

2 Corinthians
June 12, 2011
Who is in Control?
Verses 1:8-11

I. Despair

Does a Christian ever despair?

DESPAIR (exaporeo ^1820^) is used in the NT in the passive voice, with middle sense, "to be utterly without a way."
(from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words)

There are only two usages of the word in the Bible, both times in 2 Corinthians which Paul uses in reference to himself: 2 Cor. 1:8 and 2 Cor. 4:8.

2 Cor 1:8

8 We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life.

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Charles Haddon Spurgeon wrote: "I am the subject of depressions of spirit so fearful that I hope none of you ever to get to such extremes of wretchedness as I go to."

NOTE: "Despair" in the OT is usually related to shame and can always. It means "to be utterly without a way" or "to be quite at a loss, without resource, in despair." The final word in Psalm 88:15 is translated to a form of the same Greek word in the Septuagint, as used in 2 Cor. 1:8)

Do you see any difference with this usage versus 1 Cor 1:8:

2 Cor. 4:8

8 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair;
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II. The Correct Response

2 Cor 1:9

9 Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.

Paul's logic is interesting here. First, he and at least Timothy thought that they would die, but then he recalls God's power to raise the dead. By realizing his personal weakness, he understands better the power of God and uses it as an example to teach us more about it.

III. Why Choose the Correct Response?

2 Cor 1:10-11

10 He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, 11 as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

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Ultimately even the greatest of Christians must remind themselves of why they believe in God. This belief comes from seeing God working in one's life, recognizing that he has been there to help us, and then recalling later what he had done. The power of this familiar passage is thus seen:

1Thes 5:16-18

16 Be joyful always; 17 pray continually; 18 give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

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IV. When in trouble, how do we respond? Why?

Remember these words when troubles come:

1 Pet 4:19

19 So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

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What is the alternative if we do not commit ourselves to the faithful Creator?

V. From Wiersbe:

Remember what God does for us:

- He permits trials to come.
- He is in control of trials.
- God enables us to bear our trials.
- God delivers us from our trials.
- God is glorified through our trials.

What is the purpose of trials for us as individuals?

VI. What is the meaning of this verse?

Matt 27:46:

About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"-- which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
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In thinking about this verse, much has been written. Sometimes the explanations are contradictory. In interpreting the verse, remember that Jesus was the perfect man. While He knew that He was taking on the sin of the world, it was still a new experience for God. As in the Garden the day before, Jesus would probably have preferred for the "cup" to pass from Him. Yet, He submitted to the will of God the Father. What does this say about our suffering?

VII. Why do we have weakness?

2 Cor. 12:9-10

9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

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Many people have found comfort in this verse? Why?

Do you delight in your weakness? Why? Should we always delight in our weakness?

VIII. Psalm 13

1 How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

**2 How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?**

How long will my enemy triumph over me?

3 Look on me and answer, LORD my God.

Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,

**4 and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.**

**5 But I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation.**

**6 I will sing the LORD's praise,
for he has been good to me.**

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IX. Homework:

Think about those times in the past when you have seen God work in your life and you have seen the promises of God fulfilled in your life.

APPENDIX
Some OT Usages of Despair

1 Sam 4:20

20 As she was dying, the women attending her said, "Don't despair; you have given birth to a son." But she did not respond or pay any attention.

Job 9:23

23 When a scourge brings sudden death, he mocks the despair of the innocent.

Ps 88:15

15 From my youth I have been afflicted and close to death; I have suffered your terrors and am in despair.

Eccl 2:20

20 So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun.

Isa 61:3

3 and provide for those who grieve in Zion-- to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.

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