"FAITH WITH BOOTS ON"
Big Idea . . . Part 2: HANDLING LIFE'S TRIALS (James 1:2-12)

INTRO: ILLUS. of life can be a trial ("Alexander Days") . . . Life, even for Christian is not always what we desire. Along the way are difficulties, pain and sorrow. James referred to them as trials (vv 2, 12). *James wrote to prepare his readers on how to handle the trials of life so that their faith could develop.* James' readers were scattered from the security of their roots and home church (1:1a). Most were poor, oppressed and persecuted. Life was full of trials. James wrote to instruct them on how to handle life's trials. *God's people today must prepare to handle the trials of life so that their faith can develop.* Three (3) observations:

I. WHAT WE NEED TO *KNOW ABOUT* TRIALS (1:2-4)

A. *INEVITABLE* (v. 2 - *when*, v. 12 - *when*) - Trials are a required course; core curriculum in this life. They are normal to both saved and unsaved. No one escapes. Listen to Peter (1 Pet. 1:6; 4:12; 5:9), Paul (Rom. 5:12), and Jesus (Jn. 16:33). We must know trials are inevitable and unpredictable (v. 2 *meet*) – *Meet* is to fall into or among unexpectantly. Most trials are not planned. Ex: flat tire in Wisconsin . . .

B. *VARIABLE (v. 2 of various kinds)* – trials wear many faces. They come in all sizes and intensities. They are multi-colored.

C. *PURPOSEFUL (vv. 3-4)* – Trouble never means God has abandoned me, rather He wants to grow me. Trials come to:

1. *Perfect* us (vv. 3-4) – cp. Rom. 5:3-5; 1 Pet. 1:6-7. They help us grow, develop, and mature. Build strength and character. Hard times draw us more to God. Make us more God–dependent than self-dependent (2 Cor. 1:8-9). Ex: Disciples in storm. . .
2. *Correct* us – Ex: Jonah, prodigal, . . . when we make bad choices. We disobey Him and invite trouble. Get our attention.
3. *Redirect* us – God wants us going His way not ours, so He redirects through trials and circumstances. Ex: Paul (Acts 16:6ff; Gal. 4:13; Acts 28 shipwreck in Malta to heal. Lose job? Sickness? Dating?

Summary: Obeying James' instructions is essential or will not respond right. Become bitter and angry.

II. WHAT WE NEED TO *DO IN* TRIALS (1:2, 5-11) James issues 3 commands to obey when trials come. We:

A. *REJOICE (v. 2, Count it all joy)* – Isn't exactly what we normally do when trials come. Consider can mean "to evaluate or add up." James says respond to trials with an attitude of full joy. How? Can't unless we understand that God has a purpose in our trials: to perfect, correct, or redicrect us. Paul addressed this (Rom. 8:28). Every trial is an opportunity for faith to develop. Caution: If value comfort more than character, material over spiritual, present over future, then trouble will do us in.

B. *REQUEST (vv. 5-8)* – Pray and ask God for wisdom. For what? To see my trial from God's side, to respond with joy knowing what God can do. Pray the trial won't be wasted but will develop what James says (vv. 3b-4). Truths here: must ask, in faith (with complete confidence in God's character), not doubt, God will give what we need. Trials are not the result of a bad God, but of a fallen world – so we can run to Him for help! If we fail to ask or doubt, we'll remain immature and childish in our walk – trials will blow us away.

C. *REMEMBER (vv. 9-11)* Cultivate an eternal perspective to trials. As Christians we must look beyond the world's evaluation. Poverty and wealth, like trials (both are trials) are temporal. They pass. Social status and financial wealth pass away like wild flowers. What truly lasts is our spiritual identity. We are exalted and rich in Christ. Cultivate a Biblical, spiritual, eternal viewpoint. Remember these . . .? Joy and peace not product of what I have or don't have, but of WHO I have!

III. WHAT WE NEED TO *EXPECT FROM* THE TRIALS (1:12) If we follow James instructions, what can we expect? Vs. 12 indicates (verse hinges 2-11 and 13-18, using common words and ideas). Three results if persevere.

A. *SATISFACTION (Blessed)* – Joy, peace, confidence.

B. *APPROVAL (stood the test)* - When pass test and our faith is perfected or corrected or redirected, then get God's Good Seal of Approval (Pic of image . . .).

C. *REWARD (crown of life…)* – Image of crown . . . What is the crown? It is life – real, full, abundant and joyful life on earth with trials and forever life in heaven without trials. The reward here is the capacity to live victorious over trials.

CONC: James has been very thorough. How do you normally react to trials? Blown away, angry, shut down, complain? James says to rejoice for they can perfect us, correct us , and redirect us; request wisdom; remember they will pass. Always opportunity to grow.