SERMON NOTES · 11/15/26

The Reasons for Hardships

Many times, hardships are exactly God's will for your life.
God's purpose for our lives is always greater than our problems.

1 God places hardships in my life to guide me

> **2 CORINTHIANS 7:9** *"I am glad... not because it hurt you, but because the pain turned you to God..."*

- God often uses hardships to point us in a new direction and motivate us to change (Proverbs 20:30).
- A lot of people only change when they **feel the heat**, not when they **see the light**.
- Examples: Jonah and the great fish; Elijah and the brook drying up (1 Kings 17:7).

2 God places hardships in my life to examine me

- **James 1:2–4**: Have joy in your troubles, because they test our faith and drive maturity.
- Sometimes God does this to test you and reveal what is truly in your heart (Deuteronomy 8:2).
- The Israelites spent 40 years in the desert on a journey that should have taken about two weeks, because God was testing them.
- God often compares suffering to the **refiner's fire**, which purifies gold and silver.

> **ISAIAH 48:10** *"I have refined you... I have tested you in the furnace of affliction."*

3 God places hardships in my life to get me right

> **HEBREWS 12:7** *"Let God train you, for he is doing what any loving father does for his children. Whoever heard of a son who has never been corrected?"*

- We learn far more through suffering than we do through success.
- Some things we only learn by getting burned (PJ touching the stove as a kid).
- Humans are stubborn; God sometimes uses problems to correct us.
- God will always correct His children; only non-believers will lack correction in their lives (Hebrews 12:8).
- **Ask yourself:** What is this problem or hardship teaching me?

4 God places hardships in my life to shield me

> **1 PETER 3:17** *"It is better to suffer for doing good than for doing wrong..."*

- Sometimes a problem is a blessing in disguise.
- Sometimes God uses a difficulty to shield you from suffering something even greater.
- Joseph suffered for years, but he was suffering *in the will of God*. God was orchestrating his rise to second in command of Egypt.

> **GENESIS 50:20** *"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good..."*

- If you trust Him through your problems, He will always turn them into good (Romans 8:28).

5 God places hardships in my life to refine me

> **HEBREWS 2:10** *"...it was fitting that God... should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered."*

- He uses hardships to mold and shape us into who **HE** wants us to be, not what **WE** want for ourselves.
- His #1 purpose for our lives is to make us more like Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29), not to make us more comfortable.
- God uses the Bible **and** our circumstances to refine us.
  - Even if we read His Word for 2 hours a day, that leaves 22 hours of circumstances He will use.
- Jesus was made perfect through suffering. Why would we expect anything different?
- **The real issue is not our hardship, but our response.**

REFLECT *How did God speak to you about your hardships through this sermon?*