

I'm a Survivor

Survivor: one who lives through affliction;

Scripture:

1 Samuel 30:1-8 "And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; ²And had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way. ³So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives. ⁴Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. ⁵And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. ⁶And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God. ⁷And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David. ⁸And David inquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all."

I. How do people respond when trouble or affliction comes?

- A. Some people despair.
 - 1. Most people have had crises at one time or another that has left them with no more tears to cry.
 - 2. At times like this we actually hurt ourselves with our words. Imagine that you take your car to a mechanic and he says, "I should have been a bricklayer. All the cars I have repaired pack up. In fact, I don't know what I am doing here." What will you do? Of course, you will take your car away. Or you go to the hospital for surgery and the surgeon complains: "I should have been a motor mechanic. All the patients I operated on die." I am sure that you will go somewhere else.
- B. Some people get angry.
- C. Some people look for someone to blame.
 - 1. Some blame themselves.
 - 2. Some blame their spouse, other family members or their friends.
 - 3. Some blame their leaders.

II. Survivors encourage themselves in the Lord.

Ephesians 3:16 "That He (God) would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man"

Encouraged = 2388. chazaq, khaw-zak'; to fasten upon; to seize, be strong (fig. courageous, strengthen, fortify), to bind, cleave, be established, fasten, fortify

Ephesians 6:10 "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."

The Big Rock

A little boy was spending his Saturday morning playing in his sandbox. He had with him his box of cars and trucks, his plastic pail, and a shiny, red plastic shovel. In the process of creating roads and tunnels in the soft sand, he discovered a large rock in the middle of the sandbox. The lad dug around the rock, managing to dislodge it from the dirt. With no little bit of struggle, he pushed and nudged the rock across the sandbox by using his feet. (He was a very small boy and the rock was very huge.) When the boy got the rock to the edge of the sandbox, however, he found that he couldn't roll it up and over the little wall. Determined, the little boy shoved, pushed, and pried, but every time he thought he had made some progress, the rock tipped and then fell back into the sandbox. The little boy grunted, struggled, pushed, shoved--but his only reward was to have the rock roll back, smashing his chubby fingers. Finally he burst into tears of frustration.

All this time the boy's father watched from his living room window as the drama unfolded. At the moment the tears fell, a large shadow fell across the boy and the sandbox. It was the boy's father. Gently but firmly he said, "Son, why didn't you use all the strength that you had available?" Defeated, the boy sobbed back, "But I did, Daddy, I did! I used all the strength that I had!" "No, son," corrected the father kindly. "You didn't use all the strength you had. You didn't ask me." With that the father reached down, picked up the rock, and removed it from the sandbox. Do you have "rocks" in your life that need to be removed? Are you discovering that you don't have what it takes to lift them? There is One who is always available to us and willing to give us the strength we need.

III. **Survivors acknowledge that nothing has the power to overwhelm them.**

Romans 8:35-39 *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." ³⁷Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. ³⁸For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Burning Little Hut

The only survivor of a shipwreck washed up on a small, uninhabited island. He prayed feverishly for God to rescue him, and every day he scanned the horizon for help, but none seemed forthcoming. Exhausted, he eventually managed to build a little hut out of driftwood to protect him from the elements and to store his few possessions. But then one day, after scavenging for food, he arrived home to find his little hut in flames, with the smoke rolling up to the sky. The worst had happened; everything was lost.

He was stung with grief and anger. "God, how could you do this to me!" he cried.

Early the next day, however, he was awakened by the sound of a ship that was approaching the island. It had come to rescue him.

"How did you know I was here?" asked the weary man of his rescuers.

"We saw your smoke signal," they replied.

Jeremiah 29:11 *'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'*