

Luke 21

Hardships: Purpose & Response

? What are some examples of hardship that you've seen occurring today, either in the world or your own life?

Luke 21:5-19, 34-38 (NIV)

⁵Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, ⁶"As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down."

⁷"Teacher," they asked, "when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?"

⁸He replied: "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not follow them. ⁹When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away."

¹⁰Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. ¹¹There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.

¹²"But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. ¹³And so you will bear testimony to me. ¹⁴But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. ¹⁵For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. ¹⁶You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. ¹⁷Everyone will hate you because of me. ¹⁸But not a hair of your head will perish. ¹⁹Stand firm, and you will win life.

...

³⁴"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. ³⁵For it will come on all those who live on the face of

Temple Destruction

Commentators present numerous opinions regarding Jesus' reference (vs. 6) here to the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. Whether or not He may have been speaking to a later, "end-times" destruction is not something we will delve into here. What we can know is that the temple in Jerusalem during the time of Jesus had been reconstructed by Herod the Great. "Pilgrims pouring into the city...could not help but be impressed, even overwhelmed, by its sheer size and magnificence" (*New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Luke*, 733). The temple was completely destroyed during the Jewish Revolt and war with the Romans in A.D. 70., depriving them of the visible centerpiece of their faith.

the whole earth. ³⁶ Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”

³⁷ Each day Jesus was teaching at the temple, and each evening he went out to spend the night on the hill called the Mount of Olives, ³⁸ and all the people came early in the morning to hear him at the temple.

? Looking at the passage, what are some types of hardships that Jesus lists? Do any of these surprise you? Why or why not?

? How have you seen people respond, either well or poorly, to encountering hardships in their life?

Because of the LORD's great love we
are not consumed,
for his compassions never fail.
They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
~Lamentations 3:22-23

? How do those responses line up with the ones Jesus provides (vv. 34-36)?

? In this passage (vs. 37) and others in the Gospels (e.g. Luke 22:39-44, John 7:53), we see Jesus leaving the crowds behind and going to the Mount of Olives. Why do you think He did this? What can we learn from His example?

? Jesus teaches in verses 13-19 that the hardships we encounter as believers have purpose. How have you seen God use your hard experiences for His glory?

? Let's take a look at a few more passages. What can we learn about the purpose of hardship from them, as well as from our main passage today?

- Romans 5:1-5, Acts 5:27-42 (esp. 40-41), 1 Peter 4:12-19, 2 Corinthians 1:6-7

From John Piper: *"In suffering we come to hope more fully in God and put less confidence in the things of this world."*
(desiringGod.com/sermons)

? Ultimately, we do not need to be afraid of hardship because of our relationship with Christ. How does this reality impact the way we respond when we face difficult things?

? What does it look like for us to prepare to encounter hardship as part of being a follower of Christ?

For Discussion and Application

? What is your usual coping mechanism when faced with hardship, and how can your response be altered to better align with the Gospel?

? How are you following Jesus' "Mount of Olives" example in the midst of hardship?