

Hearsay or Heresy God Will Never Give You More Than You Can Handle...

I want to confess something to you this morning. I have lived dangerously this year. I made two terrifying decisions. No – I didn't skydive or stick my head inside an alligator's mouth. I said dangerous – not dumb. No offense to you skydivers out there. My scary decisions were spiritual in nature. Ready?

First, I prayed that God would sanctify me. That's scary because the process of sanctification involves a loss of something. In order to be sanctified – that's fancy language for the process of becoming more like Jesus – you must be stripped of something that is stealing your attention and affections from Him. Over the next 2 months here's what my family faced:

- Family illnesses. My sons had numerous ear infections and then in consecutive weeks I had strep throat, pneumonia, and then our entire family got the flu.
- Because of my sons' ear infections, they both had to have surgery.
- My car needed multiple repairs. Those might not seem like a big deal – but when you've found comfort in having a savings account and it gets stripped from you – it hurts.
- My wife and I had one really rough week in there somewhere – one of the hardest in our marriage – yay for being the Marriage and Parenting Pastor!
- Our house needed multiple repairs – one of which was caused by a hail storm. All of this felt like 2 months of hail – if you know what I'm saying?

Somewhere during all that – Gary threw out some options for this summer's series on Hearsay or Heresy – where we're looking at these Christian clichés that get tossed around and some aren't from the Bible and others have been misinterpreted and shortened so that they're no longer Biblically sound. I chose this morning's phrase right in the middle of those crazy 2 months for our family and when I tell you which one you might laugh. You see, when I preach I always ask God to let the message be one preached from a place of personal experience – I want to live out what I preach. So...what phrase did I choose right in the middle of all that our family was going through – not knowing that we'd have another 4-6 weeks of craziness in our lives?

I chose the phrase – the heresy – “God will never give you more than you can handle.”

We had 2 really crazy months – wondering what might go wrong next. We've felt stress, tension, fear, and confusion. What I know this morning – our story pales in comparison to some of yours. Suffering and pain are subjective though, not comparative. When you are in the middle of suffering and pain – it still hurts no matter the intensity. You know exactly what I am talking about. Most of you didn't pray a prayer about sanctification – you didn't ask for this. Yet, you've lost your job and there doesn't seem to be one coming your way anytime soon. Some of you have had difficulties getting pregnant or dealt with difficulties once you became pregnant. Some of you have lost relationships through death, break-ups, and divorce. Some of you are dealing with mental health issues. **And unfortunately**

– in some of your stories someone has tried to comfort you or you’ve attempted to comfort others by saying something like – “I know this season is tough – but guess what? God will never give you more than you can handle so He must consider you pretty strong” “Hey friend – it’s ok because God has a plan and He will never give you more than you can handle.” Ever heard someone say that? People use this phrase to be helpful in the midst of times of discomfort and sadness – but it rarely is.

In order for us to figure out why that phrase is hearsay or a heresy we have to figure out where it comes from. Where does “God will never give you more than you can handle” come from? Let’s turn to 1 Corinthians 10:12-13.

As you turn there – I want you to know that we’re not going to find this phrase standing alone in Scripture anywhere. God does allow us to experience situations that are more than we can handle – but the good news this morning is that He’ll never give us more than He can handle. Whether it’s a temptation to sin or suffering, His power is always present. His power thrives in our weaknesses. Let’s see how in this passage.

12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

Notice quickly – the phrase “God will never give you more than you can handle” isn’t actually in the passage – instead it says, “God will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able.” This is a passage where Paul is warning the Corinthian Christians to be on guard with temptation – it’s not about suffering. He’s just recounted some of Israel’s sinful history. They’d had fallen into idolatry, immoral behavior, testing the Lord, and grumbling against God for their situation. Paul’s telling us that all these things happened with the Israelites for our instruction – for our benefit. He’s telling us to be on guard against these things. Paul is saying, “There’s nothing new under the sun. Every temptation you face – someone has faced before you and that’s been true for thousands of years. You’ll never face a temptation not common to every single person sitting in this auditorium this morning.

You’ll be tempted to follow your own passions and desires. You will be tempted to worship the created instead of the Creator. You will be tempted to test God – to require Him to perform signs and miracles in return for your obedience. You will be tempted to look at your current circumstances – to know God is with you – and to grumble against Him – to tell Him He is not enough or not doing His job right.

