many of us take for granted each day and compare them to the list in verses 7 through 9.

What many of us take for granted each day? Supermarkets full of all kinds of food. Clean running water. Hot water available on demand. Refrigerator and freezer to keep perishable food.

Stove and microwave to cook easily. Washer and dryer. Computer. Cell phone. Free public education. Medical and dental services. Comfortable clothing for every season of the year.

Car or public transportation to get around. And a roof over our heads every night. Now if you even had half of these things, you would make most people in ancient Canaan look poor.

[26 : 46] So what does it mean for us? We all go through adversity at some points in our lives. But at the same time, all of us have to admit that we live in quite relative prosperity.

So what does it mean for us to heed Moses' warning? Let me give three application points. What this passage says to us in prosperity.

So first it says, remember the lessons of adversity. Verse 2 says, remember the whole way that the Lord your God led you these 40 years in the wilderness. You know, when the people of Israel went into the promised land, it might have been tempting to just totally forget about the past because it was so painful and so hard.

You know, as human beings, we're constantly tempted to live only in the present, to be consumed by our present feelings, thoughts, and circumstances. If you've ever struggled with depression, this feeling can be acute, right?

It's almost impossible to see beyond the present darkness. But God's Word always calls us to look outside of ourselves and beyond the present, to look back to God's faithfulness in the past and to look forward to God's promises about the future.

[28 : 00] But the same pattern is just as important in the middle of prosperity. We can be completely focused only on our present material blessings and miss what God has done and taught us in the past and the greatness of what He's promised in the future.

Someone once said to me, never doubt in the dark what God has shown you in the light. Not a bad saying, but this passage seemed to be saying something more like, never forget in the light what God has shown you through the dark.

In other words, remember how God has tested you, how He's humbled you, what He's taught you through the times of adversity in your life. Now, some of you may have had seemingly unforgettable experiences of God's provision through adversity.

Maybe you've had a near-fatal accident and you barely survived. Maybe you've experienced addiction for many years in your life, and by the grace of God, you've experienced some freedom through Jesus Christ.

Maybe you've had a battle with cancer and it almost killed you, or some other fatal illness. Something that makes you realize every day when you wake up, everything I have is a total gift.

[29 : 14] I might not be here, but everything I have is a gift. Now, maybe that's you, but what about those of us who, for the most part, have been spared from great adversity?

What about if you grew up in a stable home, did pretty well in school, have a decent job or in good health, have a happy family or some good friends, some retirement savings, and haven't experienced many great losses?

What does it mean for us? What does that mean if it's you? Well, don't limit yourself to the lessons that you can learn from your own personal experience.

Learn from other people who've endured adversity. Moses is speaking these words in Deuteronomy to this generation that's about to enter the Promised Land. They've experienced the wilderness.

But he's also speaking these words to future generations of Israelites who would continue to read this book as God's word to them in the Promised Land. Some of them would have never experienced the wilderness. It would only be something they'd heard about from their parents.

[30 : 20] And yet the same message is to apply to them. So don't limit yourself to the lessons you can draw from your own personal experience. Even though the people in later generations had never gone through the same experience, the lessons were meant to be passed on.

So if you're a younger person, find an older member of this church. Maybe there's someone that you've talked to at Fellowship Hour you've got to know. Ask them if you can have coffee with them sometime or have a meal with them sometime and just ask them to tell you about some of the things they've learned in their life.

Some of the things that God has taught them through the hard times and through the good times in their life. If you're an older person, look for an opportunity to come alongside a younger person to encourage them and train them.

Or even more, find someone who's going through adversity right now and walk with them through it. That's a great way to learn about what it means to be in adversity is to walk with someone through it and bear one another's burdens, as the New Testament says.

You know, you don't need to seek out adversity for adversity's sake. We don't need to glamorize suffering. It's not glamorous. But we can seek out people, our neighbors, our brothers and sisters in Christ who are suffering and walk with them through it and God will teach you important lessons through that.

[31 : 39] So remember the lessons of adversity. Second, remember the source of your prosperity. Now Moses' warning comes to a climax in verses 17 and 18 where he says this.

He says, Beware lest you say in your heart, My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth. You shall remember the Lord your God for it is he who gives you power to get wealth that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers.

In other words, prosperity is a gift from God and we can't take the credit for the gifts that God has given us. In the language of Jesus' parables, we're managers, but we're not owners of all that we have.

So let me ask, let me put it this way. Did you earn your college degree by your own power? And therefore, you can do whatever you want.

Or was it God who gave you the power to get your college degree? And therefore, he has the right to tell you how to use it or even how not to use it. Or did you obtain your house or apartment or car or computer by your own power?

