

12/18/12

Deliverance From Death

2Cor. 1:8-11

One day the king of Syria sent his army to apprehend Elisha, due to the fact that he was giving away the Syrian military plans to the king of Israel. When they arrived at the city of Dothan the servant of Elisha looked out and seeing the army surrounding the city with horses and chariots, he said, "Alas, my master! what shall we do? So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those that are with them." And Elisha prayed that God would open his eyes of Gahazi that he might see the heavenly army around the mountain full of horses and chariots to protect them." 2Kings 6:15-17

* Paul found himself in a similar situation in which he was certain that death would be the end result, but God delivered him.

We want to look at the deliverance of Paul from death, characterized by three things. 2Cor. 1:8-11

- I.** The deliverance was beyond human ability. vs. 8
- II.** The deliverance was beyond human confidence. vs. 9
- III.** The deliverance was beyond human reasoning. vs. 10-11

I. The deliverance was beyond human ability. vs. 8

- A.** The apostle Paul recalled a specific example that was beyond human ability. vs. 8a-c
 - * "For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia."
- 1.** Paul declared his desire for them to know certain information by using a phrase called litotes, "we do not want you to be ignorant", to imply the opposite, he wanted them to be informed.
 - a.** He used this phrase often.
 - 1)** Paul told the Romans he did not want them to be ignorant regarding the blindness that had happened in part to Israel until the fullness of the Gentile is come in. Rom. 11:25
 - 2)** Paul told the Corinthians he did not want them to be ignorant regarding spiritual gifts and then he went on to instruct them. 1Cor. 12:1
 - 3)** Paul told the Thessalonians not to be ignorant regarding those who died in Christ and then assured them that they were with Christ and would return with Him for us in the rapture. 1Thess. 4:13

- b. He called them brethren “adelphos”, identifying them as those in the family, just as he and Timothy.
 - 1) Members of the church of God. vs. 1d
 - 2) Members are called saints. vs. 1e
 - 3) Members, recipients of grace resulting in peace with God. vs. 2
- 2. Paul described the particular occasion by the word trouble. “thlipsis”. vs. 8c
 - a. He used the word trouble “thlipsis”, means to press together, pressure causing affliction, distress, pain or discomfort.
 - 1) The word is found twice in verse four, translated “tribulation” and “trouble”.
 - 2) The word is found again in verse six, translated “afflicted”,
 - b. He has already spoken well of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforted them through their sufferings during the Corinthians ordeal.
 - * Now he takes it a step further for the faithfulness of God, even to comfort them at the point of death.
- 3. Paul indicated the place where this crushing experience had occurred, in Asia. vs. 8c

- a. The occurrence was well known to the Corinthians evident by the general description stated in the letter.
 - 1) He had been to Asia in his first missionary journey.
 - 2) He had been to Asia and Europe in his second missionary journey.
 - 3) He had spent three years in Asia, at Ephesus, then Europe.
- b. There are different opinions as to the particular event mentioned.
 - 1) Some think there was another attack on Paul and Timothy at Ephesus.
 - 2) Some think it took place at Troas, but Timothy was not with Paul at the time.
 - 3) Others say it is the Paul’s thorn in the flesh.
 - 4) Still others say it was an illness that God delivered him from?
 - 5) The most commonly accepted is the riot at Ephesus, due to the silversmith, Demetrius. Acts 19
 - a) The information we have in the scriptures about the riot at Ephesus seems to fit the occasion, but if it is another, it really does n’t change the validity or reality of the text.
 - b) Paul said Priscilla and Aquila had risked their own necks for his

life and gave thanks for them.
Rom. 16:4

- B.** The apostle Paul described the extent of that crushing experience beyond human ability in three ways. vs. 8d-f
- * “that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.”
1. Paul depicted their experience as being extremely overwhelming.
 - a. The word burden “bareo”, means to be weighed down with the sense of being heavy.
 - 1) The picture is of an overloaded ship gradually sinking.
 - 2) They were at utter loss.
 - b. He used the phrase beyond measure “huperbole”, means a throwing beyond.
 - 1) We get our word hyperbole from it.
 - 2) But Paul is not using hyperbole in his description of the event, but in a literal way for their literal experience.
 - c. He identified the dire kind of circumstance from without.
 - 1) In other words the situation was severe and highly stressful,
 - 2) The result being weighed down beyond human imagination.

