

INTRODUCTION.

THIS MORNING, ~ WE'RE GOING TO TAKE A BREAK FROM COLOSSIANS.

▶▶ The Lord has been doing quite a work in my heart and mind ~ through this health issue.

▷▷ Making me deal with things that were long overdue to be dealt with.

▶▶ Meg thought I should share with you what the Lord has done and is doing.

▷▷ I do this, ~ not to draw attention to myself.

↪↪ But to draw attention to our great Savior.

▶▶ In my Scripture reading and prayer time, ~ a verse in 2 Corinthians ~ jumped out at me, ~ which is quite relevant to what I'm going to share.

▷▷ 2 Cor. 1:9b.

↪↪ But that ~ [i.e., ~ the situation Paul and his coworkers were in] ~ was to make us ~ rely ~ not on ourselves ~ but on God ~ who raises the dead.

▶▶ So this is what we're going to do this morning.

▷▷ I'm going to explain to you the overall context of 2 Cor. 1:8-11.

↪↪ Not in depth. ⇔⇔ Just to give us the context. ↴↴ 1/12

▷▷ Next, ~ we'll zero in on [verse 9b](#).

↪↪ And spend some time explaining that.

▷▷ Then I'll use [verse 9b](#) as a springboard ~ into what the Lord is doing ~ in my heart and mind.

▶▶ Now, ~ one caveat.

▷▷ In no way, ~ shape, ~ or form, ~ am I saying ~ or suggesting ~ that my situation ~ was as dire or as dangerous ~ as that of Paul's.

▷▷ The only point of comparison ~ is that, ~ like with Paul, ~ ¶¶

↪↪ God used my situation ~ as a springboard ~ to teach me ~ to rely not on myself ~ but on him. ~ And deal with things long overdue to deal with.

OKAY, ~ LET'S LOOK AT AN OVERVIEW ~ OF 2 COR. 1:8-11.

AN EXPERIENCE IN ASIA ~ HAD BROUGHT PAUL ~ TO THE END OF HIMSELF.

▶▶ Apparently the Corinthians had some knowledge of this hardship, ~ possibly communicated to them by Titus,

▶▶ But they did not appreciate its severity.

▶▶ Paul did not gloss over ~ ¶¶

▷▷ his feeling of despair and helplessness ~ in this situation. ¶¶ 2/12

▶▶Paul underscored it forcefully.

▷▷1<sup>st</sup>, ~ to illustrate ~ how powerless both he and the Corinthians were apart from God.

▷▷And 2<sup>nd</sup>, ~ to stress ~ how important prayer is ~ as a means ~ of effecting ~ God's gracious intervention and aid.

## JUST WHAT THE HARDSHIPS WERE IS DEBATED.

▶▶Could have been some persecution.

▶▶Could have been a drastic illness.

▶▶Later in this letter he writes of his various troubles.

▷▷2 Cor. 11:24-27.

↪↪Five times ~ I received at the hands of the Jews ~ the forty lashes less one. ~~ ↴

→→Three times ~ I was beaten with rods. ~~ Once ~ I was stoned. ~~ Three times ~ I was shipwrecked; ~~ a night and a day I was adrift at sea;

↪↪on frequent journeys, ~ in danger from rivers, ~ danger from robbers, ~ danger from my own people, ~ danger from Gentiles, ~ danger in the city, ~ danger in the wilderness, ~ danger at sea, ~ danger from false brothers;

↪↪in toil and hardship, ~ through many a sleepless night, ~ in hunger and thirst, ~ often without food, ~ in cold and exposure.

▶▶But what it was ~ that Paul was referring to ~ in 1:8-11 ~ was not the important thing.

▶▶ The point is ~ that whatever it was, ~ it was allowed & designed by God ~ to show Paul ~ 7

▷▷ that he needed to rely on the Lord ~ and not himself or earthly help or strength.

▷▷ David tells us ~ the attitude the Lord wants believers to have ~ in Ps. 20:6-8.

↳↳ Now I know ~ that the Lord saves his anointed; ~ he will answer him from his holy heaven ~ with the saving might of his right hand. ~ 77

→→ Some trust in chariots ~ and some in horses, ~ but we trust ~ in the name of the Lord our God. ~ They collapse and fall, ~ but we rise and stand upright.

▶▶ Being unable to be specific ~ in identifying this experience Paul underwent ~ permits believers today ~ to apply this to themselves.

▷▷ Especially ~ when they find themselves in desperate circumstances ~ where deliverance seems impossible.

