

**Funny Story:**

A man was driving along the highway, and saw a rabbit hopping across the middle of the road. He tried to avoid hitting the rabbit, but unfortunately the rabbit jumped in front of the car and was hit.

The driver, being a sensitive man as well as an animal lover, pulled over to the side of the road and got out to see what had become of the rabbit. Much to his dismay, the rabbit was dead. The driver felt so awful he began to cry.

A woman driving down the highway saw the man crying on the side of the road and pulled over. She stepped out of her car and asked the man what was wrong.

"I feel terrible," he explained. "I accidentally hit this rabbit and killed it."

The woman told the man not to worry. She knew what to do. She went to her car trunk and pulled out a spray can. She walked over to the limp, dead rabbit, and sprayed the contents of the can onto the rabbit. Miraculously, the rabbit came to life, jumped up, waved its paw at the two humans and hopped down the road.

50 meters away the rabbit stopped, turned around, waved at the two again, hopped down the road another 50 meters, turned, waved, and hopped another 50 meters.

The man was astonished. He couldn't figure out what substance could be in the woman's spray can! He ran over to the woman and demanded, "What was in your spray can? What did you spray onto that rabbit?"

The woman turned the can around so that the man could read the label. It said: "**Hare Spray' Restores Life to Dead Hare. Adds Permanent Wave.**"

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We are here today to spray "Jesus" to the life of trials and tribulations. If you do not have any trials or tribulations in life now, please be patient with us just for in case you might have those in the future.

Believe it or not, everyone faces a certain amount of conflicts and challenges as we journey through the life on this earth. Even a great follower of Jesus Christ like Paul had many trials in his life. Paul describes these trials in **2 Corinthians 1:3-11** as we've heard the scripture reading:

- In verse 4 he uses the word "tribulation." The word literally refers to being under painful pressure.
- In verse 6 he speaks of suffering.
- In verse 8 he speaks of being burdened.

- And in verses 9-10 he speaks of being near death.

What if the trials and tribulations you are having were not of your choosing? How should we respond when other people cause us trouble? A prime example of suffering from the troubles brought on by other people is Joseph of the Old Testament, described in Genesis chapters 37-50.

Joseph was hated by his brothers because of the father's favoritism to him. He was sold by his brothers as a slave to Egypt. In this foreign country, he was falsely accused of rape and got thrown into prison. He is lonely and hurting, and has every right to ask, "Why me?"

To the people who are dealing with letdowns or lowness in life because of trials and tribulations, Paul shares his wisdom on how to get through the trials of life based on **2 Corinthians 1:7** saying, "*OUR HOPE for you IS FIRM, BECAUSE WE KNOW.*" Simply it is saying... *What we know is what gets us through.* If we don't know the right things when we deal with problems in life, then we are going to fall over those. What we know is what gets us through. I know we know some unchanging truths. Today I just want to remind us three of those truths:

1. The first thing we know is that **life doesn't make sense, but we know we can have peace because we know God is with us and God loves us.**

Life is often confusing. There are a lot of unanswered questions in life. We simply don't know why things happen the way they do. We're always asking the question, why? Why is this happening? Why is this happening now? Why is this happening to me? Why? Why did my husband walk out on me? Why did my wife die of cancer? Why did I lose my job? Why didn't I get that promotion? Why was my baby born with mental illness? We don't know. Life does not make sense when we just look at it. Bad people prosper, good people suffer. All kinds of different things happen. Life does not make sense.

However, we can have peace still because we know that God is with us and God loves us. There are over 6000 promises in the Bible for that. Let me just share a few of them.

The first one is **Isaiah 43:2**. It says this, "*When you go through deep waters, I [God] will be with you. When you pass through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned up. It will not consume you.*"

When in pain, explanations don't help. Whenever you have a major loss, your tendency is to immediately look for a cause, a reason or an explanation. Why did he leave me? Why did I lose my job? Why did I get cancer? Why? And you're looking for an explanation, but telling you the truth here....We don't need an explanation. It does not help us at all. We need God. We need the comfort of God. We need the presence of God.