2. Paul also depicted their experience as being extremely helpless.
 - a. The phrase above strength “huper dunamis”, refers to inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of it’s nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth to resist.
 - b. The word appears only one other time in the New Testament. 2Cor. 4:8
 - c. This is the acknowledgment of personal inability for the situation from within.
3. Paul declared their outcome to have been extremely hopeless.
 - a. The phrase despaired “exaporeomai” means to be utterly at loss, to be utterly destitute of measures or resources to see a way out, to renounce all hope.
 - a. This identified the hopeless situation by one’s own assessment, there being no availability of an exit.
 - b. The meaning is plain and simple, when there is no exit to continue to live, there is only an entrance into death.

* Paul’s confidence in God through his suffering is repeated in the epistle!

Illustration

John was sentenced to be boiled in oil, yet he did not die, God delivered him, not human ability.

* Not by might not by power but by My spirit says the Lord. Zach. 4:6

Application

1. Some of us may find ourselves in a situation of being terminally ill, which will be beyond our human ability to remedy the problem.
 - a. The weight of the news will be like a ton of bricks hitting us beyond our own ability to cope with it, yet as we turn to God the burden will be lifted and the sufficient grace will be supplied. 2Cor. 3:5-6, 12:9
 - b. The relief will come from our own personal dependency on God, as we totally commit ourselves to Him that whether by life or death Christ will be magnified. Phil. 1:20
2. Some of us have or will experienced situations that involved a husband, wife, children or another person who has drain us of our strength bringing us to our end.
 - a. Some wives or husbands have been ready to give up their marriage and yet as God ministered to them they obeyed God with renewed strength. Phil. 4:13
 - b. Some parents have come to the end of themselves regarding their children when the ultimate happened and God carried them through.

- * Job said, “For the thing I greatly **feared** has come upon me, And what I dreaded has happened to me”. Job 3:25
- 1) One mother was sustained and triumphed as her son went to prison.
 - 2) Another mother had to turn her own son in as he was present at a shooting and was in possession of the weapon.

The deliverance of Paul from a sentence of death was beyond human ability!

II. The deliverance was beyond human confidence. vs. 9

- A. The apostle Paul declared that they were ready to die. vs. 9a-b

* “Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves.”

 1. Paul confirmed what he had said by elaborating in greater detail. vs. 9a
 - a. The word yes “alla” is a continuative conjunction affirming what he had said and about to say, to be true not an exaggeration.
 - b. The word yes “alla”, could be translated “moreover”.
 - c. The affirmation is verified by the supplementary details of the account.

2. Paul by the phrase, we had the sentence of death “apokrima”, is using a judicial sentence.
 - a. The word is found only this time in the New Testament.
 - b. The phrase is in the perfect tense, indicating something already passed by their own conclusion, yet not executed, but still present in mind.
 - 1) Having prayed to God and pleaded for mercy.
 - 2) Assessing the matter at hand their words were, “We must die or we are going to die”.
 - 3) This was the common manner of life for Paul and his co-laborers.
 - * “For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you.” 2Cor. 4:11-12
 - c. The apostle Paul is speaking of the death of the body.
 - 1) The separation of the soul and spirit from the body, ending life on earth .
 - 2) The word “death” is a key word to our passage being mentioned twice in verse nine and once in ten.
3. Paul was not alone in this conclusion.

- a. The personal plural pronoun “we”, indicates this, as well as “us”, throughout the four versus. vs. 8-11
 - b. Timothy concluded the same thing, along with the others present.
 - c. The experience was not subjective in nature nor an embellishment to impress the Corinthians or emotionally manipulate them!
- B.** The apostle Paul declared the immediate purpose God allowing such an occasion was so they not depend on themselves. vs. 9c
 * “that we should not trust in ourselves.”
1. Paul used the word trust “peitho”, which means to persuade or to induce by words in order to believe.
 - a. The root word also give us the word faith, believe and confidence.
 - b. The context is not that of being persuaded by another person, but of not persuading oneself to have confidence in oneself.
 - c. The confidence and trust that man has in himself is quite strong.
 - d. God created man to trust and have confidence in God not himself!
 - * “Who makes His **angels** spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.” Ps. 104:4

2. Paul knew the strongest drive of man is self preservation, when he is faced with death.
 - a. Man will do anything and everything to live.
 - b. Man will give anything he has in exchange for his life.
 - c. Man is constantly being put in situations and circumstances by God in order that he come to the end of himself and have no trust in himself.
 - d. This does not mean that we throw away all common sense nor the ability or resources to help ourselves but that when God allows us to come to such a situation we can acknowledge our inability so as not to have any confidence in ourselves.

C. The apostle Paul declared the ultimate purpose God allowing such an occasion was so they depend on the divine power of God. vs. 9c

* “but in God who raises the dead.”

1. Paul made the sharp contrast that can not be missed.
 - a. The word but “alla”, marks the contrast between self and God.
 - 1) Man is frail, fickle and fallen.
 - 2) God is a fortress, faithful and flawless.

