

The Testimony of the Scoundrels



The Testimony of the Scoundrels

- When God called prophets and good men to do His will, He warned them that scoundrels would testify against them.
 - Isa. 6:9-11 - “And He said, ‘Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive. 10 Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed.’ 11 Then I said, ‘Lord, how long?’ And He answered: ‘Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, The houses are without a man, The land is utterly desolate.’”

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- Jer. 1:8-9, 17, 19 - “Do not be afraid of their faces, For I am with you to deliver you,’ says the LORD. 9 Then the LORD put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me: ‘Behold, I have put My words in your mouth... 17 Therefore prepare yourself and arise, And speak to them all that I command you. Do not be dismayed before their faces, Lest I dismay you before them... 19 They will fight against you, But they shall not prevail against you. For I am with you,’ says the LORD, ‘to deliver you.’”
- Jer. 38:6 - “So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah the king’s son, which was in the court of the prison, and they let Jeremiah down with ropes. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire. So Jeremiah sank in the mire.”

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- 1Kings 21:13 - “And two men, scoundrels, came in and sat before him; and the scoundrels witnessed against him, against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth has blasphemed God and the king! Then they took him outside the city and stoned him with stones, so that he died.”

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The Testimony of the Scoundrels

- Why is it that God sends Christians to proclaim the Gospel and then permits obstacles to be placed in the way?
- Why does it seem His children have many needs while unbelievers seem to have all they want?
- Why is the road to heaven paved with so much difficulty?

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Reasoning From The Scriptures

- Isa. 55:8-9 - “‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. 9 ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.’”

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Reasoning From The Scriptures

- 2Cor 4:15-18 - “For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God. 16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

Why Is The Road To Heaven Paved With So Much Difficulty?

- To further the Gospel
 - Phil. 1:12-13 - “But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, 13 so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ.”

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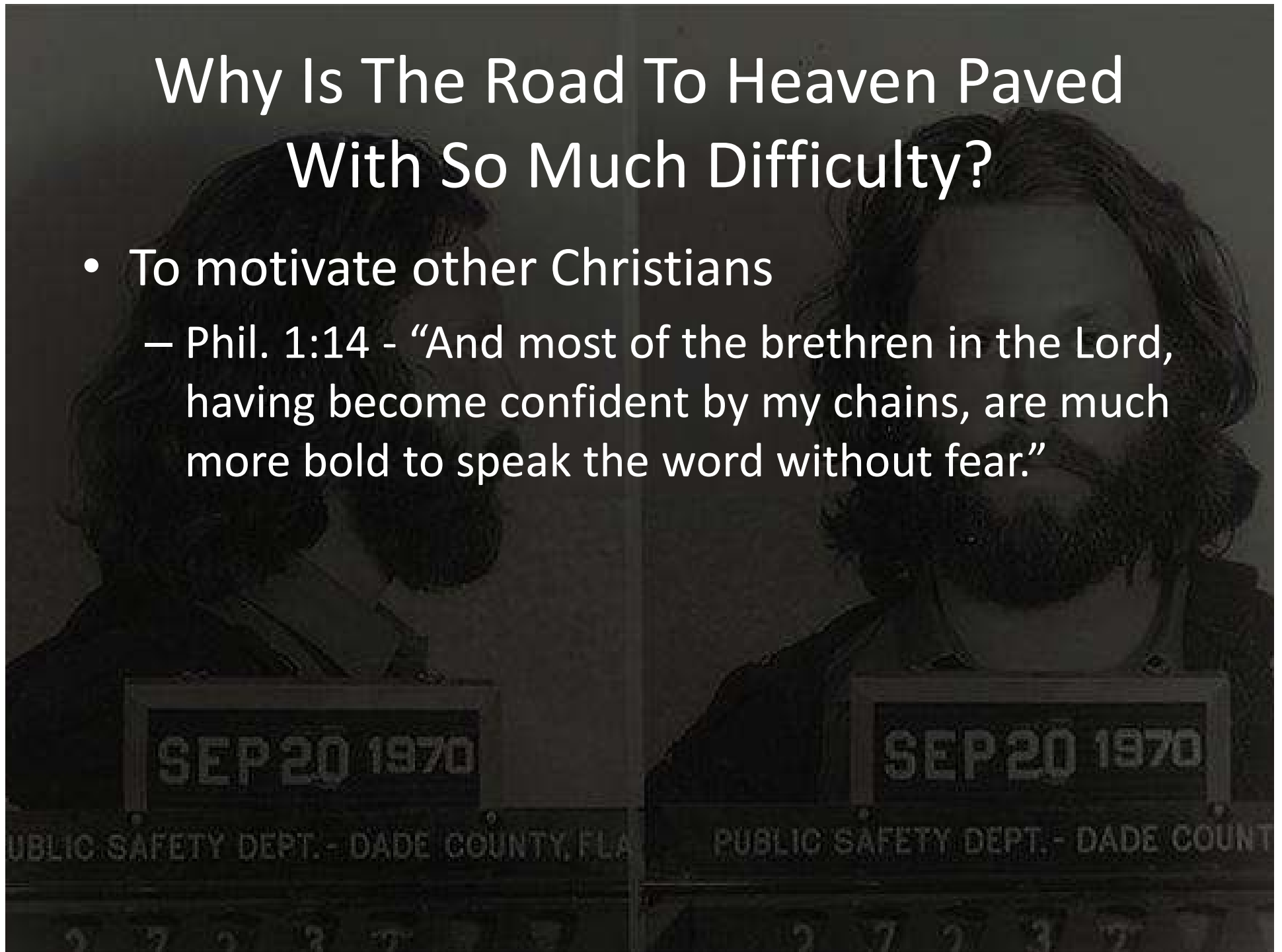
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Why Is The Road To Heaven Paved With So Much Difficulty?

