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HARDSHIPS AS OPPORTUNITIES

All of us will face hardships and disappointments at some point in our lives. They are part of the human experience. What matters, however, is how we respond to those challenges. We can allow our frustrations to consume us, or we can choose to trust God in the midst of them, recognizing that even difficult circumstances fall within His sovereign will and can become opportunities to please Him through our attitudes and responses.

Acts 21 provides an insightful example. Paul is beaten mercilessly by a crowd acting on false accusations. He has just returned from his third missionary journey through Asia Minor, sharing with the Jerusalem church all that God had done through his ministry. Some of the very people present were among those whom the Lord had graciously redeemed through Paul's ministry. Yet Paul's arrival in Jerusalem also presented a problem. The church elders knew that his presence could fuel false accusations that he taught Jews to abandon the law, forsake the teachings of Moses, and defile the temple. To demonstrate that these accusations were untrue, they encouraged Paul to purify himself along with several other men.

But while Paul was in the temple, Jews from Asia—those from the very region where Paul had just ministered—recognized him and stirred up the crowd. They accused him of teaching against the Jewish people, the law, and the temple. Their accusations were not dissimilar from those previously brought against Stephen in Acts 6 and even against Jesus in the Gospels. Their intentions were unmistakable: they were seeking to kill Paul (Acts 21:31). Yet, in God's providence, a Roman commander and his soldiers intervened and rescued him from the violent mob.

One of the great takeaways from this narrative is that Paul trusted in the sovereignty of God and His providential care. Paul already knew that persecution awaited him. The Holy Spirit had warned him that "chains and afflictions" awaited him (Acts 20:23), and the prophet Agabus had given him an even more specific warning just a few verses earlier (Acts 21:10–11). Paul was not surprised by suffering, nor was he paralyzed by it.

In fact, Paul had already made his perspective clear: "*But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus*" (Acts 20:24). Paul understood that his life did not ultimately belong to him. His purpose was not to preserve his own comfort or avoid every hardship. His purpose was to finish the course and faithfully fulfill the ministry Christ had given him.

There is another important lesson here: rather than simply trying to escape difficult circumstances, look for the opportunity to glorify God in the midst of them. Paul did not respond with a victim mentality. He did not run. He did not capitulate. And he did not simply endure the circumstances with a stubborn attitude. Instead, he recognized that even this terrible situation could become an opportunity to advance the cause of the gospel. Paul understood that God's providence had placed him exactly where he was, and therefore he could ask, How can Christ be exalted here? How can the truth of the gospel be made known? How can God be glorified in this situation?
His circumstances were ugly, unjust, and painful, but his mission remained clear. He had already determined: "*For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified*" (1 Corinthians 2:2). That same purpose shaped Paul's response when circumstances became difficult.

So, the next time you are tempted to respond poorly to the negative circumstances in your life, remember the apostle Paul. Trust in the sovereign hand of God working through His providence. Rather than allowing hardship to consume you, look for the opportunity God has placed before you to honor Him.

Ask yourself: How can I respond in a way that pleases Christ? How can I demonstrate His grace? How can I use this circumstance as an opportunity to speak truth, encourage others, or point someone toward the gospel? How can God be glorified here? We may not understand why God has permitted a particular hardship, but we can trust that He is sovereign over it. And for those who belong to Christ, He promises that He is working all things together for our good and His purposes—to conform us more fully to the image of His Son (Romans 8:28–29).

The hardship may not change, but by God's grace, our response can. And what looks like an obstacle is actually an opportunity for the glory of God.

Mark Pitman
Executive Director

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40TH ANNUAL

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BABY BOTTLE Campaign UPDATE



As of October 1st, the 2026 baby bottle campaign has brought in **$30,809.55!**

We are so thankful for the generosity and excitement around this year's campaign! Feel free to grab a bottle from one of our centers OR use your own anytime throughout the year!

Every bottle truly helps CHANGE lives.

Current Clinic Needs:

Send via **Amazon**, do a **Walmart** delivery order OR drop off items to the clinics during open hours!

Bryan Sleepers – 9-24 months, Girl Onesies (No White) 9,18, 24 months, Boys Onesies (No White) 9,12, 18,24, Changing Pads, Brush/Comb, Thermometers, Aspirators, Bibs, Burp Clothes, Baby Shampoo, Baby Lotion, Baby Wash, Baby Wipes, Diapers 5 & 6.

Defiance Diapers – sz newborn, 4,5,6, Wipes, Sleepers, 3-12 months, Spoons/Forks, Thermometers, Diaper ointment and cream, Combs/Brush, Baby bath towels, Baby shampoo, Infant toys, Crib sheets, Baby hats

Napoleon Diapers 4, 5 and 6 | Baby Wash | Diaper rash cream | Onesies: NB, 0-3, 3-6 | Handmade Quilts | Baby Wipes

Wauseon Clothing denim pants boys & Girls 0-2T, Onesies Newborn- boys & Girls, 0-3 girls 2T boys, Sleepers boy 18 mo and 2T, Outifts long sleeve girls & boys all sizes, Crib sheets, Hooded towels, Outlet covers, Infant toys & board books, Infant spoon forks & dishes, Wipes, Diapers 4, 5, 6

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Donate any amount in honor of a special person in your life or to remember someone who has passed to support our mission!

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Thank you to our photography sponsor, Brooke St. John from Heavenly Lens PHOTOGRAPHY

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