- b. The divine power is indicated to be the raising of the dead.
 - 1) The word raises “egeiro”, is in the present active tense, literally raising.
 - 2) The key message of the gospel, sourced in the raising of Jesus.
 - 3) Even a Abraham believed God to raise Isaac from the dead. Gen. 22, Heb. 11:19
 - 4) The believer is instantly present at death with Jesus and his physical body will be raised at the rapture. 2Cor. 5:1-8, 1Thess. 4:16-17
- c. God is the God of all comfort, Paul already told them. vs. 3
 - 1) There is no greater comfort than the certain hope of being raised.
 - 2) This hope is based on physical evidence by Jesus and others.
2. Paul made clear certain fundamental life lessons by this statement.
 - a. Reminding them that their lives were temporal.
 - b. Reminding them that the end of this life is not the end of life.
 - c. Reminding them that their lives were in the hands of God.
 - d. Reminding them that God does not make mistakes.

- e. Reminding them that God can not lie and will be faithful to raise them out of death.
- f. Reminding them of their confident hope to be immediately present before God at death. 2Cor. 5:1-8

Illustration

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. “If that *is the case*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver *us* from your hand, O king. “But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.” Dan. 3:16-18

Application

1. God will put all of us in many situations throughout life that shatter our confidence, even to the point of wishing we were dead.
 - a. That we not trust in the arm of flesh.
 - b. That we might come to the end of ourselves.
 - c. That we might know that we are not more spiritual than others.
 - * Job said, “May the day perish on which I was **born**, And the night *in which* it was said, `A male child is conceived.” Job 3:3
2. God will always allow certain things in order that we might trust Him and Him alone.

- a. It may be a situation in your marriage that you would of never expected and you are told by your wife or husband such as, “I had a child out of wedlock before I was a Christian and gave it away to adoption”.
- b. It may be that you are told that you are one of the ones to be laid off in the down-sizing.
- c. It may be that your daughter is pregnant or your son has contacted AID’s.
 - * “Yet man is born to trouble, As the sparks fly upward.” Job 5:7
3. There have been many who have despaired of life as they saw no chance of living, be it through persecution, terminal illness or a volatile situation yet God intervened sovereignly.
 - a. Some have been healed miraculously.
 - b. Others have been amazed at their near death experience, which is unexplainable.
 - c. Yet others have described angels coming for them or heaven itself at their deathbed!
 - * “Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?” Heb. 1:14

The deliverance of Paul from a sentence of death was beyond human confidence!

III. The deliverance was beyond human reasoning. vs. 10-11

A. The apostle Paul declared their confident trust in God, despite human assessment. vs. 10

* “who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us.”

1. Paul stated they trusted God in the past and God delivered them from their past death sentence in Asia.
 - a. He said the evaluation of their own minds was they were going to die.
 - b. He said the events were so great in the sense of being against them, yet God was greater than the events.
 - c. He said the deliverance was due to God’s sovereign will that was worked out in His unsearchable wisdom for His own glory.
 - d. He said they were declaring the trustworthiness of God.
2. Paul stated they were trusting God in the present and God was delivering them by His own choosing.
 - a. He knew God was using them to resolve the Corinthian problems.
 - b. He knew God was using them as examples of comfort in their suffering as ministers of Christ.
 - c. He knew God was revealing all of their human frailties that they not be able to trust or boast in themselves.

* 2Cor. 4:8-12, 11:24-30

3. Paul stated they would continue to trust God to deliver them in the future.
 - a. The past deliverance made God reliable.
 - b. The present deliverance made God a believable.
 - c. The future made God a trustworthy hope.
 - 1) The word trust “elpizo”, is the indicative perfect active, like the sentence of death. vs. 9
 - 2) Indicating something already passed by their own conclusion and present continuance, but not executed.
 - d. The word deliver is the second key word in our passage being mentioned three times in this verse.

* Completing the work and presenting you faultless. Phil. 1:6, Jude 24

B. The apostle Paul declared their confident trust in prayer, despite human assessment. vs. 11

1. Paul told the Corinthians that their intercession for them played a part in their deliverance. vs. 11a

* “you also helping together in prayer for us.”

- a. He said the Corinthians were partners with Paul through their prayers.
 - 1) The phrase helping together “sunupougeo”, means to labor together.
 - 2) This is the only time it appears in this form in the New Testament.
- b. He pointed out their faithfulness to pray for Paul and his companions.
 - 1) The word for prayer “deesis”, has the basic idea of personal and specific needs and it can be used of a request to God or man, but in scripture it is only used for God.
 - 2) The word is used as Gabriel told Zacharias, “Your prayer is heard”, referring to his request on behalf of his wife Elizabeth to conceive. Lk. 1:13
 - 3) The word is used in Peter, “For the eyes of the Lord is over the righteous and his ears are open to their prayers...”. 1Pet. 3:12
- c. He is referring to a certain group of the Corinthians.
 - 1) Those Corinthians, who had repented of their accusations and gossip against Paul had spoken to God on behalf of Paul.