- To motivate other Christians
 - Phil. 1:14 - “And most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.”



Why Is The Road To Heaven Paved With So Much Difficulty?

- To prove the power is in the Gospel and not the preacher
 - Rom. 1:16 - “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”
 - 2Cor. 4:7 - “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.”

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Why Is The Road To Heaven Paved With So Much Difficulty?

- 2Cor. 12:7-10 - “And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. 8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 9 And He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Why Is The Road To Heaven Paved With So Much Difficulty?

- 1Cor. 2:1-5 - “And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”

Why Is The Road To Heaven Paved With So Much Difficulty?

- To test His children, enabling them to prove the depths of their strength to themselves
 - Deut. 8:2 - “And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.”
 - Psalm 7:9 - “Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, But establish the just; For the righteous God tests the hearts and minds.”

Why Is The Road To Heaven Paved With So Much Difficulty?

- To train us
 - Acts 7:23 - “Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel.”
 - Ex. 2:15-17 - “When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well. 16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. And they came and drew water, and they filled the troughs to water their father's flock. 17 Then the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.”

Why Is The Road To Heaven Paved With So Much Difficulty?

- To train us
 - Acts 7:30 - “And when forty years had passed, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai.”
 - Joshua 14:7-13

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Why Is The Road To Heaven Paved With So Much Difficulty?

- To change our direction
 - Acts 13:46 - “Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, ‘It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.’”
 - Acts 16:13-33

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Why Is The Road To Heaven Paved With So Much Difficulty?

- To change our thinking
 - 2Kings 5:11, 15 - “But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, ‘Indeed, I said to myself, ‘He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy...’ 15 And he returned to the man of God, he and all his aides, and came and stood before him; and he said, ‘Indeed, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel; now therefore, please take a gift from your servant.’”

Why Is The Road To Heaven Paved With So Much Difficulty?

- To move us to address sin in our lives
 - Joshua 7:5, 11, 20 - “And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them from before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water... 11 ‘Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff..’ 20 And Achan answered Joshua and said, ‘Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I have done.’”

Why Is The Road To Heaven Paved With So Much Difficulty?

