

LIFE IS LIKE A DOUGHNUT

(James 1:2-4)

INTRODUCTION

Most all of us love doughnuts, don't we? When doughnuts are around the coffee pot in the morning, it is hard to pass them up. They are such a sweet delight!

How are doughnuts made? First the little balls of dough are shot through with a piercing blast of air to create a hole. Then they go into the proof box where they ride up and down an elevator in an atmosphere of heat and humidity. This causes the dough to rise. After this, they are dropped into hot oil and boiled thoroughly. After surviving this ordeal, the donuts pass through a cascading waterfall of icing.

Does anyone here today feel like a doughnut? Do you feel like you have been blasted with air? Do you feel like you have been boiled in oil? Well, remember that these experiences precede the sweet delight that follows. None of us look forward to trials. None of us love hardship. But without them, we will never enjoy the sweet fruit of maturity. A Billy Graham said, "Mountaintops are for views and inspiration, but fruit is grown in the valleys."

This morning James will tell us to count it all joy when you fall into various trials. Why? Because trials are like doughnuts. They are meant to end up as a sweet delight at the end of the process.

Let's look at James 1:2-4 to see how life is like a doughnut.

(James 1:2-4 NKJV) My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, {3} knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. {4} But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

THE KINDS OF TRIALS JAMES IS SPEAKING OF

First, let talk about the kinds of trials James is speaking of. Some versions call them trials, some call them temptations (KJV). The Contemporary English Version just says, "My friends, be glad, even if you have a lot of trouble."

We all have bad days.. I found a list of, "You know it's going to be a bad day when...?"

- you wake up to the soothing sound of running water...and then remember that you just bought a waterbed
- when you spend \$75 at the hair dressers and when you get home your dog starts barking at you.
- when your car horn goes off accidentally and remains stuck as you find yourself following a group of Hell's Angels motorcycles on the freeway.
- or when it's Nerd Day at the junior high school and your 14 year old son asks if he can borrow some of your clothes.

We all have bad days, but this is not the trials that James is speaking of. He is speaking of having to go through some very difficult trials. It is more like what this person envisioned:

1. You wake up in the morning only to find out someone have stolen you car
2. Then you go to work only to find out that you lost your job
3. Then you get a call from your lawyer when you get home from that job you had, only to be told that you house is being put in bankruptcy
4. Then you get a call from your son's mother and she tells you she caught your son is selling drugs, and he walked out on her and she have not seen him for 3 or 4 days
5. You get a call from your doctor about your health result, only to find out they need you to come back for another test, because they found a spot in on your lung

Now this are more like what James was thinking of. Have you had experiences like these? James says, that we are to count it all joy when we fall into these trials. Is this how you respond?

I believe that James is talking about going through things that shake your faith because he mentions in verse 3 **“knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.”**

Have you had experience which caused your faith in God to be shaken, or tested, or doubted? Have you found yourself or your family member is a crisis and you prayed and prayed and nothing happened and you began to doubt the love of God or the reality of God. These are the types of situations that James says ‘count it all joy.’

THE KIND OF JOY JAMES IS SPEAKING OF

Next we want to explore the idea of ‘counting it all joy.’ Is James masochistic? Masochism is “the act or an instance of deriving pleasure from being offended, dominated, or mistreated.”

No, James is not telling us to have a touch of masochism by counting it all joy when we are going through a very tough situation. The joy that James is speaking of is not joy in suffering, but joy in knowing what the trial will produce. It will produce patience and maturity. The joy is in the outcome, not the process. It is like the doughnut. The doughnut goes through the hot oil, goes through being punched and pulled, goes through being smothered in icing, but the outcome is the sweet taste of the doughnut.

It is the kind of joy that Jesus had when He went to the cross. Hebrews 12:2 tells us:

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.

Jesus did not derive joy in the pain of the cross. Hebrews 5 tells us that:

(Heb 5:7-8 NKJV) who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, {8} though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

Jesus’ joy was in what his suffering would produce. He would produce salvation for millions. It was the path to his being seated at the right hand of the Father.

The joy we are to have when we fall into various trials and temptations is the joy of knowing that God will do something good through them.

THE PURPOSE OF TRIALS

The trials we go through have a purpose. That purpose is to make us mature in our faith. We are to count it all joy, knowing that God is working his perfect work in us through these things if we keep the faith.

Now there is always another being involved in our trials and that is Satan. Satan wants to use our trials and temptations to destroy us, to weaken us, to devour us spiritually. Peter warns us of this:

(1 Pet 5:8-9 NKJV) Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. {9} Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

(James 4:7 NKJV) Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Satan uses suffering to try to defeat our faith. God uses our trials to strengthen our faith. This is been God pattern throughout the history of redemption.

Abraham was asked to offer up Isaac:

(Gen 22:1 NKJV) Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."

The children of Israel in the wilderness wanderings.

((Deu 8:16 NKJV) "who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end;

God wants to test our faith that He may do you good in the end.

What is that good?

PATIENCE AND MATURITY

Verses 3 and 4:

knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. {4} But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

The testing of our faith produces patience. Patience is endurance. It is the ability to finish well. It is sticking with it because of your commitment to God.

Here is a little parable of endurance. It seems that an old dog fell into a farmers well. After considering the situation, the farmer decided that neither the dog nor the well were worth saving. So, he decided to bury the old dog and put him out of his misery. When the farmer began shoveling, the dog was hysterical. But as the farmer kept on shoveling, and the dirt hit his back, a thought struck the old dog. Each time a shovel full of dirt hit his

back, the dog would shake off the dirt and step up. So, blow after blow, the dog would shake it off and step up. No matter how painful those shovels of dirt were, the old dog fought panic, he just kept shaking it off and stepping up. Finally, the dog, battered and exhausted stepped triumphantly over the wall of that well. What he thought would bury him actually benefited him because of the way he handled his adversity.

Perseverance is the ability to shake it off and step up when a load of trials are dumped on you.

Learning patience and perseverance will produce maturity, spiritual maturity. This is where God wants to bring all of us.

God's ultimate goal for man was to build a creature that was complete, and mature in his relationship with his Creator. He did not intend to build the whiny, feeling sorry for myself, some-time spiritually hot, sometimes spiritually cold, sometimes spiritually luke-warm. No, He wanted mature person who would choose to love Him, choose to love those around them, and choose to love themselves – NO MATTER WHAT!

To produce this kind of person, God allows us to fall into divers or various trials. We are to count it all joy, knowing that the fruit of the trial will be sweet and wonderful.

CONCLUSION

John Eldredge tells the story of a Scottish discus thrower from the 19th century. He lived days before professional trainers and developed his skills alone in the highlands. He made his own discus from the description he read in a book. What he didn't know was that the competition discus was made of wood with an outer rim of iron. His discus was made of pure metal, four times heavier than the ones used by his would-be challengers. This committed Scotsman trained day after day, laboring under the burden of extra weight. He marked the record distance and kept working until he could throw that far.

Of course, when he arrived at the competition, he was handed the official wooden discus. He threw it like a tea saucer. He set new records and for many years, none of his competitors could touch him.

As Eldredge reflected on this story, he said, "So that's how you do it – train under a great burden.

Some of us here today are training under a great burden. It hurts. It is unpleasant. Sometimes we despair. Sometimes we cry. Sometimes we are angry at

the burden. But we must always take heart. We must always have a deep sense of joy. Why? Because the burden is producing perseverance. Perseverance is producing maturity.

Life is like a doughnut. There is much heat and pressure, but you will enjoy the fruit of the trial in the end. So count it all joy when you fall into trials.

Amen? Amen!