

3. Apply the Therapy

a. When weak, we need therapy.

- 1) The obvious solution to a spiritual weakness is to improve our strength.
- 2) Physical therapy is often some sort of exercise to help the body overcome a weakness. Often, physical therapy involves another person's help.
- 3) Spiritual therapy requires God's help. (Isaiah 40:28-31)
"Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." (Psalms 27:14) **"Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD."**

b. Practical spiritual therapy is available from God.

- 1) Spend quality time each day reading the Bible. To benefit the most, find a principle from your reading on which you can meditate.
- 2) Take time to bow before the Lord in earnest prayer each day. Pray specifically about the adversities with which you struggle.
- 3) Ask God to search your heart for anything that is between your soul and the Saviour, confess anything that he brings to your mind and forsake it.
- 4) Seek to get to know God better so that your trust in him will override the temptation to worry.
- 5) Mark and memorise helpful verses.

Conclusion: You will face adversities, whether trials, hardship, loss, temptations, or persecution. Addressing them takes spiritual strength. **Now** is the time to build up your strength. Don't wait until an adversity strikes. If your spiritual strength is small, you may faint.

Song: Cast your burden on the Lord.

Overcoming Adversity

10 December 2023 PM – Text: Proverbs 24:10 – Topic: Trials

Introduction: If you have ever read any of *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, you know of the unbelievable tortures that Christians have endured down through history for the cause of Christ. Many are so horrible that it makes me shutter to even think about them. Christians in Communist and Muslim countries are enduring torments even today.

Recently, many Israelis have suffered terrible adversities at the hands of their enemies.

God has been good to us. We are not facing such painful, life-threatening adversities. However, that does not mean that we face no adversities. Trials come in many sizes, shapes, and severities. We face many of them day by day.

Why do bad things like this happen to good people? Many bitter people blame God for it; however, it is not God's fault. All these atrocities are the result of sin. God created all things perfect. Satan deceived Adam and Eve into disobeying God, and thus introduced the heartaches of sin into the human race.

In Proverbs 24:10, Solomon wrote, **"If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small."** To **faint**, as used here does not mean to pass out. According to Zodiates, it means "to become slack, to relax, ... to become discouraged, to become disheartened, to become weak, to become feeble, ... or to be lazy."^{CWSD} This often happens in the day of adversity (i.e., trouble, distress, or anguish). Such adversity may be caused by **pain, sickness, disease, fatigue, opposition, temptation, conflict, hardships, stress, persecution, losses, or even fear**. God wants us to stand strong during adversity. When we faint at such times, it indicates that our strength is small. This is more of a reminder than a rebuke.

Transition: This evening, I want us to consider a few things that we can do to overcome adversity.

1. Admit the Weakness

a. Admitting weakness is humiliating.

- 1) Our natural tendency is to deny weakness. It is common to deny symptoms of a sickness until they are obvious. Many elderly people deny instability until they fall and hurt themselves. We may think we can resist temptation,

until it defeats us and scars our life. We may refuse to cry when we are hurting emotionally, lest we show weakness.

- 2) When we yield to sinful temptations of the mind, mouth, temper, actions, or lusts, our sinful heart may blame others and excuse the fault rather than humbly admitting that we have a sinful weakness.
- 3) Whether our adversity is physical, emotional, spiritual, financial, or relational, it is humiliating to admit that we have a weakness.

b. Admitting weakness is essential.

- 1) In each of the examples just mentioned, hiding, or denying the weakness prevents overcoming the adversity.
- 2) A pianist will never overcome a bad habit until he admits it exists. An athlete will never overcome a hindering habit until he admits he is wrong. A couple will never overcome conflicts until they admit they have a problem. An angry person will never conquer anger until he admits that it exists. No harmful habit will ever be conquered until it is admitted without excuse.
- 3) When we humbly say, "*I have an adversity, and I am too weak in myself to overcome it*", then God can help us. If we will depend on Him, He will help us overcome the adversity.

2. Identify the Cause

a. Fainting always has a cause.

- 1) Remember that fainting is to become slack, to become discouraged, to feel forsaken, or to be defeated.
- 2) Solomon told us that we faint because we lack strength. While it is true that if you get exhausted when your adversity is pain, you are physically weak, yet I believe the emphasis of the verse is on our spiritual response to the adversity. If we faint spiritually, then our spiritual strength is small.
- 3) He is not saying that if your adversity is pain, that you should not hurt or get exhausted. His is emphasising our spiritual response to the adversity.

b. What causes spiritual fainting?

- 1) Lacking a flourishing relationship with God causes

fainting. Only nibbling a few bites of food and sipping water once or twice a week would leave you physically faint and unhealthy. A believer who only nibbles on God's word and sips a bit on prayer once or twice a week, cannot expect to be strong during adversity, either. If we have a flourishing relationship with God, our adversities and trials will make us better, not bitter.

- 2) A poor view of God can cause spiritual fainting. If we do not view God as our almighty, loving, caring, forgiving, compassionate Father, we will faint and not trust Him during our adversities.
- 3) Unconfessed sin will surely cause us to faint spiritually.
 - a) When we do not confess our sin to God, it blocks His aid. (Psalms 66:18) "**If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:**" That is like not paying your car insurance premium and then expecting the insurance company to repair the damage when you get into an accident.
 - b) If we do not seek the forgiveness of those we hurt, it displeases God and fuels discord. In fact, Jesus said, (Matthew 6:14-15) "**For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**"
- 4) Failure to ask God for help. Why would we not ask God for help? Well, here are a few reasons.
 - a) Some adversities come up suddenly and catch us off guard and if we are not in a constant habit of casting our burdens on the Lord, we may not think of it right away.
 - b) If our adversity is a sinful action that we have not admitted and confessed, we will have no desire to ask God for help.
 - c) If we do not believe God cares or is able to help us, we will lack motivation to seek His help.
- 5) Facing the adversity in our own strength is a sure recipe for fainting.