

How we approach challenges

Three possible approaches

- Naïve optimism
- Realistic optimism
- Negative pessimism

What is the problem with...

- Naïve optimism?
- Negative pessimism?

What is a good way to approach life as a Christian?

- In the church
- In our work and studies
- In our personal lives

A new school year

Our jobs

A friendship

Family connections

Which challenges do you face?

Which approach describes you?

Hopeful Perseverance

Acts 17:1-15

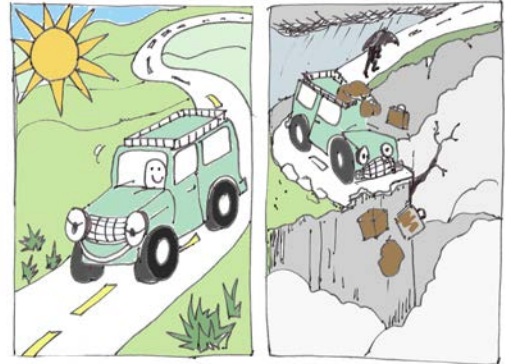
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<i>Paul's experiences in his travels</i>		
City	Beginning	Outcome
Antioch	Whole city came to hear	Persecuted, and driven out
Iconium	Great number believed	Tried to stone them. They fled
Lystra	Started to worship Paul	Stoned almost to death
Antioch	Planned to work w/ Barnabas	Argued with Barnabas, separated
Derbe/Lystra	Took Timothy along	Churches strengthened and growing
Philippi	Lydia converted. Cast out the evil spirit of the fortune teller	Arrested, severely flogged, & jailed Released and asked to leave the city
Thessalonica		
Berea		

Acts 17:1-15

Thessalonica

1-4: They proclaimed the Gospel, and many came to faith

5-9: • Explained and proved from Scripture

• Focused on Jews and God-fearing Gentiles

10-12: • Messiah must suffer, die, and come to life

13-15: • People hadn't been able to see it
(confirmation bias)

• Yet it was always there

• Jesus is the Messiah: suffering was problematic

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Signs of the Curse of God

“For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
but **the way of the wicked leads to destruction.**”

Psalm 1:6

“If someone guilty of a capital offense is put to death and their body is exposed on a pole, you must not leave the body hanging on the pole overnight. Be sure to bury it that same day, because **anyone who is hung on a pole is under God’s curse.**” *Deuteronomy 21:22-23*

Jesus was “destroyed” and hung on a tree

The Messiah will Suffer and Die

“**Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer,**

and though the Lord makes **his life an offering for sin,**
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.

After **he has suffered,**

he will see the light of life and be satisfied;
by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many,
and **he will bear their iniquities.**” *Isaiah 53:10-11*

The Messiah will Rise to Live Again

“Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer,

and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin,

he will see his offspring and prolong his days,

and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.

After he has suffered,

he will see the light of life and be satisfied;

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• Yet it was always there

• Jesus is the Messiah: suffering was problematic

• Some of the Jews converted

• Many Greek men and women

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*Acts 17:1-15***Thessalonica**

1-4: They proclaimed the Gospel, and many came to faith

5-9: Other Jews opposed them; started a riot; had to flee

- Seemingly leaders of Jews were most opposed

10-12: • Jealous: perhaps misplaced zeal & bad jealousy

13-15: • Used attack rather than argument

- They caused the trouble that they blamed on Christians

- Attacked new believers in Jason's house

- "Post bond" is a threat about future trouble

- Paul & Silas fled by night

*Acts 17:1-15***Thessalonica**

1-4: They proclaimed the Gospel, and many came to faith

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Berea

10-12: They proclaimed the Gospel; even more came to faith

13-15: • To the synagogue again: boldness!

- More "noble" Jews: eager critical thinking

- Rather than rejection and attack

- Open critical thinking brought confirmation

- More Greek women and men responded

- Women were key to growth of the church

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5-9: Other Jews opposed them; started a riot; had to flee

Berea

10-12: They proclaimed the Gospel; even more came to faith

13-15: Thessalonian Jews came to attack them; had to flee

- “Court of public opinion” is not noble
- Paul left: he was the ‘lightning rod’
 - Maybe staying there would hurt the church
 - Great hospitality to take him to Athens!
- Silas and Timothy continued ministry in Berea

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Philippi	Lydia converted. Cast out the evil spirit of the fortune teller	Arrested, severely flogged, & jailed Released and asked to leave the city
Thessalonica	3 weeks in the synagogue, explaining and proving Jesus	Riot, attempted arrest Fled by night
Berea	Teaching in the synagogue Many believers	Thessalonian Jews came and tried to start another riot. Fled

The Big Idea

The church and its people
 keep living out their calling boldly
 whether the road is
 smooth or bumpy
 and whether the responses are
 faith, noble exploration, or violent opposition

At the core of Christianity

We worship and follow a **crucified** Savior
 who **rose again**

- His full glory is visible and fully experienced
 only **after** suffering, not ***instead of*** suffering

We are called to “take up our cross and follow him”

- So our full glory is visible and fully experienced
 only **after** suffering, not instead of suffering

We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love all of you have for one another is increasing. Therefore, among God's churches **we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.**

All this is evidence that God's judgment is right, and as a result you will be **counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering.**

2 Thessalonians 1:3-5

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Application

- Persevere with a hope-filled perseverance

Different kinds of perseverance

~~weak perseverance~~ *This is too challenging!*

~~naïve perseverance~~ *It will all be great if we just keep going!*

~~sloppy perseverance~~ *I don't deserve trouble (when I really do)*

~~hopeless perseverance~~ *It's pointless, but I'll do it*

hopeful perseverance *I'll keep going & somehow good will come*

hope-filled perseverance *God is at work through our work
and where He is at work, we see goodness*

Application

- Persevere with a hope-filled perseverance
 - Don't be surprised or panic or complain or give up when the road is bumpy
 - “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world **you will have trouble.** **But take heart! I have overcome the world.**” *John 16:33*
 - Paul was “strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. **‘We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.’**” *Acts 14:22*

Application

- Persevere with a hope-filled perseverance
 - Don't be surprised or panic or complain or give up when the road is bumpy
 - **God is at work through our work in Christ and where He is at work, we will see goodness**

Application

- Persevere with a hope-filled perseverance
- With gracious and humble boldness, **proclaim and follow** Jesus as the new King of a new Kingdom
 - In troubles... Love God. Love others. Seek God. Be joyful.
 - In our work and studies **We will have challenges**
 - In our relationships **We will see God's goodness**
 - In evangelism **One day, we'll experience**
 - In the church **His goodness fully**

Application

- Persevere with a hope-filled perseverance
- With gracious and humble boldness, **proclaim and follow** Jesus as the new King of a new Kingdom
- Pursue truth and what's real, like the Bereans
 - Not: what fits my expectation or preference
 - Not: what makes life easier or less troublesome
 - Rather: seek what helps me know and follow God more
 - Seeing and worshiping God brings His goodness to life
 - Even when it involves being humbled and corrected

Hope-filled Perseverance

God is at work through
our hope-filled work in Christ,
and **where He is at work,**
we will see His goodness

“So then, those who suffer according
to God’s will should commit
themselves to their faithful Creator
and continue to do good.” *1 Peter 4:19*



Not Naïve



**Not in
Futility**



With hope-filled tenacity

Hope-filled Perseverance

What challenges are you facing today
and this week?

How are you facing them?

God is at work through
our hope-filled work in Christ,
and **where He is at work,**
we will see His goodness



Not Naïve



**Not in
Futility**



With hope-filled tenacity