## PAUL BELIEVED HE AND HIS COWORKERS WOULD DIE.

▶▶ In verses 8b-9a, ~ he says, ~ 77

▷▷ For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength ~ that we despaired ~ of life itself. ~ 77

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

▷▷ They thought they would never live through it.

↳↳ In fact, ~ they expected to die. 77 4/12

IN VERSE 10, ~ PAUL WRITES, ~ 77

▶▶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 does not let us know how the Lord delivered them.

▷▷But again, ~ that's not the point.

▷▷He was delivered from this menacing peril.

▷▷This is not the first time ~ Paul has been in trouble, ~ nor will it be the last.

▶▶And look at what Paul says.

▷▷and he will deliver us. ~ On him ~ we have set our hope ~ that he will deliver us again.

WHEN GOD HAS RESCUED YOU ONCE FROM GREAT DANGER, ~ 77

▶▶you are confident ~ that God ~ can ~ and will ~ rescue you again.

▶▶Let's take a few minutes ~ and look at Ps. 13.

▷▷How long, ~ O Lord? ~ Will you forget me forever? ~ [felt forgotten] ~ How long will you hide your face from me? ~ [felt abandoned]

▷▷How long must I take counsel in my soul ~ and have sorrow in my heart all the day? ~ [hurting, ~ mind was in turmoil] ~ How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

↪↪[enemy seemed to be winning] ↪↪ 5/12

▷▷[Look what he does] ~~ [1<sup>st</sup>, ~ he prays]

↳↳Consider and answer me, ~ O Lord my God; ~~ light up my eyes, ~ lest I sleep the sleep of death, ~~ lest my enemy say, ~~ ¶¶

→→"I have prevailed over him," ~~ lest my foes rejoice ~ because I am shaken.

▷▷[Now look at what he does]

↳↳But I have trusted ~ [past tense] ~ in your steadfast love ~~

▷▷[He looks at God's past faithfulness to gain strength for the present]

↳↳my heart shall rejoice in your salvation

[Based on God's past faithfulness, ~ he expected that faithfulness to continue].

↳↳I will sing to the Lord, ~~ because he has dealt bountifully with me.

NOW LOOK AT WHAT PAUL SAYS AT THE END OF VERSE 10.

▶▶On him ~ we have set our hope ~ that he will deliver us again.

▶▶Paul is not simply expressing wishful thinking ~~ as one would ~~ if one says, ~ "I hope that God will deliver me."

▶▶He voices his fundamental confidence ~ that God will deliver him.

LET'S TURN OUR ATTENTION TO VERSE 11. ¶¶ 6/12

▶▶ You also must help us by prayer, ~ so that ~ many will give thanks on our behalf ~ for the blessing granted us ~ through the prayers of many.

▷▷ God works through the prayers of his people.

▷▷ Doesn't need to.

▶▶ The verb for "help" ~ means ~ "to work together with" ~ or ~ "cooperate" by means of something.

▷▷ In this case, ~ by means of their prayers on his behalf.

▷▷ Paul was calling on them ~ to work together ~ in praying for him and his team.

▶▶ Paul showed an untiring belief ~ in the effectiveness ~ of intercessory prayer.

▶▶ Paul ~ does not hide behind the facade ~ of a superman ~ ¶¶

▷▷ who pretends that he can survive quite well on his own ~ without help from anyone else.

▷▷ He has no qualms ~ about expressing ~ his desperate need for their prayers.

▷▷ Often he would ask churches to pray for him.

↳↳ E.g., ~ we see it in Romans, ~ Ephesians, ~ and Colossians.

▶▶ Paul is firmly convinced of prayer's power.

▷▷ Because he knows ~ that God ~ listens, ~ responds, ~ and delivers. ¶¶ 7/12

## THAT WAS OUR OVERVIEW OF THE PASSAGE.

NOW LET'S ZERO IN ON VERSE 9b.

▶▶Let's start with **verse 8**.

▷▷8. ~~ For we do not want you to be unaware, ~ brothers, ~ of the affliction we experienced in Asia. ~~ For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength ~~ that we despaired ~ of life itself.

▷▷9a. ~~ Indeed, ~ we felt that we had received ~ the sentence of death.

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

THIS WHOLE SITUATION WAS DESIGNED BY GOD ~ 77

▶▶to get Paul and his coworkers ~ to rely ~ not on themselves ~ but on God.

▶▶We need to consider that ~ when tough or horrible situations ~ arise in our lives.

▶▶He wants us to rely on him. ⇔⇔ **Why?**

▷▷Because is trying to save us ~ from ~ the futility, ~ stress, ~ and frustration ~ of trying to do things ~ apart from him.

