

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 & 16-18

⁸ We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

⁹ Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

¹⁶ For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

¹⁸ While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Today, I want to talk about how - Life Is Hard, But God Is Good

Acknowledge Life's Hardships

1. Let's be real church. Life can be challenging; we see it all around us, in the news and in our own lives.
2. Pain, loss, and struggles are part of our journey, but we have to hold onto this truth: God is good.

**I know some of you are going through some real battles right now.
Some of you are dealing with things nobody even knows about.**

Turning to Scripture

3. When we face difficult times, we can turn to the Bible, which acknowledges our pain without sugar-coating our struggles, but it promises to walk with us through our hardest times.
4. 2 Corinthians 4 reminds us that although troubles surround us, we are not crushed or destroyed.

5. Our trials, even though they are tough, help strengthen our faith, patience, and endurance—much like a workout for our spirits.
6. **Even Jesus** faced immense suffering. In John 16:33 He said **"In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."** He remained faithful, understanding our struggles and offering peace. So what do I mean when I say that?

God's Presence in Our Struggles

7. God walks with us through the hard times; we are not alone.

Can anybody here testify to that? Can anybody say, 'I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for God's presence in my life'?"

If it wasn't for God's presence in my life, I wouldn't have made it through tough times.

If it wasn't for God's presence in my life, I wouldn't have pushed through doubt.

If it wasn't for God's presence in my life, I wouldn't have found hope in despair.

If it wasn't for God's presence in my life, I wouldn't have walked through dark times.

How many of you can testify to that? Amen?

8. Even when we are overwhelmed, we find strength in knowing God is with us, renewing our spirits daily.
9. Isaiah 41:10 assures us that God will strengthen and help us to get up again after we get knocked down. **"Fear not for I am with thee."**

God hasn't left you.

He hasn't abandoned you.

God hasn't given up on you.

God hasn't closed the door on your future.

God hasn't forgotten your prayers.

God hasn't stopped loving you.

This isn't just a locker room pep talk; it's a truth that God wants us to hold on to.

10. And because God is with us, life's challenges can be viewed as "light afflictions" in light of eternity, offering hope and a greater perspective.
11. Our current struggles are temporary compared to the eternal glory God has in store for us.
12. God's goodness is constant, and our hope lies in Him; He fights our battles.
13. We are invited to cast our cares upon Him because He genuinely cares for us.
14. Jesus acknowledges that tribulation is part of life; everyone faces struggles. But He also says He will never leave us or forsake us.

God's Invitation and Presence

15. Jesus tells us to take heart because He has overcome the world, offering comfort and hope.
16. He gives us the strength to face challenges, ensuring we are never alone.
17. Psalm 34:18 reminds us that God is close to the brokenhearted and saves those with a contrite spirit.
18. In our darkest moments, God is present, wanting to bring us peace.
19. Our pain doesn't push God away; it draws Him closer.
20. In our struggles, we can feel His powerful presence as our comforter and helper.
21. We can cry out to God, who hears us and knows our needs before we ask, like a loving parent.
22. When you feel overwhelmed, remember that God is there to lift you up and cares about your pain.

23. Lean into Him, knowing His love carries you through; you are never alone.

Trusting God in Hard Times

24. God invites us to come as we are, bringing our fears and doubts, promising love and grace.

25. This Sunday, we can find comfort in knowing that God's presence is always with us, regardless of the time.

26. Even when we feel abandoned, God walks beside us, providing strength in every season.

27. Hold onto the truth: Life is hard, but God is good and always near, ready to carry our burdens.

Focusing on God's Goodness

28. Psalm 23:4 reassures us that even in our darkest moments, God's presence brings comfort and hope—**Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.**

29. We can trust that God is guiding us, even when we can't see the way out.

30. Romans 8:28 tells us that **all things work together for good to those who love God.**

31. God uses our struggles for a greater purpose, weaving our experiences into a bigger picture.

32. Joseph's story illustrates this: Betrayed and imprisoned, he later recognized that God used his hardships for good (Genesis 50:20).

33. Joseph remained faithful, trusting that God was always at work, even in his struggles.

Even though life is hard, we shouldn't overlook the reality of God's goodness. In every season, He remains faithful. We have a choice: to lean into His goodness and find peace, knowing that our true home is waiting for us.

Leaning on God's Plan

- 34. In tough times, we can lean on God and trust His plan, even if it differs from our expectations.
- 35. Because our challenges can prepare us for something greater.
- 36. Lamentations 3:22-23 reminds us of God's mercies: **"It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed...great is thy faithfulness."**
- 37. Proverbs 3:5-6 calls us to trust in the Lord, emphasizing that our understanding can lead to doubt.
- 38. Trusting God means letting go of our need to understand everything and believing in His perfect timing.
- 39. In uncertainty, we can choose faith over fear, opening ourselves to His guidance.
- 40. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 and 16-18, shares that although we may feel troubled or persecuted, we are not without hope.

Focusing on the Eternal

- 41. Our struggles are only temporary, while the glory we will receive from God is eternal.
- 42. Instead of getting lost in troubles, we can focus on the bigger picture.
- 43. What we see now is temporary, but what God has prepared for us is eternal.
- 44. When life feels hard, remember that God is good, and His goodness lasts forever.
- 45. Revelation 21:4 gives us hope: **"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death...for the former things are passed away."**
- 46. One day, every hardship, tear, and heartache will be gone.
- 47. Life may be hard now, but it won't always be this way.
- 48. Imagine a place free from pain, where God wipes away our tears; this promise is a reality we can look forward to.

Conclusion and Invitation

49. Hebrews 13:5 reminds us, **“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”**
50. God walks with us through trials, guiding us with His light.
51. His presence is a constant source of strength and hope.
52. While life is hard, God’s goodness never fades, His presence never leaves, and His promises never fail.
53. We can hold onto these truths in our most difficult moments.
54. Life is temporary, but our relationship with God is eternal.
55. Each day, as we face challenges, we can choose to lean into His goodness.
56. If you're carrying a burden that feels too heavy to bear, I invite you to come and lay it down at the altar.
57. Let God remind you of His goodness; He’s here, waiting to comfort and strengthen you.