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| Slide # |  |
| 1 | **Our “Difficult” Salvation – 1 Peter 4:17-18** |
| 2 | **Context**  Peter writing to “***sojourners***” and “***pilgrims***” who are, and will be, **facing persecution because of their faith**.  Pointing them to our ***“living hope”*** of an eternal inheritance. (1 Peter 1:3-5)  **In the mean time**… we must deal with trials and tribulations as we strive to live and **behave properly**.  (1 Peter 1:14-16; 2:11-12; 4:1-3) |
| 3 | **Context**  **1 Peter 4:17-18**, *“For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 AND* ***IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY*** *THAT THE* ***RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED****, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER?”*  Defining ***“difficulty”*** - “**not easily**, i.e., **scarcely**, very **rarely**.” (Thayer) **Refers to** “**labor pains… syn... painfully or with toil**” (Complete Word Study Dictionary) |
| 4 | **Other uses of “difficulty”**   * *“Even saying these things,* ***with difficulty they restrained the crowds*** *from offering sacrifice to them.”* (Acts 14:18) * “*When we had sailed slowly for a good many days, and* ***with difficulty had arrived off Cnidus****, since the wind did not permit us to go farther, we sailed under the shelter of Crete, off Salmone; 8 and* ***with difficulty sailing past it we came to a place called Fair Havens****, near which was the city of Lasea… Running under the shelter of a small island called Clauda, we* ***were scarcely able to get the ship's boat under control***.” (Acts 27:7-8, 16) |
| 5 | **Other uses of “difficulty”**  *“For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7* ***For one will hardly die for a righteous man****; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:6-8)* |
| 6 | **Salvation Doesn’t Come Without Struggle**  Paul encouraged his brethren to ***“continue in the faith”*** adding that ***“through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.”*** (Acts 14:21-22;  cf., 2 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Timothy 3:12)  “***Tribulations***” (“to crush, press, compress, squeeze… to break”; The Complete Word Study Dictionary) **will cause many to fall away**. (Matthew 13:21)  **It doesn’t have to be that way**! (Joseph, Acts 7:10-11; Romans 8:35) |
| 7 | **Salvation Doesn’t Come Without Struggle**  Consider Matthew 7:13-14 and the “***gate* (that is) *small***” and **“*the way* (that is) *narrow*”**.  ***“Narrow”***? The word means “**to press**”, “**to crowd**” or “**hemmed in**” (Strong, Thayer & Vine) & interestingly is **most often translated “*troubled*”, “*tribulation*” or “*afflicted*”**.  **Peter’s letter** was about Christians **enduring** & **overcoming unjust persecution and tribulation** being brought against them. (1:6-9; 2:19-24; 3:13-16; **4:4, 12-16; 5:8-10**) |
| 8 | **The Call To “Strive” and “Fight”**  **Many will not do what is *“difficult****”!* (Luke 13:23-24)   * *“****Strive****” -* from the Greek “agonizomai” from where we get our English word “**agonize**” which means, “to struggle… to **contend with an adversary**… to endeavor…”  (cf., 1 Corinthians 9:25; Colossians 1:29; 1 Timothy 4:10; 6:12) * **Against who?** Who is doing everything to make it so difficult? (1 Peter 5:8; Ephesians 6:10ff; Revelation 12:10-11; 13:7) |
| 9 | **How Is Our Salvation With Difficulty?**  In addition to **the call to endure persecution** and tribulation **for the cause of Christ** (Hebrews 10:32-39), **how will our adversary continue to make it so difficult**? |
| 10 | **To Be In The World But Not Of The World**  It is difficult to **live in a fleshly world** and **keep focused on the spiritual**. (John 17:11-17)  The **battle between flesh and spirit** and the need to **deny our fleshly desires.** (Romans 7:19-24;  Galatians 5:16-24; 6:7-8; Titus 2:11-13)  The challenge of keeping our ***“mind set on the things above”*** (Colossians 3:1-2)  What is our **“aim” or “purpose”?** (Acts 11:23;  Philippians 1:21-24) |
| 11 | **Physical Or Spiritual Health?**  We must persevere through poor health and sickness.  In 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, Paul expressed the “**difficulty**” of a ***“thorn in the flesh”*** that he prayed God would cause it to ***“leave him”***. God said, “*My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.*”  We also ***“groan, being burdened”*** in the flesh and must keep focused on “***pleasing***” the Lord and reaching our goal to “***be at home with the Lord***.”  (2 Corinthians 5:1-9; 3 John 2) |
| 12 | **Abundantly Blessed Yet Spiritually Starving?**  **The difficult challenge of being so blessed and yet maintaining a hunger for truth and righteousness. (Matthew 5:6; 1 Peter 2:2; Revelation 3:16-18)**  **Many who are prosperous lose their spiritual appetite (Deuteronomy 6:10-12) & become complacent and stagnant. (Proverbs 1:32; Zephaniah 1:12)**  **Difficult to take God’s warnings and admonitions  *“to heart”*. (Malachi 3:1-2; James 1:22)** |
| 13 | **Fight For Sound Doctrine**  **Many will twist and distort scripture to the destruction of souls.** (2 Peter 3:16-18; 2:1-3)  **Must silence those who preach a different gospel.** (Galatians 1:6-9; Titus 1:9-11)  **With gentleness and love, correct those who are in opposition** in order to escape the devil**.** (2 Timothy 2:24-26; cf., Ephesians 4:15) |
| 14 | **Keep Focused On The Reward**  *“****After you have suffered for a little while****, the God of all grace, who* ***called you to His eternal glory in Christ****, will Himself* ***perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you****.”* (1 Peter 5:10)  “***Fixing our eyes on Jesus****… c****onsider Him who endured such hostility by sinners*** *against Himself, so* ***that you will not grow weary and lose heart*.**” (Hebrews 12:1-3; cf., vs. 4;  cf., Hebrews 10:34)  **Keep trusting your soul to our faithful Creator** (vs. 19;  2 Timothy 1:12; 4:18) |
| 15 | **Remember How Difficult It Was For…**  **God, that He would send His Son** because of His great love for us. (John 3:16)  **His Son, that He would obey** in coming to this earth (Philippians 2:5-8) & **humble Himself to the point of death on a cross**. (Hebrews 5:5-9)  **The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have done everything they can to make us victorious**… (1 Cor. 15:57; 1 John 5:4; Rom. 7:25-8:1) |