

1. YOU SHOULD NOT BE AMAZED BY YOUR TROUBLE

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3. YOU WILL NOT BE ABANDONED IN YOUR TROUBLE

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B. Remember what God has promised to you

1. What if I told you that Darth Vader didn't actually say the famous line, "Luke, I am your father"? Likewise, what if I said that the wicked witch in *Snow White* did *not* say, "Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who's the fairest of them all"?

2. Nor does the famous film *Casablanca* contain the line, "Play it again, Sam". These are some of the most famous "misquoted" lines from some of the most popular films of all time.

3. What Darth Vader actually says is, "No, I am your father." The witch says, "Magic mirror on the wall..." and Ingrid Bergman says, "Play it, Sam. Play 'As Time Goes By'."

4. I have another famous misquote for you. This one comes, not from the big screen; but the Bible. The line is this: "God will not put on you more than you can bear."

5. The closest thing to this in the Bible is found in I Corinthians 10:13. There it says, "*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*"

6. This verse is referring specifically to times of temptation – when we are tempted to sin. In those times, God promises that the temptation will not be such that we could not escape it if we wanted to, and thereby "bear it", or deal with it.

7. When people say, "God will not put on you more than you can bear," they are generally referring to times of tribulation, not temptation.

8. If someone would have said to the Apostle Paul, "Remember Paul, God will not put on you more than you can bear," I imagine he would have said, "I beg your pardon! That is not true."

9. Then, I imagine he would point them to what he wrote in II Corinthians chapter 1. There in verse 8, we find this confession: *"For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life."*

10. This verse teaches us that in fact, there are times when God *will* put on you more than you are personally able to bear. It is an important truth to know regarding the troubles we will face in this life.

11. I want us to examine this text carefully, and see what we can learn about troubles in this life, and what God intends to do in us through them. First of all, we learn here that:

I. YOU SHOULD NOT BE AMAZED BY YOUR TROUBLE

1. Paul says in verse 8, *"For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble..."* In other words, Paul says, "I want to be sure you know about the trouble we have experienced."

2. Some Christians are amazed, when after they have come to know the Lord, they find trouble coming into their lives.

3. We should not be amazed or surprised by this, however. Jesus said in John 16:33, *"...In the world ye shall have tribulation..."*

4. One of my favorite preachers and authors is a man named George Duncan. In his book on II Corinthians, he says, "We need to remember that the badge of Christian service is not a cushion, but a cross."ⁱ

5. With that being said, Paul educates us in this text about the reality of troubles in the Christian's life. You should not be surprised then, at:

A. The fact of trouble

1. Don't forget who is writing this text. This is the great Apostle Paul. Half of the New Testament flowed from his quill.

2. Following his conversion on the Damascus road, no one loved Jesus more faithfully, or preached His gospel more fervently than did Paul the Apostle.

3. And yet, we find him saying in verse 8, *"For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia..."*

4. If Paul had trouble, why should we think that we would not? The fact is that your salvation does not exempt from trouble, nor will your service excuse you from trouble.

5. Jesus never promised His followers anything less than He received while on this earth, and need I remind you that He was despised and rejected, maligned and mistreated, arrested, beaten, and nailed to a tree?

*Must I be carried to the skies,
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?*

*Are there no foes for me to face,
Must I not stem the flood?
Is this vile world a friend of grace,
To help me on to God?"ⁱⁱ*

6. You should not be amazed at the fact of your trouble, and looking at this text, I would add also, you should not be amazed at:

B. The force of your trouble

1. Again, in verse 8, Paul wants to educate his readers about the "trouble" which befell him while he was in Asia.
2. We are not certain exactly what experience Paul is describing, but his language points us to the intensity of the trouble.
3. The word translated "trouble" in verse 8, means pressure, and its root is a word that means to crush.
4. That goes along with what else Paul says in this verse. He says, "...we were *pressed out of measure*..." One writer translates that phrase as, "...we were weighed down..."ⁱⁱⁱ
5. The idea is that whatever it was Paul went through in Asia, it was like a massive weight, pressing down upon him until he could no longer stand it.
6. He says in verse 8, "...we were *pressed out of measure, above strength*..." Did you catch that? This situation exceeded Paul's strength. It was more than he could bear!
7. It was so much so, that he says, "...we *despaired even of life*..." He thought this situation was going to kill him. It was too much for Him to handle.
8. Have you been there? Have you faced a trouble in this life that left you wondering if you were going to survive it? Have you felt the pressure and weight of a trial crushing in upon you?

