

What Do You Do When Things Get Really Tough?

Scripture:

Luke 6:47-49 “Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: ⁴⁸He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. ⁴⁹But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.”

Introduction:

What do you do when life seems to throw you a curve? Sometimes things seem just too tough to handle. We were never promised that God would keep us from all the evil things that reside in this world, nor would He make an easy road for us. But He did promise that He would always make a way of escape that we could handle life’s toughest assignments.

I Corinthians 10:13 “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”

I. Some people run away.

Jonah 1:1-3 “Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ²“Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.” ³But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.”

- A. Sometimes God seems to be requiring more than we feel we’re able to supply.
- B. There is always a fare to be paid to be disobedient to the purpose of God.
 - 1. The storm came.
 - 2. Jonah was thrown overboard.
 - 3. He was swallowed by a fish prepared by God.
 - 4. It was a hell to Jonah that he cried out to God from.

II. Some people go into denial.

Matthew 26:69-75 “Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, “You also were with Jesus of Galilee.” ⁷⁰But he denied it before them all, saying, “I do not know what you are saying.” ⁷¹And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, “This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth.” ⁷²But again he denied with an oath, “I do not know the Man!” ⁷³And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, “Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you.” ⁷⁴Then he began to curse and swear, saying, “I do not know the Man!” Immediately a rooster crowed. ⁷⁵And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, “*Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.*” So he went out and wept bitterly.”

- A. Peter was still following the Lord but was not warming himself at the enemy’s fire.
- B. It was too difficult for Peter to be identified with Christ, so he denied Him.
- C. As a result, Peter lost his inner peace.

III. Some people divorce themselves from life.

- A. They begin a spiral of downward activities that can only be described as self destructive.
- B. It’s alcohol abuse, drug abuse, sexual abuse, and any number of self destructive activities.
- B. Judas hanged himself.

IV. Peter, John and the rest prayed when things got tough on them.

Acts 4:23-31 “And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. ²⁴So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: “Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, ²⁵who [□]by the mouth of Your servant David have said: ‘Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things? ²⁶The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together Against the LORD and against His Christ.’ ²⁷“For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together ²⁸to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. ²⁹Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, ³⁰by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.” ³¹And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”

- A. They prayed for boldness to continue.
- B. They prayed, “Lord, help us to speak your word.”
- C. They prayed that signs and wonders would continue to be evidenced in their ministry.
- 4. God met them as they prayed.

V. Paul and Silas prayed and praised when things got really tough for them.

Acts 16:25-26 “But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed.”

- A. It was when things got tough that they prayed and doors were opened.
- B. The prisoners were set free because things got tough for Paul; and Silas.
- C. Too many of us want an easy way to do ministry and to approach life.

VI. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to bow (or surrender) to their circumstances.

Daniel 3:13-18 “Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king. ¹⁴Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? ¹⁵Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?” ¹⁶Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷If 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. ¹⁸But 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.”

- A. They kept their integrity as followers of the one true God.
- B. God was with them in the fire. (Notice that He allowed them to go through the fire).
- C. They came through the fire with no after effects upon their lives.