

Remnant Life Church
August 31, 2014

**“Lessons by Paul:
Faith in the Time of Crisis
Part 3”**

I Corinthians 12:1-10

REVIEW:

- First 6 ways of how Paul dealt with crisis situations in his life
 1. Prepared to pay any price to follow God’s will for his life
 2. Don’t be put off by people telling you that cannot do what God has told you to do
 3. Even in the difficult times look for the opportunities to serve God
 4. The circumstances may not be able to be controlled but our responses to them can be (F-E-A-R: Faulty Expectations and Assumptions of Reality)
 5. Be realistic about your circumstances but never lose site of the fact that God’s will is still active for it to be accomplished
 6. Pick your battles and the places to get involved – His will not yours!

- The times of crisis and difficulty will come – our question is how will you deal with them?

- Three other men who faced crisis times yet through their responses were used mightily of God
 - Daniel
 - Taken as a prisoner of war by the Babylonians – **Dan. 1:1,6**
 - Desired to have them learn the ways of the captors – **1:5**
 - Stripped of his identity physically and mentally – **1:7**
 - Never forgot who he truly was – **1:8**
 - In the midst of it was shown favor by those around and over him – **1:9**
 - Suffered through plots of enemies; attempts on his life – **6:4,7**
 - Served with power and influence for 3 kings – **2:48**

 - Joseph
 - Sold by his bothers into slavery – **Gen. 37:28**
 - Falsely accused of a crime – **39:17-18**
 - Spent years in prison unjustly – **39:20**
 - In the midst of it was shown favor everywhere he went – **39:21**
 - Rose to the position of 2nd in command of all of Egypt – **41:40**

 - Nehemiah
 - The people are still in exile by the Persians and Babylonians but have been returning to Jerusalem – **Neh. 1:2**
 - This is the time of the third return trip (first two told in Ezra)

- Nehemiah receives permission from King Artaxerxes to return to Jerusalem and begin rebuilding the city walls – 2:6-9
 - He was shown great favor by the king – 2:8
 - He was opposed by many for what he wanted to do – 4:1,3,11; 6:2
 - Completed the task and brought the nation back to order – 7-13
- All of these men and many more had every reason to doubt, become discouraged, quit, complain, even turn from God – but none did and God accomplished His purposes
- Last 4 of what we learn from Paul on how to handle our times of crisis
 - Be willing to fight the good fight and not run from the issues you must face
 - This does not negate picking the places of our involvement and battle
 - Most men of the Bible that we read about, even Jesus, had times when they hid, fled or simply did not engage in what was happening
 - Seek God before you act – (Matt 6:33)
 - Faith in God means trusting that the outcome will be according to His will
 - David ran at Goliath (I Sam 17:38)
 - What is your goliath today
 - Are you running at him or away from him?
 - What is God telling you to do?
 - Be ready to accept God's intervention in ways you do not expect
 - Do not be quick to dismiss unusual ways that God may answer prayer
 - Elijah – God used ravens to bring him food twice a day – I Kings 17:6
 - Lot – 2 angels accompanied him on his journey out of the city – Gen. 19
 - Paul – Acts 16
 - God used the power of His creation in an earthquake (Acts 16:26)
 - The head of the guards cared for Paul and Silas after the earthquake – (Acts 16:33-34)
 - Don't eliminate someone by how they look, sound, or even feel to you
 - God can and will use anyone and anything!!
 - See each and every trial as a way to grow in faith, strength, courage, hope, and credibility.
 - So much of what happens in these times of trouble or crisis are determined by how we respond
 - Every one that we pass through will either make us better or bitter – the choice is ours (James 1:2-3)
 - Elijah, Lot, Paul all came out better in their walk with God because of what they had gone through and how they dealt with them

- It does not mean their problems ended
 - Paul was ultimately martyred but what he accomplished for God had a purpose that resonated for the ages and will continue until Jesus comes again
 - We do not know the impact of how we live our lives will be used of God for years to come
- When we begin to live this way we cannot allow pride to enter
 - Paul received a great gift from God and we permitted to see heaven (2 Cor 12:1,4)
 - First heaven is the atmosphere of the earth (Hosea 2:18; Dan. 7:13)
 - Second heaven is the created cosmos (Gen. 1:14-18)
 - Third heaven is paradise, the dwelling place of God (Luke 23:43; Rev. 2:7)
 - God did this to encourage Paul and sustain him during his years of struggle
 - BUT – God allowed Paul to deal with a “thorn in his flesh” (2 Cor. 12:7)
 - Demonic activity permitted yet limited by God
 - The memory and consequences of his past?
 - Why? To prevent him from becoming prideful by what God had blessed him with (2 Cor. 12:7)
- The measure of our lives can often be seen not in how we deal with the good and easy times, but how we deal with the times of trial
 - Let the light of Jesus shine so brightly in you that people may not even know whether your life is in a time of calm or a time of crisis
 - Do that all to His glory because it is His strength that will sustain you in the times of crisis!