

# Prophet: Has Hardship Struck Your House?

Has hardship ever struck your house?

“The Long and Winding Road” was a popular hit song years ago. I loved the haunting melody, but as a disciple in Jesus, I was sure that my path would be smooth and easy.

Was I ever wrong! My life has not circled a cul-de-sac, but it seems to have steered off the primary highway and onto a trail leading to who knows where.

It was a road I was unfamiliar with and one that I was not expecting. Twelve or more years were filled with winding roads and an unfair share of trauma along the way.

My heart became dead. Well, at least part of it.

As a result, I decided to make lemonade out of lemons as I went on an intentional journey to discover what it would take to revive my own heart and soul.

I did not pick this subject. I would never have picked it. If it had been up to me, I would have run a hundred miles in the opposite direction.

But in the providence of God, I think this topic has chosen me.

I now realize that God has called me to be an ambassador of hope and to call others into this resilient, bounce-back-kid lifestyle.

## **Hardship: The Reason You Need Hope**

If any of us is ever going to look for hope, we must have a reason for needing it.

Most of the time, that reason involves some hardship that is almost more than we can bear. Although I hope that hardship has not struck your house, I suspect it has in one form or another.

Now, you may need to discover hope for your life too.

By “hardship,” I am not referring only to car accidents or natural disasters; I am thinking of just about any kind of significant loss that can cause trauma or anguish to a person.

You might deem your own life events as calamities, misfortunes, catastrophes, heartbreaks, adversities, tribulations, distresses, hardships, privations, miseries, troubles, conflicts, griefs, sorrows, sufferings, pain or just plain hard times. Everybody is different, and what would seem like a loss of hope to one person would be easy for someone else.

The difficulty often strikes abruptly.

You lose your job. Your friend rejects you. Your spouse or even your beloved pet dies. You send off your precious son or daughter into military service in a war zone. Your church falls apart. Your spouse serves you divorce papers. The economy nosedives and takes your savings with it. (How did the economic downturn of 2008 or the recent coronavirus quarantine affect you? It created some real tragedy for some of my friends.)

Hard times reduce you to your elemental self. You often feel weak. Temptations might assail you, especially the temptation to despair.

Joy appears to vanish, and the air around you seems heavy. Woe becomes part of your vocabulary, and the grass looks greener just about everywhere except where you are standing (or are curled up in the fetal position).

You find it hard to get back up on your feet again every time you get knocked down, let alone to keep on walking forward.

## **Both Sides Now**

“Both Sides Now” is the name of a folk song from the '60s, and it captures a truth. I can look at life from both sides, which I previously could not do.

I have experienced both heaven-sent highs and the bleakest lows—sometimes in the same day.

And, firsthand, I have learned some things about God that I did not know before.

I have experientially learned that God is the author of hope. God abounds in hope, and He wants to restore the song of your heart. Yes, your heart can beat again!

I have learned that it is OK to be real.

Raw reality is better than any mask, especially the pat answers and sugary smiles of religion, which ignore the fact that you may be bleeding to death inside. You will never be healed until you admit you are sick!

I have learned to live life in the light of eternity, and I can identify with my namesake, James, when he says that life is but a “vapor” (James 4:14).

That does not mean I am living some kind of pie-in-the-sky existence. It just means that I get it now. I get it.

I know both sides of the stormy clouds now, and I know that my faithful, hope-imparting God holds me in his strong hands day and night.

I have found that He is bigger than any hardship you or I can cook up in our worst nightmares. He can handle anything, and joy does come in the morning (Ps. 30:5).

Now I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that:

“Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and so we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also boast in tribulation, knowing that tribulation produces patience, patience produces character, and character produces hope. And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Rom. 5:1-5).

I can look at the storm clouds from both sides now, and I can look at life from both sides of the pulpit.

I have been a full-time vocational minister now for over 45 years. I have prayed for people; I have counseled people. I have learned many of the promises that are in the Bible, and I have tried to live up to its character values.

But some things I never understood until I went through more than 12 years of what could be considered ongoing trauma.

My yardstick of judgment was tossed out the window. Now I understand some things about human frailty.

I know what the driving force of pain can make a person do, even though it does not give anyone a license to sin.

I did not enjoy the experience of my life spiraling out of control, and I do not like pain any more than the next person—but now I appreciate what God can do with it. I never knew. Now I know.

### **Tell Your Heart to Sing Again**

In my new book, *Tell Your Heart to Sing Again*, I give you a guided tour of my own triumph in the midst of a rollercoaster ride in life.

If I can learn new things about God's nature and tell my heart to sing again, then I think you are a great candidate as well.

In this book, I hope to show you how to discover hope for your journey. I promise to be real because what I share is not going to touch your heart unless I share from mine.

I hope you will join me on this path less traveled so you can rebound from any hardship and tell your heart to sing again too! {eoa}

**Dr. James W. Goll** is the founder of God Encounters Ministries. He is an international bestselling author, a certified Life Language Coach, an adviser to leaders and ministries and a recording artist. James has traveled around the world ministering in more than 50 nations sharing the love of Jesus, imparting the power of intercession, prophetic ministry and life in the Spirit. He has recorded numerous classes with corresponding curriculum kits and is the author of more than 50 books, including *The Seer*, *The Prophet*, *The Discerner*, *The Lost Art of Intercession* and *Praying with God's Heart*. James is also the founder of GOLL Ideation LLC, where creativity, consulting and leadership training come together. James was married to Michal Ann for 32 years before her graduation to heaven in the fall of 2008. He has four adult married children and a growing number of grandchildren. His goal is to "win for the Lamb the rewards of His suffering." James continues to make his home in Franklin, Tennessee.

For the original article, visit .