

2 Corinthians 1.8-11

Better-off Dead?

Jesus had UNIQUE way of CROWD Control in His Ministry > Spoke TRUTH
For many People TRUTH of Jesus was FAR MORE than they could HANDLE

Variations of THESE Words appear PROMINENTLY in ALL 4 Gospels...

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it.” Luke 9.23,24

In 2 Corinth SEE someone who Truly WANTS to be Jesus’ FOLLOWER
HIS Apostle to the GENTILES has EMBRACED the...

1. Perils of the Cross

a. Way of the Master

Are Jesus and Christianity mere tools for life-enhancement, fodder for finding ourselves and achieving our dreams today? Are they in the same category as yoga, Kombucha, KonMari, ketogenic diets, meditation apps, nature walks, and so forth—consumer items we curate to help us become healthier, happier, more actualized people? Sadly many Christians approach faith this way, as do many churches that perpetuate the problem by pitching themselves as places where people can “reach their full potential” Brett McCracken

Letter begins w/ Paul PROMISING COMFORT of God for Corinthians

NOW he Tells them they are GOING to NEED IT...

v. 8 For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia.

Not Sure what EXACTLY Paul ENDURED in ASIA > Debated 2000 yrs

10 Basic Greek words for SUFFERING > Paul uses 5 of them in 2 Corinthians

Something BETWEEN Writing of 1st & 2nd Corinthians

Acts 19 – RIOT in Ephesus – Arrested, Imprisoned, Beaten, Tortured? Not Told

Whether was Physical, Spiritual, Psychological, Emotional – ALL Together

Paul was NEARLY at the BREAKING Point

Jesus: “If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you... ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” John 15.18,20

“Jesus never hides his scars to win disciples”

James Boice

b. Where is the Master?



Lovely 21 year old MARGARET MAURER

Senior at TULANE U in New Orleans

Preparing to Graduate in May > BIOLOGY

Pres of Uni “extraordinarily gifted student, leader among her peers... kind and willing to help others”

She and friends driving back to U. after SPRING Break

Rest Stop along Interstate Highway last Wednesday

Across Highway: Wheels of Big Tractor-Trailer Truck came Unhitched as Drove
Wheels, Weighing More 500 lbs – Great Speed across Hwy – Hit Margaret Killed

“It’s abosolutely a random freaky thing. It is not right. There is so much that is wrong about this. I want to be angry at somebody, but I can’t be” Tracy Maurer

IF you Never get to POINT in Xtian Life wonder if GOD has FORSAKEN You
 NOT Honest or have Not LIVED Long Enough YET
 LIFE itself can take you to BREAKING Point > God help you NOT to SNAP

For affliction does not come from the dust, nor does trouble sprout from the ground, but man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. Job 5.6,7

v. 8 For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself.

Lit. – Burden EXCEEDS Description – BEYOND Ability to ENDURE

Only matter of TIME before Forces Pitted Against him would SUCCEED

Word for OVERLOADED Ship riding DEEP in the WATER

ALMOST UNBEARABLE – NEARLY Swamped – SINKING Under the Load

v. 9 Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death.

Stood before JUDGE received OFFICIAL Sentence of DEATH > Verdict Given

Paul received VERDICT of DEATH WITHIN himself

NO CURE short of RESURRECTION

Paul has Received a STAY of Execution > GOD Will RESCUE him

Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I do not feel weak?
 2 Corinthians 11.24-29

2. Presence of Christ

Jesus PROMISED to be with us ALWAYS until END of the AGE

Here Paul describes His Comforting Presence – Past, Present, Future

a. Trust Him Now

Popular US Game Show host made Announcement on his TV show Last Week
4 Stage PANCREATIC Cancer – Most People Die – But Not Me, Gonna Beat It!
Media PRAISING his Bravery, Determination, Fighter who will NOT QUIT

Of Course, I hope he does BEAT IT – Lives for More Decades of GAME Shows
Game Show of LIFE is Going to End – God going to SOUND the FINAL Buzzer
PURPOSE of Life is to GET PREPARED to Meet our MAKER

v. 9 But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.

PROBLEM w/ RELYING on OURSELVES is that we CAN Rely on Ourselves
PREACHERS can give MOVING Sermons & Never PRAY, Believe
CHURCHES can be Filled even when BIBLE & Jesus IGNORED

GET Very FAR in Life > CAIN went OUT from Presence of GOD

Built FAMILY, CITY, CIVILIZATION --- Did not NEED God – Look at Japan!

BUT only God RAISES the DEAD – Only by Relying on Him in THIS LIFE
NOT PAST Tense – RAISED Dead --- Actively, Presently RAISES the Dead

Paul stands FIRM in the FAITH of Abraham > TRUSTING God does Raise Dead
Will you be RAISED by Him to the NEXT Life – Have Eternal, Abundant LIFE

Paul's ordeal in Asia, whatever it was, stimulated his ongoing reliance and hope in God...his new, deep awareness of death, was accompanied by a new deep trust in God.

