

THE END OF THE ROAD



WHAT DEATH TEACHES US

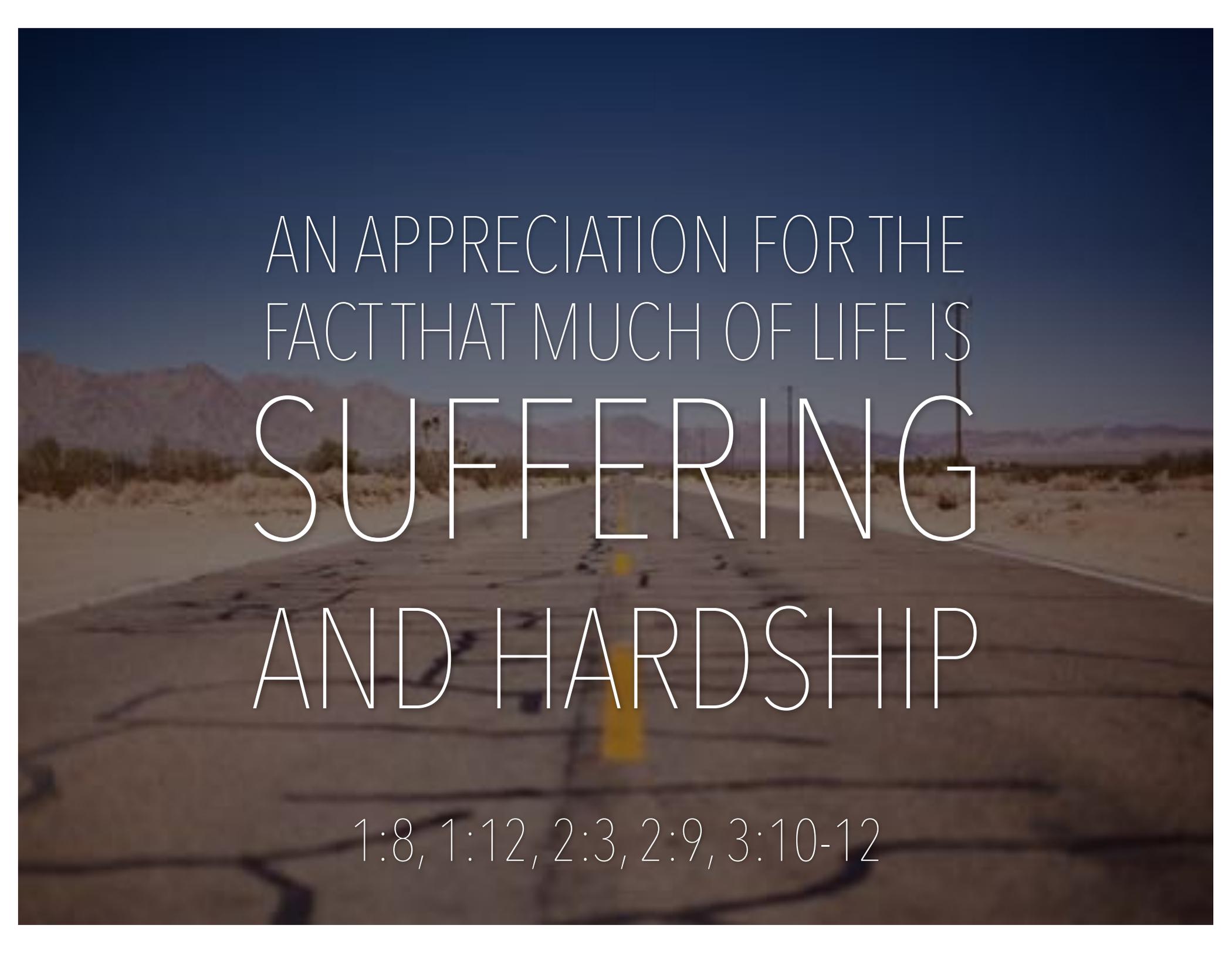
- Death is described as an enemy (1 Cor. 15:26) and the natural consequence of sin (Rom. 6:23, 5:12), but that doesn't mean it can't be a powerful motivator or a valuable source of lessons.
- While nobody enjoys talking about death, especially with some frankness, taking an honest look at what it teaches us can shape our faith, as well as our attitude toward the ups and downs of this life. It is admirable that Paul, feeling like death was right around the corner, was so willing to share his last thoughts with Timothy. He could have easily become self-pitying or cowardly. He could have acted aloof, distant, or self-consumed. But he didn't, and his faith seems to have grown stronger the closer he got to his demise.

CLARITY

- The prospect of dying can help us find clarity about our identity and accomplishments. Paul, for example, had a well-defined feeling of accomplishment (2 Tim. 4:7-8). Because he aligned his life with God's will, he was able to live with a clear conscience (1:3). His sins were forgiven and he knew exactly what he was – exactly what God called him to be (1:8-9).
- Death also gives us clarity about the purpose and content of the gospel. Man's two greatest problems are sin and death. No earthly pursuit can satisfy our need to have those issues resolved, so we must look to the divine. As it explains in 1:9-10, grace dealt with sin and Jesus' resurrection paved the way for immortality – this is the heart of the gospel (2:10-13)!

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- One of our greatest fears is leaving unfinished business (which is where a lot of ghost stories come from). Death should serve as a powerful reminder to do everything we can to leave the next generation prepared for upcoming challenges.
- Timothy had a daunting task ahead of him, and Paul didn't mince words in 3:1ff. To combat the many challenges to come, the apostle reminded his young charge to stay true to sound words (1:13-14), guarding them like a treasure. Timothy also needed to depend on grace (2:1), remember Jesus (2:8), work hard at his studies (2:15, 3:14-15), flee from sin (2:22), and make it a priority to share the gospel with others (2:2).
- How many years do you have left? How much work is undone?



AN APPRECIATION FOR THE
FACT THAT MUCH OF LIFE IS
SUFFERING
AND HARDSHIP

1:8, 1:12, 2:3, 2:9, 3:10-12

THE LORD KNOWS WHO IS HIS

- We meet a lot of enemies in this life. We're also disappointed by our friends, at times. It can be difficult to trust people when they have abandoned us. But just as surely as death, there will also be a judgment – and the Lord knows those who are His (2:19).
- Death is the ever-present reminder that we have only one life to live, and afterward we will face our Maker. The decision is up to each of us what kind of vessel we will be, either for honor or dishonor (2:20-23).
- It's hard to ignore how frequently Paul brings up examples of this in the letter (1:15, 2:16-18, 2:24-26, 3:1-7, 3:13, 4:10, 4:14-16). His hope is that Timothy will choose the right path and keep his charge without wavering (4:1-2).

A photograph of a lush green lawn with a row of small, delicate white flowers in the middle ground. The background is a soft-focus expanse of green grass.

RESOLVE

4:6, 1:12, 4:16-18