

***“Bitterness or Faithfulness”***

**Theme: Our hardships are not meaningless**

Scripture: Isaiah 43:1-7

Things I’d like to remember from today’s sermon

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**Family Activity**: Be intentional this week in prayer together as a family, expressing the good times and the hard times. Take time to remember that God is with you in both.

**Meditation Moments for Monday, January 8-** Read Luke 22:39-44; Matthew 26:36-39

Matthew 26:39, “Jesus fell on his face. In this typical posture of abject humility in prayer, Jesus lays his life before his Father in complete honesty and surrender. Jesus is facing the most severe temptation of his life, at the moment when he is ready to accomplish the culmination of his life’s mission—to bear the sins of the world.” *Crossway Study Bible*

• **Reflect:** What do you think of Jesus’ prayer at this moment in His ministry? Is there a current situation in your life where you need to repeat Jesus’s words, “not my will, but yours be done”?

***Prayer:*** *Lord, I come to you today asking to have a similar heart as Jesus when facing hardships and famine in my life. Be with me today to help me understand your will and your purpose.*

**Tuesday, January 9** - Read Romans 5:1-11

In the beginning of chapter 5, we are reassured that we have peace with an almighty God through Jesus Christ. In addition to that, this passage also says that we get to share “in the hope of the glory of God.” However, there are certain things that come before this statement; one of those is suffering or hardships. When we examine the full text, we see that there is always a bigger picture in the moments that may be scary, hurtful, or nerve-wracking. “Our hope” is further explained in verses 6-11 as it explains the work of the cross.

• **Reflect:** Do you see verses 3-4 to be true in your life? Have hardships produced greater character in you?

***Prayer:*** *Lord Jesus, we pray that we become more like you. As we pray this, we see that this can be a hard thing so help us to trust you in the process.*

**Wednesday, January 10 -** Read John 16:4-16.
Jesus had only hours left to live. He told his disciples that he would give his life for them and the whole world because of His love for them. He tried to prepare them before he left, yet he knew when the crucifixion happened, they would grieve. Jesus felt it himself (cf. John 11:35). So, instead of telling them not to feel what they were feeling (“you are filled with sorrow”—verse 6), he said the Holy Spirit would be with them, not just for a brief time, but every day, guiding and helping them as they grew in Him.

• **Reflect:** Jesus provided an active Companion to be with us until the end of time and space as we know it. Jesus has not forgotten or deserted us—he is constantly with us through the Holy Spirit. What word or phrase in today’s passage about the Holy Spirit, speaks most to your heart? When have you sensed Jesus’ presence with you?

***Prayer****: Lord Jesus, guide me by your Spirit each day. I ask for a teachable spirit to know more about you and to know your will* f*or me. Thank you for being patient with me. Amen.*

**Thursday, January 11** - Read James 1:1-15.

In verse 2, we see that we are to count it as joy when we meet various trials. Our faithfulness will be tested in this world, but if we trust in God, we will one-day taste wholeness and perfection when we meet our Lord. Similarly, in verse 12, we see that a person who remains steadfast under trial is blessed and will receive the crown of life at the end of their race.

* **Reflect:** Is it worth being faithful during hardships? How can you be faithful during those times?

***Prayer:*** *Dear Father, help me to see your faithfulness in all aspects of life. Help me to be a person that trusts in your providence more and more each day. Amen*

**Friday, January 12** - Read Isaiah 43:1-15.

In these verses, we see that God is claiming to be the only God, that He, Himself, knows of no other gods. With all of His holiness and might, He says, “I will be with you in the fire and the flood.” This is the love of God, that He would make Himself human to experience the trials of this life and to walk with us in them.

• **Reflect:** Are there situations that feel like a fire or flood? Do you believe God is with you through those things?

***Prayer:*** *Lord Jesus, I believe these things: there is no need to fear, because you are with me, when I go through fires and floods, I will not be burned or consumed. Thank you for being the only constant in life. Amen.*

**Saturday, January 13 -** Read Romans 8:16-39.
We see throughout this passage that nothing can separate us from the love of God through Christ Jesus, His Son. This love and gift of salvation should be the most important thing in our lives. When we come to the reality that nothing can ever separate us from that, we are able to live unafraid and full of hope.

• **Reflect:** Do you believe that nothing can separate you from the love of God?

***Prayer:*** *Lord, help me to see your goodness in all situations and that no matter what life throws at me, I can never be separated from you. I love you dearly, Amen.*