

The Crossing
“The Yardstick of Hardships”
Pastor Bob Botsford

Message available at www.horizon.org/archive

Main Scripture: 2 Corinthians 11:16-33

Referenced Scripture: Matthew 10:1-4, 16-19, John 15:18-16:4, Acts 9:15-16, Galatians 6:17

OPEN:

1. What in particular spoke to you from Pastor Bob’s message?
2. Contrast the common perspective of hardship with a biblical perspective of hardship.

DIG DEEPER:

1. Given the hardships Paul suffered, which do you think was more of a burden to him- the external suffering or the internal pressure of his *“deep concern for all the churches”* (**2 Corinthians 11:28**)? How about Jesus and the suffering he experienced vs. His love and concern for all mankind (**Matthew 27:26-50**)? Explain.
2. In **2 Corinthians 11:23-29** we read through Paul’s list of horrific hardships he suffered. Did Paul see these hardships as curses or causes? In what way do you interpret your own hardships- as curses or causes?
3. Just as the disciples in the boat during a severe storm, in **Matthew 8:23-27**, that the Lord did not deliver Paul from his circumstances, rather through his circumstances. What do these accounts reveal to you about the heart and nature of God?
4. Pastor Bob gave us three significant points regarding hardships to consider. The first being *“Hardships are to be expected.”* Hardships are inevitable in life, and one cannot go through life without feeling their sting. We don’t choose hardship, but we do choose our response to hardship. What does our response reveal about our faith? How can our response encourage or discourage others about God?
5. The second point is *“Hardships give you something to talk about.”* We all have a testimony that includes hardship. How can our hardship/testimony be used to encourage others? How did God show you that He was greater than your circumstances?
6. The final point is *“Hardships create character, consistency, compassion, and comfort.”* How have you found this to be true in your own life?

REFLECT:

1. What inconvenience, discomfort or failure would you be willing to endure if you knew others would come to a saving faith in Jesus Christ?
2. What new perspective has the Lord given you about hardships?

MEMORY VERSE:

Galatians 6:17

“From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.”