

Burdened Beyond Measure

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Scripture: 2CO 1:4-11

Date: February 16, 1994

Time: Wed 1:52pm b Wed 1:43pm e

Location: TBC WE

People to Thank or Praise: **Sal, Men's Meeting**

INTRO:

Last Week we studied the Book of Ecclesiastes

This week we want to go down through vs 11 which is really the introduction to the Book.

As I have studied vv 3-11 I have found Paul giving us 4 basic reasons why Christians suffer.

Don't expect to correlate righteousness with lack of suffering. Ecclesiastes teaches us that if you try to figure out why God prospers this one and allows trials to this one, a long life to that one and a short life to this one--you will become discouraged.

However we can look at reasons why God allows Christians to suffer.

Persecution, uncertain death, unexpected financial reversals, etc.

I. Suffering encourages other sufferers. v4

APP: By far the greatest encouragers are those that have gone through the same things

A. God will give sufficient grace to endure what we have to suffer. vs 5

1. Without violating other promises--promised provision, promised strength to do His will, promised finances to accomplish His plan.
 - a. Does not mean that life cannot get tough, unpleasant, even unbearable. But not impossible.
2. Without cracking up.
3. Without our families cracking up.
4. From an eternal standpoint--only increases.

II. Suffering equips other sufferers vs 6

A. The pioneering purpose in suffering

- a. effectual--energizes, *wrought effectually, gets the job done, accomplishes the goal.*
- b. in enduring--*The brave patience that the Christian contends against the various hindrances, persecutions, and temptations that befall him in his conflict with the inward and outward world.*
2. ILL Pioneers--they had to go through the privations so that others would have the faith to continue.
3. ILL Pilgrims--many pitfalls. As we go through trials we learn a number of lessons.
ILL the lesson of the failure of socialism and importance of capitalism.
 - a. The lessons of our human nature--its weaknesses--the special things that discourage us, the things that encourage us.
 - b. How God worked during your trial.

APP: People are watching us--they are skeptical--*you claim to believe in God--is He able to help you, or is this simply some kind of crutch.*

B. **God will do the same thing for you vs 7**

1. We can use this.
2. God is no respecter of persons.

TRANS: We have seen the purposes of suffering with respect to others. Now we turn to two ways that God uses suffering in the life of the person who actually goes through the suffering.

III. Suffering Removes Trust in the Flesh.

A. Description of the Tribulations vs 8

Paul shares with them the extent of his sufferings

1. vs 8 the suffering was *over and beyond our strength.*
 - a. Gr hyper-bola hyperbole English--hyperbole A figure of speech in which exaggeration is used for emphasis or effect, as in I could sleep for a year or This book weighs a ton
2. The suffering is described as "*burdened beyond power*" a *heavy crushing burden, extraordinarily oppressed.*

- a. ILL A ship that is overloaded and gradually sinks under weight of the heavy load until it gets to a fatal point.
- b. ILL A weary animal that sinks in despair under a burden that is far heavier than it is capable of handling.
- c. ILL A nation that is being crushed under the heavy load of taxation.
- 3. *despaired even of life* lit. having no way--be at an utter loss. Being crushed beneath the load and having no route of escape.
 - a. One problem, then another, then another, then another.
 - b. ILL Job--one report then another...
 - c. When it rains it pours.

APP: It is at times like these that we learn the truth about our abilities--or lack of them. Ps 30:6 *In my prosperity I said...*

4.

5. vs 9a--*we had the death sentence passed upon us.*

B. Reason for these sufferings

- 1. To teach Paul to trust God and not himself.
 - a. His trials were well beyond his own strength, physically, emotionally, and spiritually--but it was then that God stepped in and lifted Paul up
 - b. This is many times God's way--if He chooses to deliver it is often after all hope was then taken away.
 - (1) Joseph--several times all was totally lost.
 - (2) Rea Sea--all hope was lost
 - (3) Shadrack, --they were thrown into the fire
 - (4) Daniel--thrown into the fire
 - c. real trials because they did not know the final chapter

IV. To give hope in present and future trials vs 10

A. If God has not failed us up to this time, He probably won't start now. like vs 7 except this is for ourselves--not others.

- 1. vs 10 Past deliverances are proof of future deliverance
 - (1) ILL Dr. Afman
 - (2) ILL God's provision for us through the years.

B. Why did God wait so long to rescue Paul? Why does He wait so long to rescue us?

- 1. Our greatest lessons come through trials--not times of prosperity and ease.
 - a. The Roman empire was much stronger when it had many external enemies.
 - b. Same with the Kings of Judah. Asa 2Ch 15,16 Great victories as a young man--then 20 years of peace--he lost his faith.
- 2. It takes time for God to remove our *self-esteem* which the world has worked so hard to build up. He replaces it with something far better--*confidence in God*
- 3. ILL A person drowning, arms thrashing, gasping for air--when would you dive in to rescue the person?--Probably not until the person was going down for the third time. When they finally had no more ability to resist.

APP: Parents are too quick to jump in and rescue their children.

APP: How do we respond? It may be that we will have to repeat. Have we genuinely learned to trust.

V. It pays to pray for one another. vs 11

A. The gift--not monetary--but God deliverance.

VI. Paul's strategy. To demonstrate that it is God who is doing the work through Paul's life--not Paul himself.

- A. What about the false prophets. Is it human ability or is it divine power that helps them get through this life?
- B. Not manufacturing results--but living in such a way that God must do the work.