In verse 12 Paul is warning us to not think too highly of ourselves or else we’ll be tempted to think we can stand on our own. We CANNOT stand up against temptation alone. The way to endure temptation is God providing the way of escape FOR YOU. He’ll provide **THE** way of escape so the temptation stays a temptation and doesn’t cross over into sin.

Craig Blomberg says, “The circumstances that tempt us to sin are never qualitatively different from those which God’s people of every era have experienced, and we never have to give in to them. There is always an escape-hatch, which is defined as a way to persevere without sinning in whatever difficult situation we find ourselves.”

The phrase “God will never give you more than you can handle” is usually used in times of suffering, not in times of temptation. But based on the context of this passage – Paul is

letting us know that God WILL allow us to be tempted – but He WILL be present in that temptation to provide an escape out of it. That's the first thing I want you to know this morning. **In temptation, God's power provides the escape.** He won't tempt you. James 1:13-14 tells us God cannot tempt us but we're tempted by our own lusts and in 1 Peter we're told we have an enemy in Satan who prowls around like a lion looking to devour us. It is in the midst of those situations that God provides THE way out. A very wise woman once said, "Every time Satan knocks at my door, I let Jesus answer."

Take heart this morning – He is faithful and His power is present with you during temptation. The Holy Spirit who indwells you will provide your way out of temptation. It's His power that shows up in the middle of temptation. When you are weak, His power is strong and He'll never let you face temptation without providing THE way of escape.

Your ability to resist temptation depends fully on you relying on His strength, yielding yourself to the power of His indwelling Holy Spirit. I can't tell you what that will look like for you – but most of us know when we're being tempted and that moment before we cross over into sin. Sometimes the problem is that in the middle of temptation – we don't want a way out, we aren't looking for it, or when God provides it – we go deaf and blind to it. The way of escape is obvious, but we simply don't care. We've decided to move head first into the sin.

It's like the man that was trying to lose weight and decided that it was best if he not drive past his favorite bakery on the way to work each day. So, he took an alternative route. This worked well for some time. But one day he absentmindedly took his old route to work. When he realized what he was doing, he thought, "This must be a sign from the Lord – He wants me to have a donut today." So, he kept driving. But just to make sure he wasn't deceiving himself he said, "Lord, I'll drive past, and if there's a parking spot, I'll take it as a sign from You that You want me to buy something there." And wouldn't you know it – on the 8th time around the building...there was that parking spot.

I know for some of you this morning – it's becoming increasingly difficult to find the way of escape. You have a reoccurring sin or what may seem like an addiction. Can I encourage you this morning to write your name on a prayer card this morning with your request on it? Or to find a prayer partner after our services are over this morning to talk about your struggle? Would you share your struggle with your Life Group? Would you trust them enough to come alongside of you in whatever you're dealing with? If you don't have a Life Group – this might be a great time to start.

The way out of temptation – the way of escape requires your obedience. God's power shows up in your weakness – giving you victory over temptation and sin – but you must follow the Way. If you could handle sin and temptation on your own you wouldn't need Jesus. Temptation reminds us of our weakness and our need for His power to provide the way out. **God doesn't promise that He won't give you more than you can handle in 1 Corinthians 10:13 – He promises He can provide you victory during temptation.** But what about those situations in life that aren't about sin. What about those situations where you are facing pain and suffering – where your world is collapsing all around you? The moments where you are facing hardships, pain, and tragedy not caused by your own sin. Is God giving you more than you can handle? Flip over a couple of pages to 2 Corinthians 1 and let's see what Paul tells the Corinthian believers.

2 Corinthians 1:3-10

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort

those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. ⁵For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. ⁶But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; ⁷and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are *sharers* of our comfort.

⁸For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came *to us* in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; ⁹indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; ¹⁰who delivered us from so great a *peril of death*, and will deliver *us*, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us, ¹¹you also joining in helping us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through *the prayers of many*.

In temptation, God promises the way out – He promises victory. But in the tough times of life – God doesn't promise a way out. Instead, He provides comfort so you can endure it **In suffering, God's power provides comfort.** God will allow affliction but His power provides comfort during those moments. In temptation God requires your obedience – in moments of pain and suffering – God desires your dependence.

Look at what Paul says. We were going through such an affliction – we were burdened beyond our own strength – we were reminded of just how weak we are – so much so that we had given up – there was no light at the end of the tunnel – we thought we were going to die – we were exhausted beyond our own limits.

You've felt that way, right? If not physically – then spiritually, emotionally, mentally?

