



# Links Players

## LOSSES AND GAINS 1: TROUBLE

*“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33, NIV)*

**Y**OU DON’T HAVE TO BE LOOKING FOR TROUBLE on the golf course to see it. All you have to do is stand on the tee. Looking down the fairway, your eyes will tell you right away that where there are bunkers and trees and water and boundaries. Start focusing on the trouble and you’ll have a hard time finding the fairway ever again.

But there is also trouble you can’t see from the tee. A well-struck tee shot wiggles to a stop in a divot. You’re oblivious to this until you arrive at your ball, when suddenly it’s hard not to grumble. A good drive like this doesn’t deserve such a fate.

Friends, here we are again, lining up golf with life. You wake up many mornings, knowing just what challenges lie ahead. If you’re smarter than I am, you’ll even build in time for things to go wrong. But then there are the unexpected. In the “old days,” we might have listed flat tires, broken copy machines, or a key employee whose mother died last night. Now we think bigger: cyber ransoms, pandemics, and even ships stuck sideways in the Suez Canal. Everything Jesus said was true, we know, but was anything truer than, “In this world you will have trouble”?

A number of months ago, I was contacted by a friend who participates in one of our Links Fellowships. He’s a consultant who thinks of the big picture, and he was seeing something going on that concerned him. “People have lost a lot during these pandemic shutdowns,” he observed. He thought maybe there was a way to address some of these losses in a Bible study series. As I thought about his phone call, I realized that there are things we have gained as well. In fact, what some process as loss, others might process as gain. There was definitely reason to turn to Scripture.

This week we begin the series. To do so, though, we must acknowledge the painfully obvious: We live amidst trouble. We might bully our way through some things, but other challenges are just too big. In fact, when Jesus referred to “these things” in our passage today, he was wrapping up teaching about some bigger-than-you times of grief. These are situations we have no choice but to endure (just like you have to play from that divot). How will you do it? Our starting point for this series is the starting point Jesus gave his disciples: Take heart in him. He has the ability to overcome.

**Opening questions** What is a recent mishap that frustrated you on the golf course? How about in your day-to-day activities? Could you have responded better than you did? How so?

**READING** Job 2:7-10; Psalm 10:12-18; Jeremiah 2:26-28

### Job’s perspective (Job 2)

Job lost riches, family, and health overnight. How was his response different than his wife’s? What allowed him to maintain perspective? How would accepting trouble as part of God’s plan alter your thinking?

---

---

---

### Affliction and rescue (Psalm 10)

Have you ever considered yourself to be truly afflicted? Where did you go for help at that time? • When you look at the world around you, where do you see affliction? How might you pray for/assist those who are afflicted?

---

---

---

---

### Other saviors (Jeremiah 2)

What error of Israel was Jeremiah exposing? Where do people today turn when they face trouble? What makes this help inferior to the help God provides?

---

---

---