

LENT DEVOTIONAL

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LENTEN DEVOTIONAL APRIL 12, 2022

SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 1:8-22

8 We do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, of the affliction we experienced in Asia; for we were so utterly, unbearably crushed that we despaired of life itself. 9 Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death so that we would rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. 10 He who rescued us from so deadly a peril will continue to rescue us; on him we have set our hope that he will rescue us again, 11 as you also join in helping us by your prayers, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

12 Indeed, this is our boast, the testimony of our conscience: we have behaved in the world with frankness and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God - and all the more toward you. 13 For we write you nothing other than what you can read and also understand; I hope you will understand until the end 14 as you have already understood us in part - that on the day of the Lord Jesus we are your boast even as you are our boast.

15 Since I was sure of this, I wanted to come to you first, so that you might have a double favor; 16 I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to come back to you from Macedonia and have you send me on to Judea. 17 Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans according to ordinary human standards, ready to say "Yes, yes" and "No, no" at the same time? 18 As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been "Yes and No." 19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not "Yes and No"; but in him it is always "Yes." 20 For in him every one of God's promises is a "Yes." For this reason it is through him that we say the "Amen," to the glory of God. 21 But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us, 22 by putting his seal on us and giving us his Spirit in our hearts as a first installment.

DEVOTIONAL

The Rev. Ben Beres '10

“But . . . but . . . But I thought God would never give me more than I could handle?!?”

It is a common misconception, but the challenges we face each day are not given to us in proportion to our strength or our ability to navigate such problems. I don't know how or why this became passed off as gospel truth, but you don't have to look any further than the Garden of Eden to see that God knows we are limited. We are finite. It's not good for us to be alone.

Paul starts our reading today by empathizing with the Church in Corinth in the hardships they are facing. This small group of Christ-centered folks finds themselves burdened beyond their ability. Paul tells them of his woes, not because he wants their sympathy, as a catalyst for action, or for any other desire. He tells them so they know that when they hit their limit, when they have nothing left in the tank, when death seems like a possibility, that God is still faithful. In fact, they have gone that way in obedience to him, and he let them suffer, even to believe they were effectually sentenced to death, so that they might trust him all the more.

Despite Paul's words to the Church, we are tempted to make our lives seem easier or better than they are. We cling to silly things and shield ourselves with aphorisms that fly in the face of our true circumstances. It is not weakness to need help. It is not unfaithful to struggle. Telling the stories of our hardships allows us to also tell the joy of God's provision, and God's strength to bring us through times that would have otherwise destroyed us.

PRAYER

Father God, teach us to be more honest in all our dealings, so that we might be the vessels of your glory, for the whole world to see. Let us welcome others into the challenges we face so that they might pray for us and rejoice with us when the victory is yours. Help us to be transparent to our communities. Forgive the ways we try to hide. Amen.

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