9. You should not be surprised that this happened to you. Paul says, "It happened to me!"

10. *You should not be amazed by your trouble.* Notice a second truth we draw from this text. The Word of God teaches also that:

II. YOU CAN NOT BE ADEQUATE FOR YOUR TROUBLE

1. Remember now, this is Paul writing. He tells us that he faced trouble that was above his strength.

2. This is the same man who later in this same book, will describe his experiences saying, "*Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep* (II Corinthians 11:25)."

3. He was no weak-kneed, fair-weather follower of Christ. Yet, God allowed a trouble into his life that was more than he could bear.

4. Likewise, you and I will find that there are going to be troubles that we simply are not adequate to handle in our own abilities.

5. These humbling hardships that surpass our abilities are not things that slip past the will of God. They are sent directly from God for the express purpose of exceeding our abilities.

6. That is what Paul teaches us in this text. Notice with me what happens as God brings us face to face with troubles that are bigger and stronger than us. First of all, when you realize you can not be adequate for your trouble, consider:

A. The truth that God must show to you

1. Look now at verse 9. Paul goes on with his description of the trouble he encountered in Asia. He says, "*But we had the sentence of death in ourselves...*"

2. The phrase "sentence of death" is a judicial term, and the idea is that Paul felt like the verdict was in, and his sentence was death.

3. Again, this trouble was so great that Paul did not see any outcome other than death. Can you imagine such a desperate situation?

4. Why would God allow his choice servant to reach a place so dark and difficult that he could only see death in his future?

5. I'm glad you asked. Paul tells us why in verse 9. He says, "...*that we should not trust in ourselves...*" There it is. The truth God had to show Paul, and will have to show us as well, is that we cannot trust in ourselves, and depend upon our own abilities.

6. In Romans 7:18, Paul confesses, "*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing...*"

7. This is a hard lesson for us to learn. We want to be self-sufficient. We want to be independent and competent. We don't like to think that we are weak or unable to handle the situations of life.

8. We want to be able to say, like the poem *Invictus*:

*In the fell clutch of circumstance,
I have not winced nor cried aloud,
Under the bludgeonings of chance,
My head is bloody, but unbowed^{iv}*

9. The only problem is that both God and you know that is not the case. Our strength is not sufficient. Our abilities are not enough.

10. At the heart of the gospel message is the truth that we cannot save ourselves. Jesus died for us, when we were "without strength". God must show us, as He does when He saves us, we cannot trust in ourselves.

11. The fact that you can not be adequate for your trouble is not only because of the truth God must show to you, but also because of:

B. The trust that God must shape in you

1. In verse 9, Paul says that God allowed him to experience a trouble so great that he thought he was going to die. And he did so, "...*that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.*"

2. God pressed Paul down, and hung him out over the precipice of despair, so that Paul would learn not to trust in himself, but rather to put his trust wholly upon God.

3. Here is the great truth at the heart of this text. God *will* put on you more than you can bear. He will weigh you down until you go to your knees, and look up to Him as your only hope.

4. And when He gets you to that point where you can no longer depend on yourself and your strength, there He will reveal to you a glorious principle.

5. That principle is that while God *will* put on you more than *you* can bear, He will *never* put on you more than *He* can bear.
6. Through the great troubles of your life, God is trying to shape in you a trust in Him. Though you are weak, Jesus is strong, and though you will fail, Jesus will not fail you.
7. Dr. Robert Lightner was a long-time member of the theology department at Dallas Theological Seminary. Many years ago, Lightner was involved in a terrible plane crash.
8. The single-engine plane he was traveling in flipped over backwards during takeoff. He was nearly killed, and when his wife first saw him in the hospital, she said, "I looked at this black mass of flesh, and I didn't even know who he was."
9. By God's grace, Dr. Lightner eventually recovered, and looking back on the experience he said this: "I learned things I didn't know I needed to learn."^v
10. The truth is, God *will* put on you more than you can bear, because there is a truth He needs to show to you, and a trust He needs to shape in you, and He cannot do it any other way.
11. Looking at this text, we see not only that *you should not be amazed by your trouble*, and *you can not be adequate for your trouble*, but we see also finally that:

