



**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...

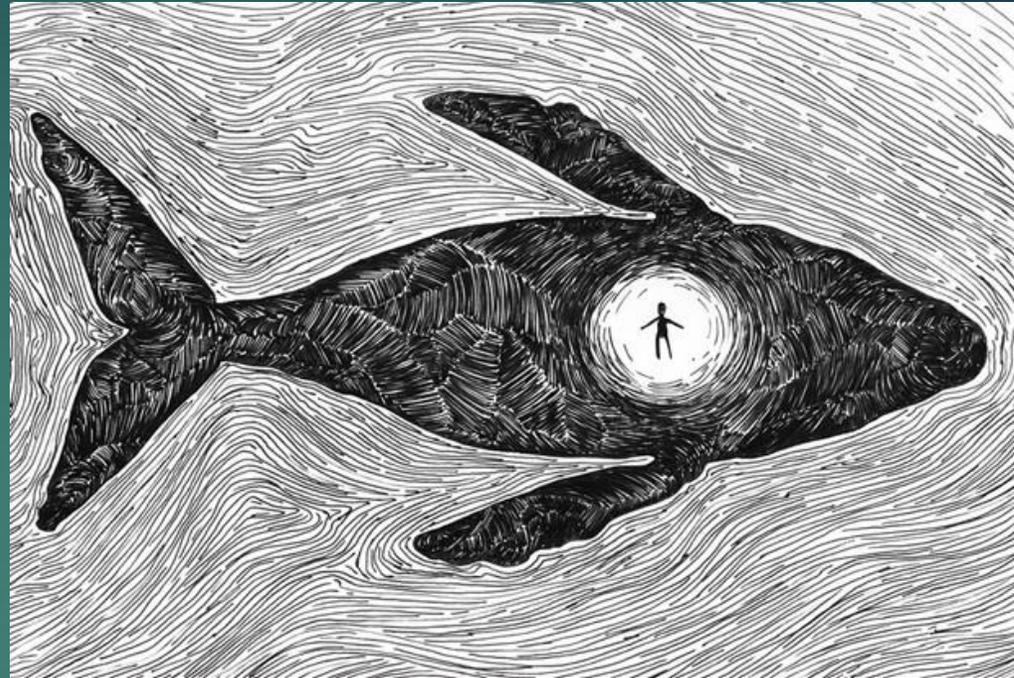
- ▶ The Bible

- ▶ 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"

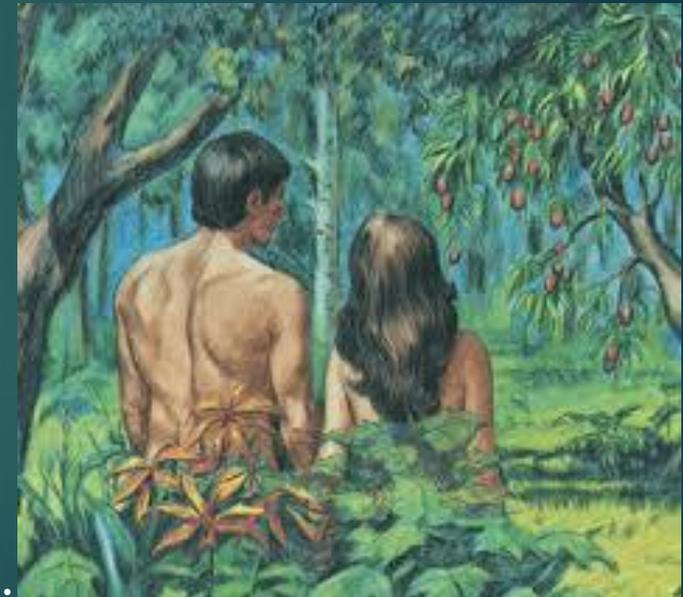
*Psalm 73*

*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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