▷▷This, ~ I believe, ~ is Jesus' point ~ in telling us ~ that without him, ~ we can do nothing.

▷▷And personally, ~ I am beginning to view whatever is going on with my physically, ~ that the Lord designed it to get me to deal with some issues. 77 8/12



## PAUL WAS NO DIFFERENT FROM OTHER HUMAN BEINGS ~ IN BEING TEMPTED ~ 77

▶▶ to place his confidence ~ on his own powers ~ rather than on God.

▶▶ The roots of human pride grow deep, ~ and are not easily dislodged.

▶▶ We frequently ~ need a good dose of helplessness, ~ ~ 77

▷▷ when we are reduced to extremities ~ and stripped of all false self-confidence, ~ ~ 77

↳↳ before we ~ learn humility ~ and open ourselves up to God's power.

▶▶ Deep certainty of death for Paul ~ led to a deeper trust in God.

## THIS BRUSH WITH DEATH ~ AND GOD'S DELIVERANCE ~ TAUGHT PAUL ~ 77

▶▶ that we cannot rely on our own puny strength ~ but on the God who raises the dead.

▶▶ Those who rely on themselves ~ for their strength ~ and for their wisdom ~ 77

▷▷ cannot rely entirely on God ~ ~ and thus doom themselves to failure.

▷▷ Isaiah warned the Israelites about this. ⇨⇨ [Is. 31:1](#).

↳↳ Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help ~ and rely on horses, ~ ~ who trust in chariots because they are many ~ ~ and in horsemen because they are very strong, ~ 77

→→ but do not look to the Holy One of Israel ~ or consult the Lord! 77 9/12

↪↪ The reason for failure is lamentably simple.

→→ Men ~ are mere men.

→→ And horses ~ are mere horses.

→→ But God ~ is God.

↪↪ Isaiah is demonstrating God's superiority.

→→ Disaster awaits those who trust ~ in human strength ~ rather than in God.

▷▷ And in [Prov. 3:5](#), ~ Solomon exhorts us to trust in God.

↪↪ Trust in the Lord ~ with all your heart, ~~ and do not rely ~ on your own understanding. ⇔⇔ Why?

1. →→ Finite . . . .

2. →→ Understanding is faulty. ⇔⇔ Opposite page

3. →→ And influenced ~ by our sinful nature.

↪↪ Deceitful above all things, ~ and desperately sick, ~ who can understand it?

▶▶ Those who rely on God ~ may appear to be weak ~~ and even to be failures, ~~ but God does not fail to deliver them.

▷▷ David, ~ [Ps. 28](#). ⇔⇔ The Lord is my strength and my shield; ~~ in him my heart trusts, ~ and I am helped. ↕↕ 10/12

## AND THAT ~ BRINGS US BACK ~ TO WHERE WE STARTED.

▶▶ The Lord has been doing quite a work in my heart and mind ~ through this health issue.

▶▶ In my Scripture reading and prayer time, ~ a verse in 2 Corinthians ~ jumped out at me, ~ which is quite apropos to what I'm going to share.

▷▷ 2 Cor. 1:9b.

↪↪ This whole situation that Paul was in ~ was allowed and designed by God ~ to get Paul and his coworkers ~ to rely ~ not on themselves ~ but on God.

▶▶ And I'm beginning to come to the conclusion ~ 77

▷▷ that the Lord has allowed and designed my health issue ~ to get me to deal with things ~ that were long overdue to be dealt with.

▶▶ My health issue.

▷▷ Lower-abdominal pressure and other weird and worrisome symptoms.

▷▷ Anxiety.

▶▶ Enemy attacked.

▷▷ Mind became battlefield

▷▷ A spiritual battle ensued.

▶▶ Drove me into really praying through and reading. 11/12

▶▶ Spiritual battle raging, ~ God decides to deal with me on four fronts.

▷▷ More renewal than it's had.

▷▷ 99.9% of time for prep.

▷▷ Trust issue. ⇔⇔ Control freak.

▶▶ Led to much repentance.

▶▶ Led me to repent that I did not really believe that the Lord has what is best for us at heart.

▶▶ And all of this is starting to lead me into even more of praying through and reading Scripture.

▷▷ Speak the name of Jesus.

▶▶ And now I'm starting to take little, ~ shaky ~ steps into really trusting in the Lord.

▶▶ And spending a lot of time in God's word for prayer and spiritual growth.

▶▶ All of this was almost derailed on Friday afternoon.

▶▶ Conclusion ~ obvious really.

▶▶ Pray for us.