

## "How to Get Through Trials,"- 2 Corinthians 11:24-33 – March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017

- I'm going to take a different approach in teaching the rest of this chapter in a sermon I've titled "How to get Through the Trials."
- On Wednesday of this week, as I was preparing my heart for this sermon, the Lord ministered something very powerful to me.
- Namely, that of how the Apostle Paul was able to make it through the many perilous trials and tribulations that he had suffered.

- To me, Paul is amongst the many great men and women of God who not only survived but actually thrived in spite of such peril.
- I think of Joseph, who endured unspeakable difficulty for some seventeen years, yet, he never gives up or gives in to despair.
- Their example begs the question of how they did it, perhaps better asked, what was it about them that enabled them to endure?

- Who of us has received forty stripes minus one even one-time let alone five times like Paul, and no less from his fellow Jews?
- Who among us has been physically beaten with rods even one-time let alone three times as Paul had?
- Who in our midst could say that they we're ever stoned and left for dead as Paul was?
- Who could say that they were shipwrecked and in the water a night and a day even one time let alone three times as Paul was?
- Who has faced such difficulty from things like facing the threats from thieves, or the threats from those close to you?
- Who has become so physically weary from sheer exhaustion and sleep deprivation while at the same time going hungry?
- Who could honestly say that they've been so destitute that they would often have to fast with no food or even clothing?

- That's the physical pain and suffering Paul endured daily; then you add his emotional suffering concerning the churches, (v28).
- I find it interesting Paul would admit he burns with anger inwardly whenever someone is made to stumble in the church, (v29).
- I find it even more interesting Paul would continue his boasting in his weakness and infirmity displaying righteous anger, (v30).

- It seems all that Paul was saying was so unbelievable that he would have to remind them that God knows he's not lying, (v31).
- Paul even boasts about when he almost got arrested in Acts 9, and escaped in a basket through a window in the wall. (v32-33).
- Again, the question becomes, how did Paul get through all that he went through, and refuse to just quit and toss in the towel?

Alan Redpath poses the same question this way, - "Such is the price that Paul paid. How does that react upon you? Do you congratulate yourself that you have escaped it? One week of such living and we would be done, but Paul went through it for a lifetime and gloried in his infirmities." -- Of Paul facing the daily pressure of his concern for all the churches Redpath says "... I could not possibly convey to you adequately in the English language the force of that statement. I tried to picture it in terms of being smothered under a blanket, or by being attacked and crushed by some great animal, for he could not have used a stronger word when he said, in effect, 'That which bears me down, that which is upon me as an intolerable load, that which is a burden, that which is something that I can never shake off day or night. It is with me always. I have no vacation for it ever. It is upon me daily. The care, the compassion, the concern of all the churches.' "

- This brings us full circle to the question that's on the table before us today, "how is it possible to get through the trial that I'm in."
- What follows are four conclusions we can come to concerning those who, like Paul, et al., we're able to endure through trials.
- More specifically, that which we should stop doing, and that which we should start doing if we hope to get through that difficulty.

### 1. Stop thinking God is punishing you

- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the biggest mistakes we make as Christians when in a trial, this would be it.
- It's almost a default of sorts when we wrongly conclude that the reason we're in a trial is because God mad at us for something
- We even go far back into our lives to identify what it could be that made God so mad that He deemed it necessary to punish us.

- I think of Job's so-called friends who were quick to tell him the reason for his suffering was because God was punishing him.
- This thinking was prevalent in Jesus' day when in John 9:2 He's asked if blindness was because of a man's or his parents sin.
- If there was ever a man who could have succumbed to this thinking it would be Paul, because he actually had Christians killed.

### 2. Stop trying to take control

- One of the greatest difficulties for us when in a trial is that we feel out of control of our perilous and perplexing circumstances.
- I think of the death of James and the deliverance of Peter in Acts 12 and how it almost seemed as if God wasn't in control of it.
- It's almost as if God was taken by surprise and the situation was so out of His control that one man dies and one is delivered.

Morgan - "He who could deliver Peter and He in his wisdom did so, was equally wise when He did not deliver James."

### 3. Start trusting in God's ways

- The fact of the matter is, God's ways are not our ways but are infinitely higher as Isaiah said. We are only finite; God is infinite.
- We don't know the way God will resolve it, when God will resolve it, even how God will resolve it, only "that" God will resolve it.
- As such, God will do so in His time, in His way for His glory and our betterment. God will have the final word in your situation.

One said it best this way, "God answers all my prayers the same way I would if I had His infinite wisdom power and love."

### 4. Start believing in God's promises

- It's important to remember that bad things do happen to good people in this fallen world. A life of fairness is not promised to us.
- The problem comes when we have expectations of good to happen, which stumbles us in our faith leading us to a crisis of faith.
- Actually I sort of saved the best for last such that I see believing by faith in the promises of God promises is the key to enduring.

- This was the key to the endurance in Joseph's life. Joseph had the promise of God, in a vision from God, prior to all the peril.
- The best example of having the Word of God prior to the peril of life is none other than Peter, in the aforementioned account.
- This because, on the night before he's to be executed, he slept so soundly that the angel had to hit him in order, to wake him.

- Here's the question, how is it that Peter was able to sleep so soundly on the night before he is to be executed in a beheading?
- Answer, because Peter had the Word of God prior to the peril he was in, when Jesus Himself told him he wouldn't die this way.
- In John's gospel chapter nine, Jesus tells Peter he will be crucified and not beheaded and it would be in old age and not young.

- Perhaps you think to yourself, well those visions and promises were given to men like Joseph, Peter, and to the Apostle Paul.
- Well, what if I told you that there are, as one counted, over three thousand promises in the pages of Holy Writ give to you too?
- The common denominator in all of God's promises is simply this, no matter how bad your trial is, God's Word is the final Word.

Psalm 91:14-15 - 14 "Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.  
15 He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.