



**WHEN NO MEANS YES: FAITH IN THE LIGHT WHEN FACING THE
DARKNESS OF DENIAL**

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When No Means Yes: *Faith in the Light When Facing the Darkness of Denial*

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What are trials?

- ▶ Failures
- ▶ Refusals
- ▶ Sufferings
- ▶ Mysteries
- ▶ Mandates

Failures

What is failure?

- ▶ Technical Definition: The lack of success or the omission of expected or required action
- ▶ What does it look like?
 - ▶ Nonfulfillment
 - ▶ Defeat
 - ▶ Disappointment



Failures

Examples of...

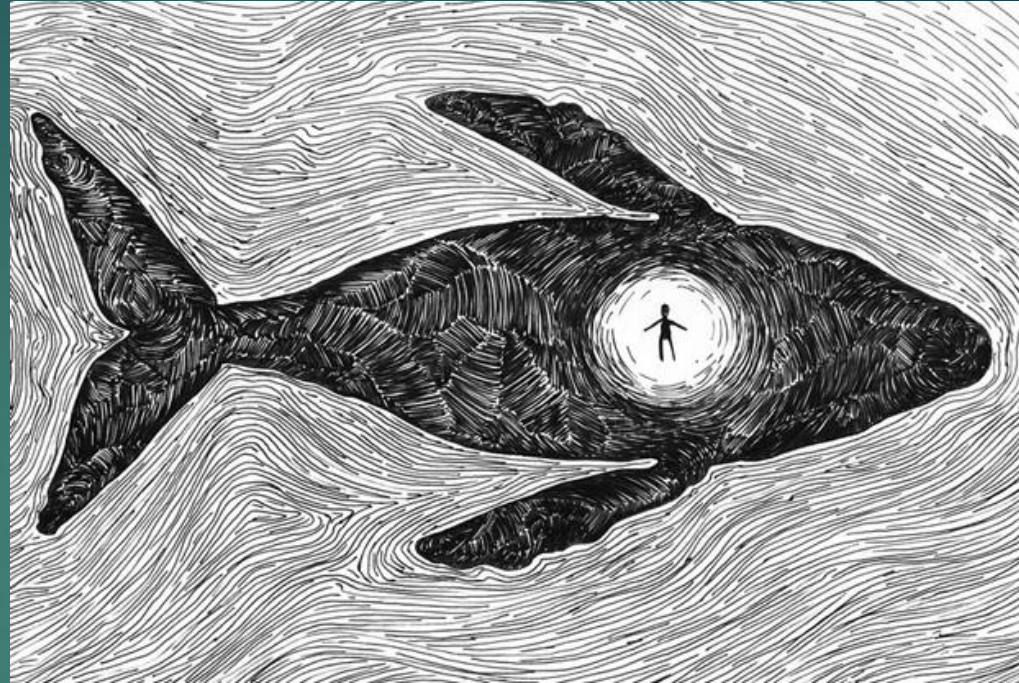
- ▶ The Bible

- ▶ Jonah

- ▶ Adam & Eve

- ▶ “The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.” - Genesis 3:22

- ▶ *He cares for us even in our failures.*



Refusals

- ▶ Grace
- ▶ Help
- ▶ Acceptance
- ▶ Desires

Matthew 26:39

Isaiah 41:13



Suffering

What is it?

- ▶ Technical Definition: The state of undergoing pain, distress, or hardship
- ▶ What does this look like in our lives today?
- ▶ Grief
- ▶ Loss/Death
- ▶ Illness
- ▶ Financial hardship
- ▶ Broken relationships



Examples

► What does Scripture tell us?

- Acts 14:22
- Romans 8:18

Real World Example:

*-Reference to Finding Faith
in the Dark by Laurie Short*

- Pages 13-14



Mysteries

- ▶ Technical Definition:
- ▶ "Something that is difficult or impossible to understand"

- ▶ What does this look like?

Church plants gone bad

Unplanned pregnancies

Infidelities

Mysteries can be seen as:

Unwanted /Unwelcome

Unexpected



Mysteries

Scriptures:

1 Corinthians 13:12

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Biblical Examples:

Job



Mandates

▶ Laws/Rules

- ▶ Can be considered hardships
- ▶ Really meant for our benefit, God's glory



▶ Examples

- ▶ Tithing
- ▶ Pre-marital sex
- ▶ Same sex relationships
- ▶ Missing out
- ▶ Taking the "high ground"

Psalm 73

Hebrews 12:11

Why does God allow pain and trials?

Let's back up a few years...

- ▶ In the beginning... God created a perfect world
 - ▶ Not only did God meet our needs but gave us abundantly more
 - ▶ Food -> *Flavor*
 - ▶ Sight -> *Colors/Dimension*
 - ▶ Sound -> *Music/Communicate*
 - ▶ Think -> *Decide*
 - ▶ God, in His perfect, freeing love, allowed us to have *free will*.



Where did "pain" come from?

