



Christians Should Expect to Face Hard Things in Life

1. Old Testament Saints experienced Hard Things
 - a. Noah built an ark, and preached about a flood, for 120 years, inland
 - b. Abraham left his comfort, wealth, and family to travel to an unnamed land
 - c. Elijah battled the 700 priests of Baal and Asherah on Mount Carmel
 - d. Israel marched around Jericho for seven days before taking it in battle
 - e. Neighboring gods required human sacrifice to please them.
2. New Testament Saints experienced Hard Things
 - a. James was beheaded, Peter was crucified upside down, Thomas speared, etc.
 - b. The peoples beloved religious leaders hated and persecuted Christian converts
 - c. Paul was imprisoned, beaten, shipwrecked, stoned, and beheaded
 - d. The church was harassed by the Judaizers, and hated by the pegans
 - e. John was boiled in oil, and then exiled to Patmos
3. Jesus experienced Hard Things
 - a. Rejected by his family and home town community
 - b. Misunderstood and questioned by his disciples endlessly
 - c. Endured an illegal trial, betrayal by Peter, rejection by the Jews, and crucifixion
 - d. Is mocked, ignored, and ridiculed by people even today.
4. Others, around the world experience Hard Things.
 - a. 5,621 Christians were martyred for their faith in 2023, and 5,898 in 2022
 - b. "Extreme" levels of persecution against Christians is reported in 76 countries, placing 312 million Christians in "very high or extreme levels" of persecution. (source or both "a" and "b" - Open Doors USA)
 - c. Bakeries, Web designers, and flower shops are facing law suits, and in some cases losing, because they refuse to endorse/empower unbiblical worldviews.
 - d. Pregnancy centers, churches, and para church organizations are regularly vandalized, lied about, and attacked legislatively and commercially.

5. We should also _____ to face Hard Things

- a. John 16:33
- b. Acts 14:21-22
- c. 2 Timothy 4:5
- d. Hebrews 12:7
- e. John 15:20
- f. 2 Corinthians 4:8-10
- g. 2 Timothy 3:12

6. With Christ, we can not only handle, but _____ Hard Things

- a. John 16:33
 - i. Jesus (_____) has overcome the world
 - ii. The Holy Spirit (_____) lives in us
 - iii. _____, we too can overcome the world
 - iv. The level to which we overcome _____ largely on our devotion and level of commitment to God.
*** (Overcome does not mean "win")

b. Philippians 4:12-13

- i. Context: In need, or in plenty / hungry or well fed
- ii. Point: He can _____ under any circumstances
- iii. Application: _____, too, can do God's will, under any circumstances

c. Therefore:

- i. **I can triumph** for Christ in danger, physical harm, jail, and death
- ii. **I can triumph** for Christ being mocked, slandered, and verbally attacked
- iii. **I can triumph** for Christ living modestly, righteously, and prayerfully

7. **BUT**, I won't triumph in the big stuff, unless I **first** triumph in the _____ stuff.

- i. One degree of separation now will make you _____ feet off course in just one mile. _____ in just ten miles.
- ii. Compromise and Justification work the _____ same way
- iii. Luke 16:10-12

Application: Christians should expect to face hard things in life. If we want to be successful, we need to _____ easier things and build from there.