

LIFE IS HARD



TORBEN SONDERGAARD

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Torben Sondergaard

“Life is hard”

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Preface

This booklet began as a series of informal teachings at a café in Denmark. The series is called “Cafe Talk” and is available online. This booklet has been written from the transcription of a video called “Life is hard”. Therefore this booklet is not a complete teaching about the life we live as disciples of Christ. It is more an introduction and testimony about how we can have victory. I am confident that it will bring freedom to many who struggle and experience persecution. I am most thankful to the people helping with transcribing, correcting, and editing the text, making it accessible to and a blessing for thousands of readers around the world.

Blessings, Torben Søndergaard

Life is hard

I'm going to share something with you today that we normally do not speak much about: Life is hard! Yes, it's hard! We go through a lot of things. We experience a lot of persecution. We experience a lot of fights. We experience a lot of doubt. We experience a lot of attacks. Yes, life is hard. Sometimes when I'm out having meetings, I'm provoked when people look at us and look at me as if I have it easy. They say things like: "Yeah, you experience what you do because God has just given you everything", but it's been hard. It has been really hard. Yes, it is hard. Life is hard.

Often people don't understand, because they don't see me showing that life is hard. Why is that? Well it's like a woman who is giving birth to a baby. If you ask that woman if the time of the birth was hard - yes it was hard! Up to that point, she was feeling sick, she couldn't sleep and her stomach was

growing. When she came to the time to give birth to that baby - yes, it was hard.

I've been there with my wife and her three births, with our children. Oh! It's hard. What a woman goes through is not a small thing, but it's not as though every time she looks at her child she thinks: "Ugh! Ugh! Ugh! What awful pain I had giving birth to you. Oh what pain!" Try to imagine that every morning, even when the baby is five years old: "Ugh! That pain! Every time I see you I'm reminded of that pain I went through". No! Women do not think of the pain. Why? Because what she gained was so much more beautiful. In the same way, we don't talk so much about the struggles and people don't see the pain we go through. Why? Because what we gain is so much more beautiful.

Attacks and battles

Battle of the mind

Before I go on, I want to talk about exactly how hard life is and what we go through. There are a lot of battles, spiritual battles. There are just spiritual battles when you really want to pursue God - it's like battles in your mind. I have experienced crazy things. Crazy dreams in the night. Thoughts coming to my mind. Like for example: 'leave your wife, leave your kids, go out in the world'.

I've been fighting with a lot of thoughts. Sometimes they just come to me. Sometimes, I've experienced attacks where there is so much stuff, even lasting a few days. It's in the mind, all the time, all the time, all the time. During these times, I had to pray a lot. I had to fast and had to be in the Word because that attack is just there. Then after a fight, it's gone again! There's a freedom - until the next time I

experience a spiritual attack. Yes, we experience crazy things.

There is also attacks just with sin, where it feels like there is no freedom from sin. I experience freedom from sin and I've been talking about that before, that there is freedom from sin.

Physical attacks

I've had spiritual attacks where I've suddenly ended up in a hospital with morphine and three doctors around me and I wanted to die! The next day I'm driving a car to a meeting and everything is fine. I've experienced car windows exploding and people driving right in front of my car. There's been crazy things with the car breaking down and everything just goes crazy!

There's a spiritual war and it's crazy!

Attacks from non-believers

We also experience attacks from the world, from non-believers out there who hate us and think we are crazy. When we talk to them, they just shake their heads and look at us as if we are crazy. They say things like “Who do you think you are?” and it's not nice. People write things and put them into our mailbox, they spit on our car and do different things. They want to kill us and so on. People write bad things about us, yes, crazy things! So we experience attacks from the world out there.

Attack from the church

We also experienced attacks by the church and that is the hardest. I have experienced brothers, pastors and leaders cheating me. They've cheated with different things: my money, my network and even my house. Once I was thrown out of my house because somebody, a pastor, cheated me in the contract we had and so on. It's been hard. It's been hard and there are Christians who write and say bad things about me. Yes, it's hard, it's really hard, especially when people you know and respect suddenly turn against you and think you're crazy. The Bible says it will be like that.

Paul, if you look at his life in Corinthians, said that he is in danger in the open seas, in the desert, amongst the Jews and amongst his false brothers. He had been in danger throughout his whole life and we experience the same thing - attacks in many

different areas and especially attacks from the church. It's hard.

Doubt

We've also experienced attacks from within ourselves. Doubt. Doubt. Doubt - "God is that really you? Shall I go this way? Is that your will?" Then when we step out in faith and we suddenly need some money: "God, God I need that money, otherwise everything is going to fall down. God, I believe it was you who spoke to me. God, why did you not come?" It's hard. It's really hard.