**Hebrews 13:5** says, "*I... [This is God talking.] I will never leave you and I will never abandon you.*" God says this over and over from Genesis to the end of the Bible. God says "*I will never abandon you.*"

When life doesn't make sense we need to hold on to the promises. Life doesn't make sense but we can still have peace because we know that God loves us and God is with us.

2. There's a second thing we know. **Everything on earth is broken, but we can still have joy because we know God is good and God has a greater plan!**

Nothing on this planet is perfect. Everything is broken.

The weather does not work perfectly. We have tsunamis, tornados, earthquakes. We have fires and floods and all kinds of natural disasters. The ecosystem is broken. Not only that, the economy doesn't work perfectly. None of your plans work perfectly. Have you noticed that? Not one of your plans works perfectly. Your body doesn't work perfectly. Anybody agree with that one? No relationship works perfectly. Anybody want to give a testimony?

No brain works perfectly. We all have broken brains. We're all mentally ill. And we have thoughts that we can control compulsions, desires, attractions, fears, depressions, worries and rage. Does it work? Everything is broken in this world. Now, as I said, we're all mentally ill, but we're not insane. Very few people are insane, but we all struggle with mental illnesses, because everything is broken.

If everything is broken, how can we have joy? The Bible says, it is because we know God is good....and God has a good plan for our life.

**Romans 5:3-5** says, "*We can have joy even in our troubles because we know these troubles produce endurance. And endurance produces character, and character produces hope. And this hope will not disappoint us, because God has poured his love to fill our hearts.*"

We could choose joy even in troubles because of what we know. What we know is that...God is a good God who brings hope out of troubles at the end....and he has a greater plan for us!

**Jeremiah 29:11** says, *“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.”*

Our good God has a good plan for us that give us hope. This hope will not disappoint us. Umm.... HOPE. To be honest, hope disappointed me many times. How many of you have the same experience? ...Disappointed by your hope?

This takes us to point three which is the next thing that you and I need to be reminded of.

### **3. Life is a struggle, but we can have hope because we know that there is more to the story.**

What do we do when hope doesn't turn out the way we expected it? Usually, we blame God or we blame ourselves. But, these responses are not helpful. So what are we left with? If we are not going to blame God and we are not going to blame ourselves, then *where do we go with these dashed hopes?* What we are left with is mystery.

**2 Corinthians 4:8-9, 14** says, *“We often suffer, but we're never crushed. Even when we don't know what to do, we never give up. In times of trouble, God is with us, and when we are knocked down, we get up again... because we know God raised the Lord back to life. And just as he raised Jesus, he will also raise us back to life, and will bring us into his presence together.”*

We can't live without hope because God is not done yet with us. Because of that we should be willing to try hope again.

**1 Corinthians 15:43** says, *“Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness but they will be raised in strength!”*

Hope may not look the way we thought it would but hope is alive in us because of what we know. The tension goes down when we know the end of the story. We're reading a mystery novel and we're scared to death, but if we know the end, we know it's going to work out.

When something happens and we have a major loss in your life, we tend to think that this is the end of the world! No. It's not the end of the world. It's an end of

the moment. And in our life we're going to have many ends of the moment. It's not the end of the world.

I don't know what you're going through and...how low and dark days you are having these days. But, I know that it isn't the end of the world. Why? Because I know that Jesus will show up at our sight physically if it is truly the end of the world. Then you and I know it's the end of the world! How many of you have seen Jesus physically? .... NONE. So...it is not the end of the world yet ☺

When a problem comes into our life, I would like to encourage us all to say, "Lord, take this problem" and case all our cares upon God. God can take situations that are totally bad and turn them around. Our God is able. When people use situations to try to destroy us, God can use them to develop us...like God turned crucifixions into resurrections. So, let's trust God in all circumstances...and spray "Jesus" over our troublesome life. So, we can LIFE in Christ! Jesus is Risen. We are risen in Christ in deed. Amen.