

## TOUGH TIMES DON'T LAST BUT TOUGH CHURCHES AND PEOPLE DO

Dear Friends:

You hear about it every day: "Times are tough". Yes, they are in some ways, but in many ways blessings still abound. It is not 1929 - times were tougher! It's not 1943, we were in the midst of World War II, fast forward to 2008 and 2020. Remember the 2008 Stock Market crash and NO ONE forgets the pandemic 2020-2021, these were really tough times!

On the other hand, times could be very tough personally for you right now. Times are tough for many churches, Franklin included. But you know what? I serve a great big God who can do great big things! Dr. Robert Schuller wrote a book entitled "Tough Times Never Last But Tough People Do", however, Schuller was not the first to discover everyone faces tough times. James said it 2,000 years ago in his New Testament epistle. In James 1 we can learn about outlasting tough times (churches included).

First, trials are a given. In James 1:2 he does not say: "You may have trials" or, "There's a 1 in 3 chance you may have trials". No, he says: "Whenever you face trials of many kinds ". Second, you have a choice in trials: joy or worry. Every trial you run into will make you bitter or better, you can pout or persevere with the joy of the Lord as your strength. Third, trials test your faith and produce perseverance. Life is easy on the mountaintops but most of life is lived in the valley of perseverance. People must persevere, churches must persevere and can do so with joy! Fourth, perseverance produces maturity. God's goal is not to make you (or the church) wealthy, not to make the church large, but to see every church produce spiritually mature people who show and their faith.

This all brings me to an important question: "Where's Franklin Church going in the future?". As your pastor I hope we will all be committed to the church going in 3 directions... First, we must go forward. "Onward Christian Soldiers" is not a song about going backwards. Henry Ford intentionally did not put a reverse gear in his first car. Church, no reverse, let's go forward. Second, church, let's go outward. How do you go outward? Outward means we do not sit and wait on visitors to just drop-in (thank God we have had 6-7 in the last 4 weeks), going outward means we find needs in the community and fill them. I have a New Albany community survey which lists the 4-5 most common needs as mentioned by residents. Third, we must go downward. Yes, downward onto our knees in prayer. James 1:5 is a prayer verse.

Pray, ask God for wisdom. In the broader prayer picture ask God to get you (and the church) through the tough times and trials you face every day. In Christ's Love, Pastor Mike

Prayer Needs: Our Country! Rose Farber, Betty McCombs (shut-in of the month)

Events: Tuesday, July 9<sup>th</sup> 7:00pm Management Team Meeting;  
Thursday, July 11<sup>th</sup> 6:00pm Women's Ministry