Sometimes I have been fasting for forty days or twenty days or ten days and seeking God: "God, I need answers now!" Well to be honest, it's much easier to just go out and throw it all away and get a job and live a normal life, than to live this life. It's a hard life because there is a lot of doubt. "God is that you? I need that money". "What about this?" Then fear comes in and attacks. "What will people say when I do this?" and so on. It's a lot of things you have to work with and it takes a lot of time. It takes a lot of energy. You can be so totally tired and when

you look back on the day, you think that you have done practically nothing. It takes a lot of time and energy to keep yourself in faith, keep yourself in God and keep focused.

Responding to persecution

We experience attacks from the world and we experience attacks from the church. Sometimes it's false people in the church who stand in the pulpit and sometimes it's also people who just have a misunderstanding: it's love coming with misunderstanding and it causes splits between brothers in the church. This is what we have experienced. Just a few days ago someone sent a unkind message to me and I didn't like it. I don't like it. It takes a lot of energy and a lot of things to keep your heart pure, pray to God and not be angry with them. You just have to work with it, work with it. It's hard, but it's easy to get it to stop! We just have to compromise and then it will stop, but if we do compromise, it means Jesus is not our Lord. Jesus has promised us persecution, so we experience spiritual attacks.

Attacks come and it's hard to keep yourself pure especially when somebody messes you about and says bad things about you and then you have to forgive them. The Bible says forgive! You have to forgive and sometimes it takes time.

Sometimes when people have really hurt you, really, really hurt you and said a lot of bad things about you and they've destroyed a lot of things about you and your name, it takes time. You have to pray. You have to ask God to help. "Help me. Help me to forgive. I forgive, I forgive, I forgive right now. I forgive right now". It takes time and it takes energy to keep your heart pure, to keep yourself focused. So I just want to say, life is hard, it's not easy.

Yes, there are spiritual attacks. There are attacks from the world out there, from sinners who do not know what is happening. There are attacks from false brothers, family members, people in the church and people you know. There are attacks

with doubt when you come to believe in God and want to take the next step. There are worries, a lot of worries. Oh, we use up a lot of time on worries and it takes time to push those worries away and just look in faith and do what God has called us to do. Then there is an attack with yourself and your mind to keep your heart pure.

Joy in the pain

Life is hard. If I look back at our lives, I can say that we have again and again lost friends. We have lost so many friends that I really can't keep count of them all. Some people believed a lie inside the church and suddenly we lost them as a friend. We have twice been thrown out of our house. We once lost all our money and got into debt for 100,000 dollars.

Many times we have experienced people writing bad things about us and other friends have believed it. We have experienced people doing a lot of crazy things, but I don't talk about it often. Why? It's because there is a joy. I don't think of the pain, because out of it all, there is a baby that has been born. So what is our joy? Our joy is not the ministry, it's really not the website, it's really not money. Our joy is seeing people born again, seeing lives change. It's because the only thing I can take with me from this world is not our big website, our

ministry or our money, if we had any. You know the only thing I can take with me is believers - people who've been born again. The joy is also Jesus, of course.

Through all of this, and this is what Paul said to the Corinthians, when we are weak, He is strong. When we give up, this is where God can start. When I look back on my life, it has been hard. I've been crying so many times, I've been fasting so many times, I've been praying so many times and I've wanted to give up so many times. I've been depressed, really depressed, so many times. I've been in battles where I've thought I was going crazy and that I should go to the mental hospital and thought that I'm never going to survive this day. I've been thinking many times, 'should I jump out in front of a car and just die, because I don't want this anymore'. Through all of this, when I look back, God has been faithful and I have found Jesus. Out

there, out there where we lost everything, I found Him. I don't want to change it.

To be honest, sometimes I do miss that time, because when we had a period when everything was going ok, and we had a short period of that, then it was easy to forget what it's all about. Then it was easy to get stuck into ministry and work and other things, but out there we don't have anything else besides Him. So I just want to say that if you have a picture of me and other people and think that life is easy, forget it! Life is not easy. God has truly not promised us an easy life.

Jesus said that through many trials, through much persecution, through a hard life we will enter the kingdom of God - and that persecution is not a weekend! I remember one time I had a prophecy in which God said that He will take me through a desert period, but then my pain will be over. I remember when I got that word I was thinking 'Yeah! The last two weeks have been hard, but now

our pain is over'. No! The desert period had not really started at that time. It took four, five, six years more! So a desert period is not only a few days, it's not a few weeks, it can be years, but God is faithful. God is faithful.

So don't be afraid when you experience persecution and battles. Don't think 'what is wrong with me'. You should rather think what is wrong with me when life is too easy. So it's not our best life now. This is a hard life, but in all of that, we don't focus on the pain, because what comes out of it is amazing!

God bless you.