- ▶ Our decision allowed sin to enter the world
- ▶ God, in His holiness and perfection, forced to be separated from imperfection
- ▶ Because this is a fallen world, God has the ability to control what He chooses to intervene with but the workings of the world are piloted by our free will.
- ▶ Pain happens for 3 reasons:
 1. Because of the workings of the world
 2. Because we have free will and make choices
 3. Some events happen because God needs them happen
- ▶ ALL EVENTS ARE PURPOSEFUL
- ▶ PAIN (emotions, responses) are human reflections

Where did “pain” come from?

- ▶ Adam and Eve allowed sin into the world which brought along with it unexplainable pain and trials
- ▶ Pain and trials are inevitable and unavoidable in this world
- ▶ However, God does not simply leave us stuck in it...

How does God use pain and trials?

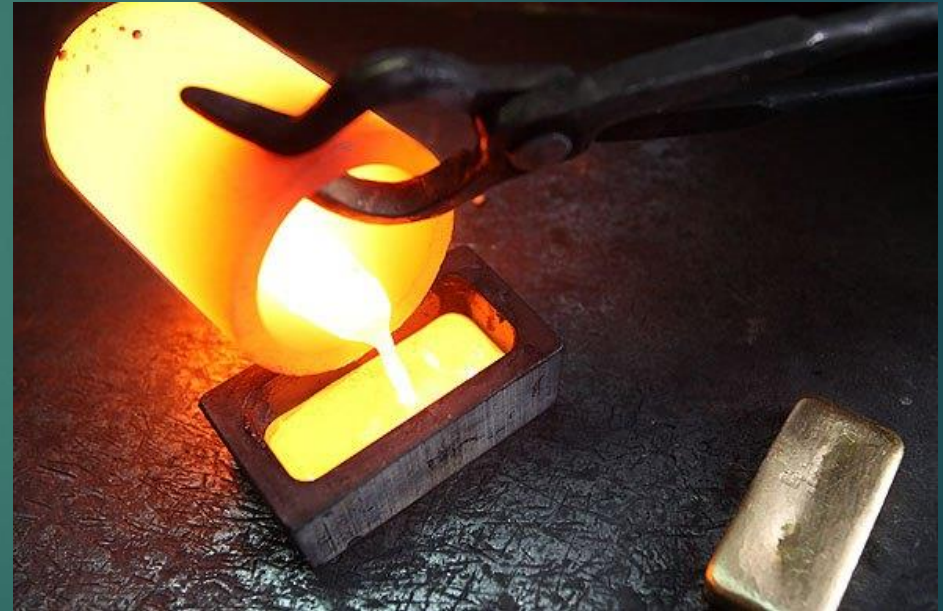
- ▶ C.S. Lewis: The Problem of Pain
 - ▶ The value of pain is that it shatters our illusions
 - ▶ We have all we need
 - ▶ All is well
 - ▶ Human divinity

"God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world."



God uses pain and trials for the betterment of His children

- ▶ Progress is made through trials: REFINEMENT
- ▶ Earth's most precious elements are made from pressure, heat, bending and breaking
- ▶ 1 Peter 1:7-8



Perception

- ▶ In the mist of excruciating, incomprehensible pain/trial
 - ▶ No one understands/can't rationalize it yourself
 - ▶ No one able to empathize to the degree that you need
 - ▶ Feel alone/isolated
- ▶ It is here, one begins to see their limits and a choice must be made:
 - ▶ Respond to this out of anger to self, others or God
 - ▶ Respond by surrendering
- ▶ Jonah

Trials are Transformative

- ▶ Trials are purposeful
- ▶ What does Scripture say?

James 1:2

1 Peter 1:6-7

2 Corinthians 3:18

- ▶ Suffering associated with "fertile" --> new birth



Trials are Transformative...But How?

- ▶ Through our suffering, something else within us is called forth
- ▶ We become increasingly aware of our connection with a larger force- God
- ▶ We come to a new relationship with God
- ▶ New construction of God = new life



Redemption

- ▶ Requires *humility*
- ▶ Sense of awe
- ▶ Gratitude
- ▶ We “need” again
“You don’t really know Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have.”-Tim Keller

I need God in every single moment of my life.

What happens when we
choose to redeem?

Redemption

Trials are redeemed for

OURSELVES

OTHERS

THE KINGDOM/GOD



Redeeming Trials for Ourselves

▶ Ourselves

- ▶ We become compassionate with ourselves
 - ▶ Suffering is part of our journey, not something unfortunate, victimizing, embarrassing or a representation of failure
 - ▶ We value what suffering has brought us

Redeeming Trials for Others

- ▶ Others

- ▶ We relate our experiences to others

- ▶ We are not afraid of suffering and have the capacity to see and help others through theirs (Barrett, 1999)

Redeeming Trials for The Kingdom

▶ Christ

- ▶ As Christ gave His life to bring about redemption for all of us, so we can view suffering as a gift we can offer to God and His Kingdom, redeeming it for something better.



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