

Additional Resource

For the week of November 2, 2014

“When Life is Unfair”

Sermon Series: *Bulletproof* (week 1 of 3)

Except where noted, all scripture passages have been taken from the 1984 New International Version (NIV1984)

The “Sugar Cookie” Illustration

Speaking at a commencement ceremony, US Navy Admiral McRaven recounted an experience from his Basic SEAL training. He shared this difficult experience with the graduates to teach them a valuable lesson about dealing with hardships in life. To paraphrase, Navy SEAL training involves months of rigorous physical, mental, and emotional trials. One such miserable drill begins with uniform inspection, which occurs several times a week. The cadet’s uniform must be utterly immaculate. Systematically, though, the drill sergeant will single out one cadet to fail, regardless of how perfect his appearance. Once failed, the cadet is ordered to run, fully clothed, into the ocean, return to the beach, and roll in the sand until every inch of his uniform and exposed skin is covered in sand. Then, looking more like a “sugar cookie” than a human being, he must remain this way for the rest of the day.

Many drop out of training, due to episodes like this. Admiral McRaven said that the problem is that these cadets do not understand the purpose of the drill: no matter how hard you try, there will be times that you will fail. It is not fair or just, but this is life for everyone, at one point or another. His point was that we cannot make much of an impact on life; we cannot be world changers, if we quit whenever we feel like the “sugar cookie.” Our perspective on the trial makes all the difference in how we respond.

2 Thessalonians 1:1-12

¹ Paul, Silas and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: ² Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing. ⁴ Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.

⁵ 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. ⁶ God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you ⁷ and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. ⁸ He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power ¹⁰ on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

¹¹ With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your

faith. ¹² We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

James 1:2-4

² Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴ Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.