- 2) Those Corinthians, who had continued faithfully throughout the entire ordeal, praying for them.
 - 3) These Corinthians would have greater confidence and trust in God through prayer for future situations.
2. Paul told the Corinthians that others would thank God for their deliverance, as an answer to their prayers. vs. 11b
- * “that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many.”
- a. The thanks given by the first group of many “polus”, indicated the larger number of people, those hearing of his rescue from death.
 - 1) These would thank God for Paul and the others continued earthly presence.
 - 2) These would thank God for the spiritual benefit of Paul and his companions to the church.
 - b. The many indicating the larger number, after hearing are portrayed vividly in their thanks to God.
 - 1) The word persons “prosopon” means the face, countenance, the front of a human head.
 - 2) Depicting a picture of literally many faces uplifted before and

- towards God giving thanks on behalf of Paul deliverance and his missionary companions from the perilous occasion.
- 3) Declaring and demonstrating their gratitude for Paul's deliverance and privilege of seeing the power of prayer.
- c. The answer by God regarding the rescue of Paul and the others is called by Paul, "the gift granted to them."
- 1) The word for gift "karisma" means a favor with which one receives without any merit of his own.
 - 2) The word "grace" has the same root.
 - 3) In other words, God's answer to our prayers is just part of the work of grace in our lives as Christians, not that we deserve it so.
- d. The second group of many "polus", are the Corinthians who prayed for Paul and his friends.
- 1) These are those helping together in prayer. vs. 11a
 - 2) The word many is the third key word appearing two times in this verse, joining the mysterious combination of God's activities in the lives of His people and the petitioning saints on earth.

- 3) Those praying personally and specifically to God for Paul and his missionary team.
- 4) Those delighting in their privilege of being used for God's purposes.

Illustration

Some missionaries were surprised that natives surrounding their house did not follow through to kill them. Years later some of the native were saved and the missionaries asked them about that night and told them they saw these giant men around the house. The missionaries realized it was as they were praying for God to deliver them.

* Psalms twenty declares, "Some trust in horse, some in chariots but we will remember the name of the Lord, our God." Ps. 20:7

Application

1. The trustworthiness of God to work or how He will work can never be based on our ability to figure out.
 - a. The Scriptures tells us But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so

no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God”.

1Cor. 2:9-12

- b.** Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.
- Rom. 11:33-36

2. The trustworthiness of prayer for every situation God works is according to His will, a mystery that is worked out only in the mind of God and Paul trusted in prayer for himself and others in the mission field.

- a.** Paul asked the Romans to pray for him, “Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, that I may come to you with joy by the will of God,

and may be refreshed together with you.”

Rom. 15:30-32

- b.** Paul asked the Ephesians for prayer, “and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel.” Eph. 6:19
- c.** Paul told the Philippians, “For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.” Phil. 1:19
- d.** Paul named a prayer warrior, “Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.” Col. 4:12
- e.** Paul said to the Thessalonians, “pray for us”, “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run *swiftly* and be glorified, just as *it is* with you, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith. 1Thess. 5:25, 2Thess. 3:1-2
- f.** Paul told Philemon, “But, meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me, for I trust that through your prayers I shall be granted to you.” Phile. 22
- 3.** The responsibility of prayer falls on every believer.
- a.** Jesus said, “men ought always to pray and not loose heart.” Lk. 18:1

- b. Paul said, “Pray without ceasing.” 1Thess. 5:17
 - c. Paul said, “I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.” 1Tim. 2:8
 - d. Jude says, “But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit”. Jude 1:20
4. The dangers that confront us in life are many and some will never be resolved without prayer.
- a. The salvation of the lost.
 - b. The reconciliation and restoration of marriages by the transformation of the Holy Spirit.
 - c. The ability to walk in the Spirit.
 - d. The need of wisdom for the decisions, as we raise our children.
 - e. The praying for the sick.
 - f. The intervention of God for safety and protection from unreasonable and wicked men, who hate Jesus, the gospel and the Christian.
- * “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Phil. 4:6-7

The deliverance of Paul from a sentence of death was beyond human reasoning!

Conclusion

Paul’s deliverance from a sentence of death:

- I. The deliverance was beyond human ability!
- II. The deliverance was beyond human confidence!
- III. The deliverance was beyond human reasoning!