Those moments remind us of our own weakness. They remind us of our frailty. They remind us that something is wrong with this world. They remind us that there was a time when everything was perfect – that we, creation, and God all lived in perfect harmony but since sin entered the picture we live in a world that groans and longs for redemption. It reminds us that all of creation is in desperate need of the Redeemer.

Does God give us more than we can handle? Paul seems to answer that question with an emphatic yes. But it's to drive us from self-reliance and sufficiency to depending on Him. Paul implores us to stop trusting in ourselves – to stop trying to find comfort on our own – and instead trust in and depend on the God who raises the dead. That's why God will never give you more is a heresy – you were never intended or designed to endure anything on your own – but to have a relationship with the One who can. **In times of pain and suffering God DOES give us more than we can handle – but He'll never give us more than He can handle. His power thrives in your weakness. His power gives comfort in life's hardest moments. Some of you have been angry with Him over circumstances in your life and it's caused you to run from Him– and He wants nothing more than for your return and for you to lean into Him instead.**

“No matter what variety of affliction we may be experiencing, and no matter what its intensity, God will provide strength and encouragement that is adequate for our need. He will bestow more comfort than we have affliction.” Tom Constable

Our 3-year-old, Roman, had his tonsils out in May which meant a night in the hospital for him. I volunteered to stay the night in the hospital with him because we had a 6-month old that needed his mama – and I volunteered because...ice cream. Duh. The surgery

went well but he was obviously in discomfort that night. So what did we do? We literally cuddled for about 20 hours including all night in that tiny hospital bed. I had an absolute blast having that little boy cuddled up next to me – not wanting any separation from me. That’s what times of pain and suffering are meant to do? They’re meant to draw you near to the one who comforts you most. He knew I was present for him for one reason – to be a comfort.

Wherever you’re at right now – whatever you are going through – the God of comfort is with you and wants to be invited into your hospital bed. That’s a weird image. But you get the point! He wants you to cling to Him for comfort because it builds trust and reliance.

If you’re like me – when I read passages like this I sometimes think, “That’s great and all but how exactly does God comfort us? I mean – I’ve been sitting in discomfort and pain for a long time and it doesn’t look like God is showing up.

There are several ways but I want to highlight three ways He comforts:

He comforts through the Resurrection. In the Resurrection, Jesus claims victory over our greatest enemies – sin and death. No matter how hopeless of a situation you are in – no matter what life is beginning to look like – no matter if you are staring death in the face – He promises victory. And because of that – He is worthy of our worship and praise in the direst of circumstances. No trial this side of heaven ever wins. No death, no loss, no pain, no suffering ever triumphs. We do. We always overcome because God’s power defeated death. God’s power shows up in our weakest moments. On the cross of Christ he took care of every pain and every tragedy. Death no longer reigns – Christ does. He wins and because He does – so do we. We have hope because we know this world isn’t all there is – that there is a day coming when this groaning world will be fully redeemed and everything made right again.

1 Peter 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Because of Christ we have hope in this life and in the one to come and because of that we can have comfort in life’s worst circumstances.

The first way He comforts is through the resurrection. The second way He comforts is through modeling. If there’s one person that can identify with suffering – it’s Jesus. He left heaven – a place where He was being worshiped ALL THE TIME to come here and put on flesh. Once here, He wasn’t welcome in His hometown, some people thought He was crazy, people tried to murder Him on multiple occasions, He had literal face to face interactions with Satan, others betrayed Him, and then He’s sentenced to die on the very tree He created. Jesus has experienced pain and suffering and each time His response is to turn to the Father. He always turns to His Father for comfort.

When you turn towards God for comfort in the middle of difficulties you have just become a little more like Jesus. You’re being sanctified even if you didn’t pray for it.

The great Elisabeth Elliott says it this way, “God will not protect you from anything that will make you more like Jesus.”

He comforts us through the Resurrection, through modeling, and the 3rd way He comforts us is through the church. Look at verses 3-5. God comforts us so we can

comfort others. We need God and we need each other. How do we do that? If we're suffering – we let others into our world. If we're friends of a sufferer – we meet them there – we don't take the suffering on ourselves but we come alongside them in theirs. We don't throw around clichés but we sit, we listen, we validate their experience and feelings, we take care of practical needs, we pray, and we hope.

And at the end of the day because we know these things we can make Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 12:9 a prayer. "God your grace is sufficient for me, for your power is perfected in my weakness. Most gladly, therefore, I will boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me."

