

Man's Adversity is God's Opportunity

Intro: Most of us would not recognize these two men. In 1883 a devastating tornado struck the prairies of Minnesota, killing many, injuring hundreds and almost demolishing the town of Rochester. An elderly doctor and his two sons (shown here in this photo) worked for days aiding the stricken, bandaging wounds, and setting broken limbs. Their heroic work did not go unnoticed. The occasion of the tornado and their service provided the impetus to fund and establish a large hospital there, provided that the doctor and his sons took charge. They agreed, founding in 1889, their clinic that soon attracted wide attention. Though most of us would not have recognized these two brothers, we would immediately recognize the name of the hospital named after them and their father. You are looking at Charles and William Mayo of the world-renowned Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN.

When the tornado struck, people reacted with, "God has forgotten!" Yet out of this disaster came a hospital that has brought healing to over six million people there and in their affiliates around the world.

It illustrates a concept I want to impress upon your minds today: "Man's adversity is God's opportunity."

We cannot avoid adversity in life.

Indeed, if a man should live many years, let him rejoice in them all, and let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many. (Ecclesiastes 11:8)

Think about the word "adversity". It is closely related to our word "adversary", and all of us have one!

Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (1 Peter 5:8)

If you didn't already know, Satan gets his name from his adversarial relationship to God and to us! He is our enemy and he seeks to destroy us and adversity is one of his tools! To some degree the adversary uses adversity to take us down and defeat us.

Cf. Job—Satan pulled out every trick in the book.

Material loss

Death of loved ones

Physical sickness

Temptation to give up by his wife

Discouragement of "friends"

Our adversary still uses adversity to defeat us.

Man's adversity has been God's opportunity.

God can take the work of the adversary and turn it into a blessing.

Joseph suffered the adversity of being sold into slavery, being wrongly accused by his master's wife, betrayed by his fellow-prisoner. Yet in spite of

all of this adversity, God brought him through and seated him on the throne next to Pharaoh.

“And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

(Genesis 50:20)

Think of what great things came from Joseph’s adversity:

The Israelites were saved from famine.

It insulated the Israelites from the influences of the Canaanites and prepared a people longing for the deliverance of God.

That deliverance came to Israel through the work of the prophet Moses.

Think of what great things came from Jesus’ adversity:

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. (1 Peter 2:21-24)

Jesus’ adversity was an opportunity for God’s salvation to come to us!

And so today, man’s diversity is God’s opportunity!

The adversary has not quit using adversity. Just as man’s adversity was God’s opportunity in the past, so it is today.

Man’s pain is God’s opportunity to provide comfort.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. (2 Corinthians 1:3-5)

Man’s temptation is God’s opportunity to provide strength.

And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Man’s confusion is God’s opportunity to provide guidance.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Man’s sin is God’s opportunity to provide forgiveness.

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness. He will not always strive with us;

nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him. (Psalm 103:8-13)

Conclusion: Every dark moment in our life is a door for God. When we have problems in our lives, we must see them as God's opportunity to come in to us; but we must open that door.

'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me. (Revelation 3:20)

We must let God help us in times of adversity. We must pray to Him and trust in Him when times are bad as well as when times are good. And when we do we will experience the comfort, strength, love, fellowship, guidance, and forgiveness of God.