

“Help For Hard Financial Times From 2 Corinthians 1:3-11”

Though Nebraska has not been hit as hard yet as some parts of the country, there is still the concern among many that a down economy will have an impact. How do we deal with such a prospect? We will look at this in greater detail this summer on Sunday morning. In the meantime here is some wisdom from the first chapter of 2 Corinthians.

1. Understand that through such difficulties God most likely will equip us to help others in their times of need. Pray and expect that we will be able to encourage those hurting because we have experience. Also we will put God’s grace and mercy on display. Consider vv. 3-7:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.

2. Remember that we rarely grow in our faith apart from hardship. In such situations we learn that God is faithful. The God who can raise the dead can take care of us. We will come out of such times much stronger. Read vv. 8-10:

For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.

3. Pray that God will give us grace so that glory and thanksgiving will flow to Him regardless of what happens to us. This will take place in large part because hard times move us to pray and God will work among us in response. Notice verse 11:

You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

There is nothing which can remove pain that arises from lost jobs, cut wages, or financial uncertainty. As followers of Christ, however, I pray that we will pray for and encourage one another to remember who ultimately is in charge and that He will never leave nor forsake us. May we say, then, “The Lord is my Helper, I will not fear!” (Heb. 13:5-6).