III. YOU WILL NOT BE ABANDONED IN YOUR TROUBLE

1. The Apostle Paul has already told us that in this troubling experience in Asia, he reached the point where he was sure he was going to die.
2. He also says that in that experience he learned to trust in God "...*which raiseth the dead*." Take note of that. Paul refers to our Lord as the God which raises the dead.
3. Why does he say that? Look at verse 10. He says, "*Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.*"
4. Yes, God will bring you face to face with a trouble that will crush you. But, He will not leave you there. He will not abandon you in your trouble.
5. No, one way or the other, He will deliver you! He will raise you up when you are brought down! If you are feeling crushed by the pressure of a problem in your life, take heart! Trust in the God who raises the dead!
6. Look with me at this great tenth verse, and notice what we draw from it. You can be assured that God will not abandon you in your trouble when you:

B. Remember what God has proved to you

1. Paul says that He learned to trust in the God which raises the dead, because, "...[He] *delivered us from so great a death...*"
2. In other words, looking back on the whole experience, Paul saw that though he thought he was as good as dead, God showed up and delivered him from the jaws of death.
3. There may be someone who feels like they are at that same breaking point. You have reached the end of your rope, and below you is only darkness and despair.
4. Listen to Paul. This is no time for amnesia. Look back over your life, and remember the times that God has come through for you.
5. Remember when you didn't think the ends were going to meet? God sent what you needed right on time. Remember when your heart was so broken, and you thought you would never recover? God comforted you and brought you through.
6. Most of all, remember when you were lost in your sins. Death was the only prospect before you. Then, you looked to the cross of Jesus, you cried for mercy, and God saved your soul from hell!
7. Do you remember what God has proved to you already! If so, then know that He will not abandon you now.

*Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come!
'Tis grace that brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home!*

8. You can trust that you will not be abandoned in your trouble, not only when you remember what God has proved to you, but also when you:

B. Remember what God has promised to you

1. Look again at verse 10. Paul says that he has learned to trust in the God "*Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.*"
2. Paul says that not only did God deliver him in the past, but He is still delivering in the present, and will deliver in the future as well.

3. Though we are thankful for what God has done for us in the past, we do not live the Christian life on the fumes of memories.
 4. No, God is still alive and well today. He is still working on behalf of His people today. We trust His promises, and believe that He will continue to deliver us until our last deliverance into the glory of heaven.
 5. Adonirum Judson was one of the first missionaries to penetrate the country of Burma, now called Myanmar. For years, Judson struggled to reach anyone with the gospel, and the work was extremely difficult.
 6. His infant son died from disease, his wife was continually sick, and the language was difficult for them to grasp. It took four years before Judson saw his first convert, and after 17 years, he only reported 10 Burmese believers.^{vi}
 7. Once, someone rather snidely asked Judson what he believed were the prospects for the "speedy conversion of the heathen" in Burma. Without flinching, Judson said, "The prospects are as bright as the promises of God."
 8. It may not look very bright for you right now, but don't doubt in the dark what you know to be true in the light.
 9. Our Lord Jesus has promised that He will never leave us or forsake us. His promises are sure and secure, which means we need not fear the troubles we now face or may face in the future.
 10. As Paul himself would later write in Romans 8:31, "*What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*"
 11. Rest assured; you will not be abandoned in your trouble! The God who has delivered you in the past, is delivering you now, and will deliver you in the days to come.
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1. Perhaps like Paul in Asia, right now you feel weighed down with a burden that is too heavy for you to bear. Perhaps you are dealing with something beyond your strength.
 2. No, God has not lied to you. Others may have told you that God will not put on you more than you can bear, but that is not what God has said.
 3. The truth is, if you are "pressed out of measure, beyond strength", to the point where you feel like your not going to make it, that is likely the very place God intends for you to be.

4. Rather than trying to muster the strength to carry on, why don't you give up trying to trust in yourself, and instead place your full faith and trust in the Lord who raises the dead?

5. He has delivered you before, and He will deliver you again. Remember, *you* can't bear it, but He can.

ⁱ Duncan, George B., Pastor and People, (Word Books, London, 1972), p. 13

ⁱⁱ Watts, Isaac, "Am I a Soldier of the Cross?", 1721

ⁱⁱⁱ Wuest, Kenneth S., The New Testament: An Expanded Translation, (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 1961), p. 417

^{iv} Henly, William Ernest, *Invictus*, 1888

^v Swindoll, Charles, The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart, (Word Publishing, Nashville, 1998), p. 550

^{vi} Voelkel, Jack, Adoniram Judson: Part 1, *urbana.org*, accessed 7/22/10, <http://www.urbana.org/great-cloud-of-witnesses/adoniram-judson-1788-1850-part-i>