

In Every Circumstance

Choosing to worship even in tough times

By Matt and Beth Redman
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A friend tells us a painful and shocking secret: Her husband has been violently abusing her for nearly a decade. A visitor at church is trudging through a messy divorce. A 25-year-old friend is in intensive care with cancer and is nearing death.

Life on earth can be tough and painful journey. Yet it's a journey in which God calls us to worship Him in every circumstance and assures us that His grace will be sufficient. Our heavenly Father doesn't promise escape from pain in this world, yet He proves himself ever faithful to those who choose to trust Him. Every act of worship is a decision to believe and respond to God for who He says He is – no matter how pressing our circumstances. And the greater the pain we're experiencing, the tougher the choice may be.

In Scripture, Job is stripped of everything precious to him and suffers much hardship. Toward the beginning of his ordeal, he falls to the ground in worship and cries out: "The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised" (Job 1:21). This is a challenge for every believer – a call to trust in the sovereignty and fatherly heart of God, believing He's as strong and as caring as He says He is.

Inspired by this passage a few years ago, we wrote the song "Blessed be Your Name," a song about choosing to worship God in every season of the soul. We knew these words would be a challenge to live up to – and over the last year, after a series of painful miscarriages, we've lived it almost every day.

In times like these, we must be real with God, and Scripture gives us permission. The Psalms are filled with intense emotions and expressions toward God that were birthed in times of suffering and struggle. The psalmist cries out to God with emotional abandon – sometimes in anger and desperation. He is free to question God's ways because he is confident his relationship with Him is secure. The psalmist never abandons worship; he never suggests that God isn't caring or sovereign without quickly coming around to see that He is. This is a good model for us.

If you are in a season of suffering, remind yourself that God sees your struggle. You can encourage your soul to return to a place of hope. We worship a triumphant Savior, a victorious King – the all-powerful and all-loving God who's faithful and gracious. He has never been anxious, overwhelmed or outsmarted, and He's the God of unbroken promises. He remains as faithful as the day he created you and as powerful as the day He spoke the world into being. And in your brokenness, He stays as close and as involved as you want Him to be.

The Power of Worship

Remembering releases rejoicing. In times of crisis, dig deep into the revelation of God. Journey through Scripture and let it remind you that God never loses control or ceases to care. Review your life, and recall moments you sensed the faithfulness of God.

Tell yourself the truth. Faced with distress, the psalmist encouraged himself. He speaks to his soul, recalling that there is One who can save him: "Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him my Savior and my God" (Psalm 42:11).

Weep with those who weep. Carry others through painful season, and rejoice with them in times of abundance. If you're in a calm season, reach out to someone in the storm. If you are in crisis, call on your church family to walk with you. The apostle Paul reminds us, "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it" (1Corinthians 12:26).

The long-term view. So often our heavenly Father brings fruitfulness out of pain. Yet some hardships will remain a mystery - ones we may never be able to explain on this earth. For these, embrace the eternal perspective and promise of what lies ahead for those who trust and worship Jesus.