

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12)

LSB 418 - O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days
(Verse 4 of this week's hymn serves as inspiration for today's devotion)

It is often attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson the famous words, "Life is a journey, not a destination." It was Ernest Hemingway who said, "Never go on trips with anyone you don't love." How very true!

Life is a journey. It is a journey that is filled with different paths, amazing scenery, unexplored opportunities – at times filled with excitement. On the other hand, at times, life's journey is also filled with challenges and bumps in the road, trials, heartache, disappointment and struggles. James reminds us that, yes, there are trials and difficulties in this mortal life. Yet, in the same voice he also reminds us that we are "blessed."

As Hemingway put it, journey with someone you love. So, why does James call us blessed? We are blessed because we travel with someone who *loves us*, Jesus Christ! Our Heavenly Father loves us so much that He gave up His own Son, Jesus, to step in our place, to take on Himself all the challenges and bumps in the road, trials, heartache, disappointment and struggles. As I have shared with many during this pandemic, I now share with you. Throughout my time as a pastor, I have shared with many people who are going through all sorts of loss, grief, and difficult times, that when we are in the thick of struggles it is as if we are standing in the middle of a snow-globe and someone has shaken it up. Everything is spinning around us and at times we can't see our hand in front of our face. It is in those times that Jesus reaches through the spinning chaos and grabs hold of us and carries us through. Hear God calling out to you, "For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, 'Fear not, I am the one who helps you.'" No matter what is thrown in our direction, God holds our hand, helps us, so that we do not have to fear anything! Thanks be to God!

During this Lenten season, as our hymn states, "*Be with us through this season, Lord, and all our earthly days. That when the final Easter dawns, we join in heaven's praise*". In your journey, may you continue to travel with the one you love, Jesus, who loves you with His very life, death, and resurrection!

Prayer

Dear Lord, you have showed your deep love for us in that while we were still sinners, you died for us and conquered sin, death, and Satan once and for all. May you continue to journey with us, not only through this Lenten season, but through every moment of our life. Guide our paths and be our strength as you lead us to our heavenly home. In Jesus name, Amen.

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