Date: 9/24/2016

Title: Smooth Stones

Theme: Difficulties in life can make us better and help us shine for Jesus.

Object: One smooth stone; one sharp jagged stone. Bag of polished stones.

Text: James 1:2-4 (NLT) 2 Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. 3 For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. 4 So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

In the bag today I have brought with me two stones. Would you like to see them?

What is different about these two stones?

This one is nice and smooth; and this one is sharp and jagged. Which one do you like better? Yes! I like the smooth stone better too.

[Tell about vacations at Presque Isle on Lake Erie where we always found whet stones on the beaches for sharpening knives. Demonstrate sharpening the Swiss Army knife on the smooth stone.]

So smooth stones can be very useful as well as being fun to find and collect.

Do you know these two stones had a very different life?

This sharp stone had a very easy life. He just sat on a mountain side day after day soaking up the sun.

Nothing difficult happened to him at all. He didn’t have any troubles. No little pieces ever got broken off of him. That’s why he ended up sharp and jagged. He had an easy life.

The smooth stone, on the other hand, had a very hard life: He came from the beach at the ocean.

The water and the waves tossed this rock back and forth in the sand.

Little by little all the sharp edges on this rock were broken off and worn away until the rock became round and smooth.

The Bible verses we read this morning say: don’t get discouraged when life gets hard, when you have troubles and difficulties and discouragements.

Don’t be discouraged but be happy because God can use troubles to make you a better person, just like this better stone.

Let’s say you didn’t study for your spelling test and you got a bad grade.

Nobody likes getting a bad grade on their test. So what should you do for the next test?

You need to study for it, right?

So every time something bad happens to you, you need to learn how to make it better the next time.

And when we do that, it’s like letting God polish us into a smooth stone that He can use.

Let’s say that somebody makes fun of you for being a Christian and believing in the Bible.

Nobody likes to be made fun of. But God can use that to make your faith grow stronger.

You can ask God to help that person to see that they need Jesus too.

In every difficulty, God provides the opportunity to become smooth useful stones.

So when you run into tough times in life, when things don’t seem to be going you way, when your teacher yells at you or your parents yell at you, don’t be discouraged, don’t pout and put on an attitude.

Instead be thankful that God is polishing you into a smooth useful stone.

God wants you to become a beautiful stone like Jesus.

Would you like to see some stones after they have been all polished up? [Show polished stones.]

Which stone do you want to be like? Which is your favorite?

Do you want to be a polished stone? Let’s ask Jesus to make us like Him.