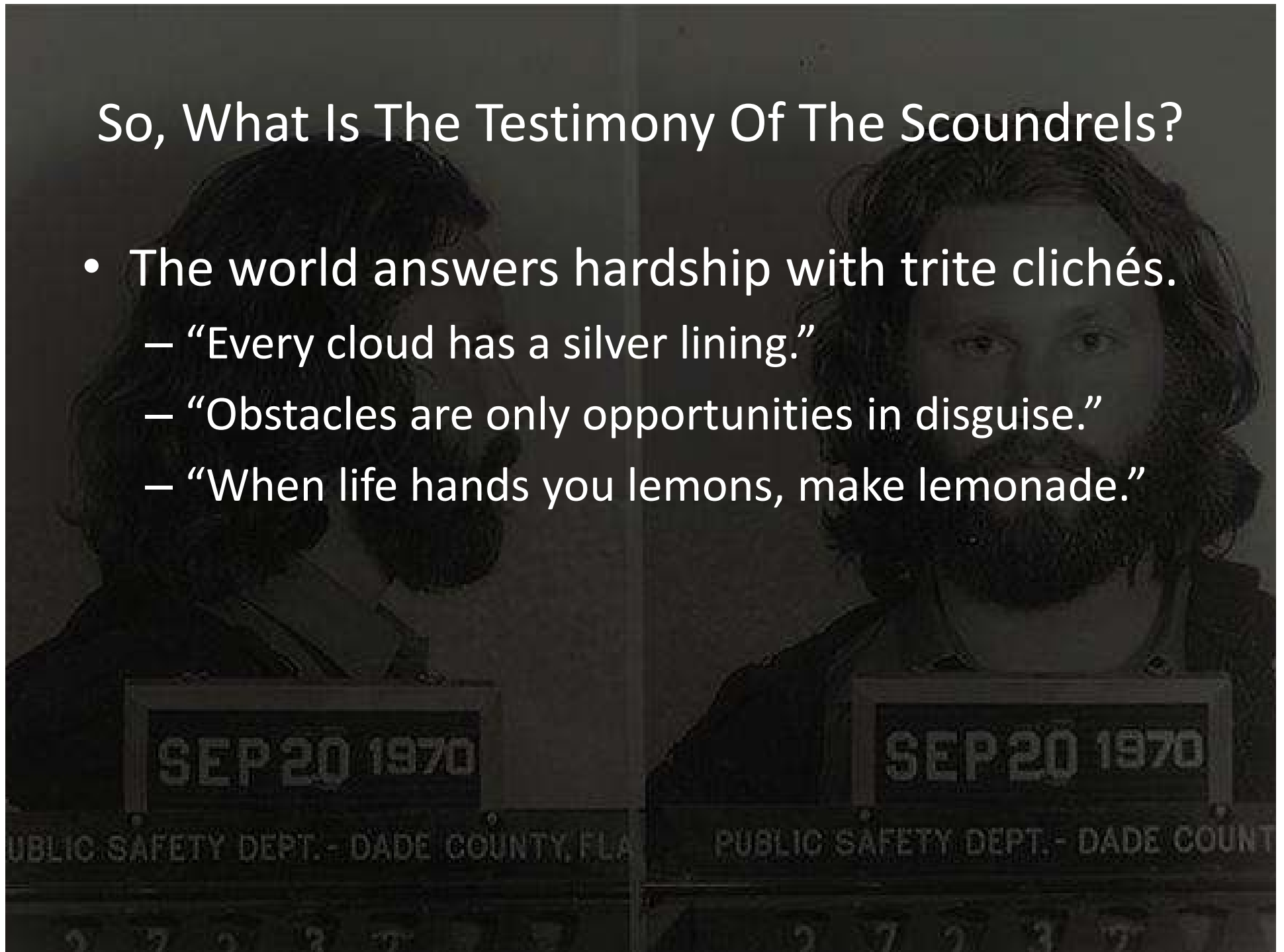
- To move us to address sin in our lives
 - Heb. 12:9-11 - “Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. 11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

So, What Is The Testimony Of The Scoundrels?

- What should we hear when scoundrels speak ill of Christians?
 - Validation! - 1Peter 4:14 - “If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”
 - Confirmation! - Matt. 5:11-12 - “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”
 - Affirmation! - 1Peter 3:16 - “Having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.”

So, What Is The Testimony Of The Scoundrels?

- The world answers hardship with trite clichés.
 - “Every cloud has a silver lining.”
 - “Obstacles are only opportunities in disguise.”
 - “When life hands you lemons, make lemonade.”



Christians Answer Obstacles With The Wisdom Of God

- Lam. 3:21-33 - "This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. 22 Through the LORD'S mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. 24 The LORD is my portion, says my soul, Therefore I hope in Him! 25 The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the soul who seeks Him. 26 It is good that one should hope and wait quietly For the salvation of the LORD. 27 It is good for a man to bear The yoke in his youth. 28 Let him sit alone and keep silent, Because God has laid it on him; 29 Let him put his mouth in the dust--There may yet be hope. 30 Let him give his cheek to the one who strikes him, And be full of reproach. 31 For the Lord will not cast off forever. 32 Though He causes grief, Yet He will show compassion According to the multitude of His mercies. 33 For He does not afflict willingly, Nor grieve the children of men."