

Remnant Life Church
August 24, 2014

**“Lessons by Paul:
Faith in the Time of Crisis
Part 2”
2 Cor. 11:16-33**

REVIEW:

- Maintaining our faith in the time of crisis
 - Def – *A difficult or dangerous situation that needs serious attention*
 - It does not always have to be a negative outcome or lead to that conclusion
 - It is very often how we deal with the situation that will determine if it is bad or good
 - Paul faced a great deal of crisis in his life and what he did can help teach us how to deal with the difficult times of life in a way that will...
 - Honor and glorify God
 - Maintain our witness to others
 - Help to minimize the amount of time that we have to stay in it
 - One of the best things we can do in preparation for those times is to recognize and accept that they will come.

- What qualified Paul to write about dealing with hardship and crisis in his life since...
 - ...he came from a background of stability and provision
 - ...he had the best schooling and rose to a place of notoriety and prominence in his work
 - Everything about him, including his name, changed after an encounter with Jesus on a journey to Damascus

- Paul lists the struggles he had to endure
 - Forty lashes minus one (**Duet 25:3**) – a Jewish punishment – 5 times
 - Beaten with rods – a Roman punishment (scourging/caning) - 3 times
 - Stoned – a Jewish punishment also inflicted on Stephen (Acts 7)
 - Shipwrecked – 3 times
 - Adrift in the ocean
 - Homeless – always on the move
 - Pursued by bandits – most likely in all of his travels
 - Persecuted by the Gentiles and also the Jews (his own people)
 - Lied about and the subject of gossip and slander
 - Gone without sleep, food and shelter
 - Exposed to the elements at times with no clothing

- **2 Cor. 11** lists Paul’s struggles up until that time – it is not a complete list
 - His ministry lasted approximately 32 years

- Conversion in 36 AD
 - Death in Rome in 68 AD
 - 2 Corinthians is the 4th book Paul wrote
 - Written from Macedonia in approximately 57 AD during his 3rd missionary journey
- Add to what he writes in that passage...
 - Two years imprisoned in Jerusalem
 - A journey from Caesarea to Rome that ended in another shipwreck on Malta – island 50 miles south of Sicily (**Acts 27**)
 - Bitten by a poisonous snake (**Acts 28:3-5**)
 - Imprisoned in Rome twice the second time leading to his death (
- Paul is qualified to speak about living life in the times of struggle, what we would probably call crisis
- Already seen that Paul...
 - ...would pay any price to be in God's will
 - ...would not be put off by what others said
 - ...still looked for ways to serve God in the midst of the storm
- Look at 3 more ways that we can learn how to keep our faith in difficult times using Paul's experiences as our example –

1. He recognized that even if he could not change his circumstances he could control his perceptions, attitudes and responses to them

- a. In times of struggle and crisis of difficulty, our perceptions and where we allow our mind to go determines if we deal with things in a right way or give way to fear
- b. The vast majority of things that we anticipate in fear NEVER OCCUR!
- c. F-E-A-R – Faulty Expectations and Assumptions of Reality
- d. One of Satan's most powerful tools in anything that he does is to bring fear
 - i. 77 times we read do not be afraid– NIV
 - ii. The women at the tomb of Jesus (**Matt 28:5**)
 - iii. The angel appears to Zechariah in the temple (**Luke 1:13**)
 - iv. Jesus speaking to His disciples and comforting them (**John 14:27**)
 - v. Walking on the water; the angel appearing to Mary
 - vi. Many times in speaking with Abraham
 - vii. When God spoke to Moses, Joshua, Daniel, Jeremiah He would often speak first to their fear
- e. This does not mean that Paul did not battle fear; but it did not rule over him
 - i. **Acts 16:25** – Paul and Silas singing while in prison
 - ii. What happens when we do not allow fear to rule our responses? We can be used of God to comfort others to His glory
 1. **Acts 27: 23-26** *Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island."*

- f. How do we overcome the faulty expectations and assumptions of reality?
 - i. Give your mind and your thoughts over to God
 - ii. *We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*
2 Cor. 10:5
 - iii. Paul himself tells us the very way he conquered fear in his own life
2. He looked at his circumstances realistically but still never lost sight of the fact that God's will would be accomplished
- a. Acts 27:26 – the boat will still run aground
 - i. Daniel standing in the middle of the lion's den
 - ii. The 3 Hebrews in the middle of the fiery furnace
 - iii. Moses standing on the bank of the Red Sea
 - b. Faith is not denying what is, it is believing in what you know will be.
 - c. What we must know, in the depths of our hearts, is that God loves us and is in every situation we encounter
 - d. Paul did not offer false hope to those on the boat, but he knew that they would be saved because of his faith in God
3. He picked his battles
- a. Many of the times of struggle or the times of crisis are a result of our being involved in something that we should not be
 - b. There are many times in the Bible that we are told that Paul, David even Jesus hid or walked away from confrontation and struggle
 - i. Paul – Acts 9:25 - immediately after his conversion and the start of his preaching
 - ii. David – I Samuel – he often hid from King Saul and those sent to pursue him
 - iii. Jesus – John 8:59 – hid from the Pharisees trying to stone him
 - c. You are not called to become involved in every situation you encounter
 - d. Jesus did not heal every person he saw in His travels
 - i. Why? Because He only did what His Father told Him to do (John 14:31)
 - ii. We can only do that if we ask and if we listen

How we respond will determine many things including how long we stay in that time

- Do not be afraid and do not embrace fear (Faulty Expectations and Assumptions of Reality)
- Be realistic regarding what you are facing but never lose the belief that God will accomplish His will for you and the situation
- Pick your battles in wisdom and through the leading of the Holy Spirit