I have some new friends here at Fellowship that are in the midst of pain and suffering and they are experiencing God's comfort in profound ways. I met Rudy and Veronica through Parent Dedication. They have 3 children all under the age of 4. A little over a month ago Veronica found out that she has stage 4 Triple Negative Breast Cancer. She's going through chemo every two weeks, a round of shots every 4, plenty of lab work, and she'll continue this regiment for 4 months.

I asked Rudy and Veronica last week if I could share their story and asked them to share a few details with us. Here's what they had to say...

"When I initially got my diagnosis I asked questions like 'Can I do this? What about my children? My husband? God are you really with me?' One day while my children napped I was praying and crying and I asked God those questions. Within minutes I received a text from an aunt who is also a believer and had been in prayer for me. She said something to the effect of "The Lord is giving me this word for you Joshua 1:5." Joshua 1:5 "...Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you." It meant everything to me. I've never felt so close to my Creator as I did in that moment. My questions answered and it strengthened my resolve. I haven't questioned my future or that of my family since. I know in whom I place my trust. She went on to say I have never experienced the Lord so close. Never. I've known Him to be mighty and powerful and sovereign and great, but in this situation I've known Him to be sweet and kind and gentle and good and faithful, faithful, faithful! My diagnosis has drawn me closer to Him. His word is a constant reminder, encouragement, and life to my soul. I don't feel constantly overwhelmed or fearful or worried and that's not me that's God.

Rudy: Since the diagnosis, my relationship with the Lord has strengthened as I seek Him more and use His word to help me through this difficult situation. This process is draining physically and mentally because after Veronica undergoes chemo, she is in a state of fatigue and flat out has no energy. With all our relatives 8 hours away, the first two rounds of chemo were difficult as I did not know what to expect from her afterwards. There were times I was on my own cleaning, feeding, bathing and putting my children to bed after waking up at 5:30 am with my 8-month old. At first I felt alone, but as the fear and uncertainty caused me to seek the Lord and his word I read Isaiah 41:10, "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." This verse lifted and rejuvenated me!

We have been blessed above and beyond anything we ever dreamed to ask for. God's provision through His people has been overwhelming. I feel like God opened the windows of heaven and said "Make it rain on the Guajardos!". This scripture came to mind, Matthew 7:11 "If you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him." We've experienced those good gifts in the form of prayer, encouragement, childcare, food, fellowship, from our church family at Fellowship and others locally and across Texas.

Even though we don't have family locally, we have never felt alone in our plight. We're constantly thanking God for His provision because He continues to provide. Everyday I receive texts, phone calls, messages from old friends, new friends, family telling me that they're praying for me and my family. I appreciate that so much. It humbles me and encourages me to actively pray for others too.

Pray for Guajardo's.

Specifically at the moment, please pray that the cancer will respond to the chemotherapy and that God will continue to teach us and use us through our journey. Please pray for continued encouragement not only for me but for my husband who carries the load when I'm not well.

Communion

At this time – our ushers are going to begin passing out the elements for communion. As you receive yours – would you spend some time this morning in confession or praise. If you've been facing and giving into temptation – would you confess that to Him and invite Him to make the way of escape clearer to you. If you're in the midst of suffering and pain and you've pushed Him away or been angry – would you invite God to comfort you. Or maybe this morning you've seen how He is provided the escape in temptation or comfort in the midst of a difficult season – would you praise Him for those things. It is only by His broken body and poured out blood that His power has been given to us.

And on the night Jesus was betrayed, He took the bread, gave thanks, broke it, and told His disciples "This is My body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way He took the cup also saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Outline:

- 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 (NASB)
 - 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. 13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.
- In temptation, God's power provides the escape.
 - "The circumstances that tempt us to sin are never qualitatively different from those which God's people of every era have experienced, and we never have to give in to them. There is always an escape-hatch, which is defined as a way to persevere without sinning in whatever difficult situation we find ourselves." - Craig Blomberg
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-10
 - 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. 6 But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; 7 and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are sharers of our comfort. 8 For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; 9 indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; 10 who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us, 11 you also joining in helping us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through the prayers of many.
- In testing, God's power provides comfort.
 - "No matter what variety of affliction we may be experiencing, and no matter what its intensity, God will provide strength and encouragement that is adequate for our need. He will bestow more comfort than we have affliction." Tom Constable
- God comforts through the Resurrection.
 - **1 Peter 1:3-5** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
- God comforts through modeling.
 - "God will not protect you from anything that will make you more like Jesus." - Elisabeth Elliot
- God comforts through the Church.