

## **#1 Summary**

In this sermon titled 'Expiration Dates,' the pastor uses personal stories and metaphors to illustrate how trials in life are temporary and have purpose. He contrasts trophies (which everyone wants) with trials (which no one wants), explaining that while trophies last, the pain it took to get them doesn't. Using examples of expired food, he emphasizes that our trials, like bread with an expiration date, will eventually come to an end. The pastor shares his own experiences with health challenges, including a stroke that left him in a wheelchair, and how his faith carried him through these difficult seasons.

## **#2 Intro Prayer**

Heavenly Father, as we gather to discuss the trials and challenges in our lives, we ask that You open our hearts to Your truth. Help us to see our difficulties through Your eyes - as temporary seasons with purpose and meaning. Give us the wisdom to understand that our pain has an expiration date, and the courage to trust You in the waiting. May our discussion today draw us closer to You and to each other. In Jesus' name, amen.

## **#3 Ice Breaker**

What's the most meaningful trophy, award, or recognition you've ever received, and why did it matter to you?

## **#4 Key Verses**

Philippians 3:14

John 16:33

Romans 5:3-4

## **#5 Questions**

1. The message states that 'God's not going to give you a life that makes him unnecessary.' How have difficult seasons in your life made God more necessary to you?
2. The pastor mentions that 'trials will refine you.' Can you share an example of how a difficult experience refined your character or faith?

3. How has prayer changed during your trials compared to your seasons of blessing?
4. What's something you've learned through hardship that you couldn't have learned any other way?
5. The pastor shares his story about waiting for a child. How have you experienced God's timing being different from your own, and what did that teach you?
6. What current trial are you facing that you need to remember has an 'expiration date'?

## **#6 Life Application**

This week, identify one current trial or challenge you're facing. On a notecard or in your phone, write down: 1) What this trial is teaching you, 2) How it might be refining your character, 3) A specific prayer request related to this challenge, and 4) The phrase 'This has an expiration date.' Place this reminder somewhere you'll see it daily, and commit to praying about this situation each day, remembering that God is working even when you can't see it.

## **#7 Key Takeaways**

- Trials have an expiration date - the pain and suffering we experience is temporary, even when it doesn't feel that way.
- God doesn't always prevent trials, but He uses them to refine us, teach us, and make us stronger.
- Trials reveal what's real, expose what's weak, and build up what's eternal in our lives.
- Prayer positions us for purpose and becomes more vital during difficult seasons.
- Our trophies (victories) remind us that we got through the storm and that trials do end.

## **#8 Ending Prayer**

Lord God, thank You for the reminder that our trials have expiration dates. When we're in the midst of suffering, help us to remember that this season will pass. Use our difficulties to refine us, teach us, and draw us closer to You. Give us the strength to endure, the wisdom to learn, and the faith to trust Your timing. May we become people who can encourage others

through their trials because we've experienced Your faithfulness through our own. Thank You that You never waste our pain. In Jesus' name, amen.