Paul Barnett

GOD who will give ULTIMATE Deliverance now gives INTERIM Deliverance
For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.

2 Corinthians 1.5

There is NO COMFORT in Suffering IF God is NOT Sovereign OVER IT

When God puts His children into the furnace, He keeps His hand on the thermostat and His eye on the thermometer. Paul may have despaired of life, but God did not despair of Paul.

Warren Wiersbe

b. Testimonies from Yesterday

v. 10 He delivered us from such a deadly peril...

Experience encourages HOPE – God HAS BEEN Faithful and will Be Yet

Mistake to think IF NOT Suffering YOU ARE NOT Spiritual!

SANCTIFICATION does Not Happen on Assembly Line or by Cookie Cutter

We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

2 Corinthians 4.8-11

c. Tomorrow is in His hands

v. 10 He delivered us from such a deadly peril, *and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.*

Paul “sets his hope” on God’s DELIVERANCE > SINGLE Minded

God’s promises of ultimate salvation will be fulfilled in their time, for the whole Bible assures us that he is a God of deliverance. Geoffrey Grogan

Paul NEVER Recommends OR Encourages Suffering > Admits it COMES

Some Early Christian taught MARTYRDOM was Highest CALLING

BIBLE Never Encourages us to SEEK SUFFERING - Don’t Need To!

DO much MORE for Jesus on EARTH when you are ALIVE

But WHEN He calls you from EARTH He will have JOB for you in HEAVEN

If we live committed Christian lives, we must not be wincing and ducking at any hint of trouble – waiting for the other shoe to drop. We all live under the good providence of God, and his unstinted goodness toward us never diminishes regardless of what comes our way. Kent Hughes

God RESCUED Paul in the PAST so he could TRUST Him for the FUTURE

And PATIENTLY Endure ALL and EVERY Trouble in the PRESENT

Paul reminds CORINTHIANS and US – Called to FOLLOW a Suffering Servant

His SUFFERINGS led to GLORY --- So will OURS when SUFFER IN HIM

He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 1.8

I believe God can and will bring good out of evil, even out of the greatest evil...I believe God will give us all the strength we need...But he never gives it in advance, lest we rely on ourselves and not on him alone. Dietrich Bonhoeffer

3. Prayers of the Church

a. Effectual Prayer

Someone ASKS for PRAYER – You PROMISE – they Come Back PRAISING HONESTLY you FORGOT all About your Promise – Thankful! AND Guilty! Might THINK – God seems to Get HIS Good Work done WithOUT My Prayers

Paul writes much about GOD’S Sovereignty – Predestination – Election – Plan But he ALSO writes much about the VITAL IMPORTANCE of Prayer

God’s WILL will be DONE, His Purpose Not held HOSTAGE by Prayerlessness HIS Sovereign PLAN INCLUDES our Prayers > INVITED to Commune w/ Him

Last Wednesday Night – Sweet Communion God & His People – TRUST Him Not KNOW HOW or WHEN God is Going to Answer, like ABE CONFIDENT

“...Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?” Genesis 18.25

Each his 13 NT letters include PRAYERS for the Recipients > Deep, Profound God’s SALVATION & Man’s SUPPLICATION placed SIDE by SIDE

“I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus...” 1 Corinthians 1.4

“we pray to God that you may not do wrong...” 2 Corinthians 13.7

“we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding...”

Colossians 1.9

v. 11 You also must help us by prayer...

Those we PRAY FOR experience GOD'S BLESSINGS

People LIFT UP PRAISE to God's NAME

MAYBE the Corinthians were like ME – Not Praying for Paul as they Should

Paul tells CHILDREN he ALMOST DIED --- SO, Glad you were Praying!?

OH! Maybe you were NOT Praying – Nobody Hold Ropes – Never had my Back

Sad FEELING their Father in Faith to think his Children NOT Praying for him

We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you.

We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us.

2 Corinthians 6.11,12

IF you Sometimes think your PRAYERS are Not Getting Anywhere

Apostle JOHN says you are WRONG > he saw HOW FAR they Get...

...between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain...And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

Revelation 5.6,8

b. Eternal Praise

v. 11...so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

‘PRAYERS of MANY’ lit “OUT OF MANY FACES”

Picture of UPTURNED Faces of Many GIVE Praise & Thanksgiving to GOD

Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.

2 Corinthians 9.13

In Christ we are SO SURE God will Answer Prayer > Thanksgiving must Follow THANKS offered IN ADVANCE because we KNOW God will HEAR and ACT

In the service of Christ there may be disappointments, but there cannot be despair there may be conflicts, but never doubt; there may be afflictions, but never without comfort. Our epistle is pervaded by this spirit of a faith which abides serene and steadfast no matter how much the outward circumstances of life may tempt to the shadow of distrust.

Philip E. Hughes

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