[32 : 48] Or was it God who gave you the power to get all those things? Do you take the credit or do you give the glory to God? Do you think, well, I can use it however I want.

I can give it away if I want or I can keep it totally to myself because it's mine. I earned it. Moses warns us. He says, no, it's the Lord who's given you power to get whatever you have.

And therefore, it belongs to Him. And we use it in reflecting Him. So just a few weeks ago, a family in this church invited me to come to their new apartment.

And they said to me, we believe that God has provided for us this new apartment. It's spacious. It's much larger than what we had previously. So we've made one of our rooms a guest room.

And they said to me, if you know someone who needs a place to stay, let us know. They understood that it was God who gave that to them.

[33 : 56] You see, if it's God who's given us the power to get all these things, then everything we have is His and not ours. To be used creatively for His purposes, for His glory.

God involves us in His work. We can be thankful for that. But ultimately, it's not our achievement. And ultimately, the credit belongs to Him. So remember the lessons of prosperity.

Remember the source, remember the lessons of adversity. Remember the source of prosperity. And finally, remember the greatest treasure of all. You know, the people of Israel had failed.

the test of adversity in the wilderness. They turned away. They'd become bitter. They'd complained. Become angry. And they'd also fail the test of prosperity when they entered into the promised land.

At the end of Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy 32, Moses looks forward and prophetically anticipates what would happen to them. And he says, Israel grew fat, stout, and sleek.

[35 : 00] And then he forsook God who made him and scoffed at the rock of His salvation. You were unmindful of the rock that bore you and you forgot the God who gave you birth.

The people of Israel failed both tests, the test of adversity and the test of prosperity. And so you might wonder, is there any hope that we can do better?

Well, the answer is there was one. There was one person who faced both tests, who faced the test of adversity and who faced the test of prosperity. And he was completely and perfectly faithful to God in both.

Jesus Christ was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness where He fasted for 40 days and 40 nights.

In a sense, He was reliving that wilderness experience of Israel in His own body. And there in the wilderness, the tempter came to Him and said, if you're the Son of God, turn these stones into bread.

[36 : 03] And Jesus replied in the words of this chapter, man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. And this same Jesus had also experienced prosperity beyond any of our wildest dreams.

Jesus had dwelt for all eternity in unequalled prosperity in the very light of God's presence. And all the glory and all the riches and all of His creation belonged to Him by right.

But in accordance with the plan of God the Father out of His great love for us, He was willing to give it away. To come and be born in a dirty stable and to die on a cross for us.

Paul says, you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor that you by His poverty might become rich. You see, Jesus Christ is the greatest treasure of all.

The Apostle Paul wrote this in Philippians. He says, whatever gain I had I count as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ, my Lord.

[37 : 27] So if you're in the midst of adversity today, know this. In Jesus Christ, you have every spiritual blessing. He is your merciful Savior.

He is a faithful friend. He is a good shepherd. And He will carry you as He carried the people through the wilderness. Trust Him.

Your adversity may last for a time, but knowing Him will last forever. And if you're in the midst of prosperity, know this, that your prosperity may last for a time, but only knowing Him will last forever.

Only that surpassing worth of knowing Jesus will be eternally valuable. So hold loosely to the wealth that God has given you.

Use it wisely and generously, but hold tightly to the life that is in Jesus. As Paul said to Timothy, he said, command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

[38 : 41] Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, to be generous and willing to share. In this way, they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

There is life in Jesus Christ that is truly life, both now and eternally. Treasure Jesus above all things.

You can, and in Him, you can face adversity or prosperity by the power of the Holy Spirit whom He has sent to live within you. So that's why Paul could say, at the end of Philippians, I've learned in whatever situation I am to be content.

I know how to be brought low and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I've learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance, and need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Let us pray. God, our Father, we thank You for Your providence and that You use both adversity and prosperity in our lives to teach us about You.

[39 : 56] Lord, even to expose to us our own sinful hearts, but also to draw us back to You. You are the giver of all good gifts. Lord, everything we have is a reflection of Your abundance.

Lord, we thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, that where we had failed these tests that He was perfectly faithful and we thank You for sending us Your Holy Spirit that by the power of Your Spirit that we might live lives of faithfulness to You.

Lord, whatever may come, Lord, we thank You for the confidence and the peace that we can have in You. Lord, that we do not have to fear the unknown, that whatever may come to us, we know that You are our greatest treasure.

Lord, we pray that we treasure You above all things. We thank You for Your great love for us. We pray this in Your name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.