

SERIES: II CORINTHIANS: THE HEART AND HUMILITY OF A MAN OF GOD, WEEK 3

TITLE: DIVINE DELIVERANCE

TEXT: II CORINTHIANS 1:8-11

INTRODUCTION: (1) ONE OF THE THINGS THAT MAKES II CORINTHIANS SO INTERESTING AND RIVETING IS THE WAY THAT THE APOSTLE PAUL MADE NO ATTEMPT TO HIDE HIS VULNERABILITY.

* HE WAS AN OPEN BOOK AND TRANSPARENT ABOUT HIS WEAKNESSES.

** IN FACT, IF YOU READ THE 13 CHAPTERS OF II CORINTHIANS YOU WILL SEE THAT THERE IS NO ATTEMPT TO PROJECT AN IMAGE. HIS DEFENSES ARE DOWN, HE DROPS HIS GUARD.

*** PAUL IS OPEN AND CANDID, PAUL IS REAL AND AS I SAID TWO SUNDAYS AGO IN OUR INTRODUCTION TO THIS BOOK, NONE OF HIS LETTERS IS MORE REVEALING ABOUT THIS MAN OF GOD THAN II CORINTHIANS.

**** WE SEE THE HEART AND HUMILITY OF A MAN OF GOD.

(2) AND CERTAINLY THIS IS REFRESHING.

* FOR SOMETIMES BELIEVERS FEEL THEY CANNOT IDENTIFY WITH PAUL, THAT HE WAS FORGED FROM A DIFFERENT KIND OF MATERIAL THAN THE REST OF US.

** THAT HE WAS SOME KIND OF SUPERMAN UNLIKE US, THAT HE HAD A BULLETPROOF SPIRITUAL VEST AND WAS NEVER DOWN OR IN DESPAIR.

*** YET IN OUR TEXT TODAY, WE SEE PAUL COMMUNICATING DESPAIR, BURDENS BEYOND HIS STRENGTH, AND HE THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO DIE IN ASIA, ABOUT A TIME OF GREAT AFFLICTION.

**** AND HE OPENS HIS HEART TO US AND HE IS A MAN OF GOD WITH A TRANSPARENT HEART THAT HURTS, NOT A SPIRITUAL TIN MAN THAT DOES NOT HAVE A HEART THAT IS A MECHANICAL ROBOT.

(3) IF WE CAN EVER IDENTIFY WITH PAUL IN OUR WEAKNESS, HUMANNES AND AFFLICTION, IT WILL BE IN THIS TEXT.

* BUT PAUL DOES NOT WALLO IN AFFLICTION, HE IS KNOCKED DOWN BUT NOT KNOCKED OUT, HE IS PRESSED BUT NOT PINNED, THE JAWS OF A VICE THAT HE WAS CAUGHT IN DID NOT DESTROY HIM.

** AND PAUL WILL TALK ABOUT HIS DIVINE DELIVERANCE AND HOW GOD USED THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS TO HELP HIM IN HIS DARK HOUR.

*** WITH THAT SAID, LET ME FRAME THE CONTEXT OF ALL THIS.

**** AS WE COME TO V. 8 OF II CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 1, GOD'S COMFORT IS RINGING IN OUR EARS.

(4) AND THE REASON FOR THAT IS PAUL USED THE WORD COMFORT 10 TIMES IN THE PRECEDING PARAGRAPH, 10 OF WHAT I COUNTED OF 106 WORDS IN THE GREEK TEXT.

* AND THIS GREAT PARAGRAPH IS MEANT TO ECHO GOD'S GREAT COMFORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT IN OUR HEARTS.

** FURTHERMORE, WITH THE RESOUNDING COMFORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF GOD STILL RINGING AND ECHOING IN OUR EARS, PAUL NOW RELATES A DRAMATIC PERSONAL EXAMPLE OF GOD'S CARE AND COMFORT FOR WHICH HE CONTINUES TO BLESS GOD.

*** IN OTHER WORDS, TO SHOW, TO ILLUSTRATE TO THE CORINTHIANS THE POWER OF GOD'S COMFORT, PAUL

REMINDS THEM OF A SERIOUS LIFE THREATENING CIRCUMSTANCE FROM WHICH GOD HAD DELIVERED HIM.

**** PAUL MOVED FROM THE PRINCIPLE OF COMFORT THAT GOD ENCOURAGES BELIEVERS IN THEIR TRIALS IN VERSES 3-7, TO A PARTICULAR SITUATION, AN ILLUSTRATION IN PAUL'S LIFE OF GOD'S COMFORT AND DELIVERANCE.

(5) PAUL WILL TALK ABOUT HIS OWN DIVINE DELIVERANCE AND ABOUT HIS GRATITUDE TO GOD FOR HIS DELIVERANCE AND THANKS TO THE CORINTHIANS FOR THEIR MANY PRAYERS UTTERED ON HIS BEHALF.

* AND AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF PAUL'S OPPONENTS AT CORINTH PROCLAIMING THAT PAUL'S SUFFERING SHOWS THAT GOD'S HAND WAS NOT UPON HIM AND THAT HIS SUFFERING DISQUALIFIED AND SHOWED HE WAS NOT A GENUINE APOSTLE.

** PAUL COMMUNICATES THAT EXTREME SUFFERING SOMETIMES IS A SIGN, A MARK OF APOSTLESHIP, THAT ALL OF GOD'S APOSTLES SUFFERED AND THROUGH WEAKNESS THEY BECAME MORE DEPENDENT ON THE LORD AND WERE REFINED INTO PURE GOLD.

*** SUFFERING BRINGS GOD'S COMFORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT AND FORGES THAT PERSON INTO A VESSEL OF HONOR FOR THE LORD WHO IN TURN

COMFORTS OTHERS THAT ARE HURTING, WITH THE COMFORT THEY HAVE RECEIVED OF GOD.

**** SO PAUL GLORIES IN GOD'S GREAT DELIVERANCE IN HIS LIFE AS HE TALKS ABOUT A GREAT TRIAL HE WENT THROUGH.

(6) THEREFORE I'VE TITLED OUR SERMON TODAY, "DIVINE DELIVERANCE."

* AND UNDER THAT TITLE, WE'LL LOOK AT 3 POINTS TODAY AS WE WORK OUR WAY THROUGH II CORINTHIANS 1:8-11.

** NO. 1 THE DESPAIR OF PAUL, VV. 8&9; NO. 2 THE DELIVERANCE OF PAUL, V. 10; AND NO. 3 THE DEPENDENCE OF PAUL ON PRAYER, V. 11.

*** SO WE'LL LOOK AT THE DESPAIR, THE DELIVERANCE AND THE DEPENDENCE UNDER THE TITLE OF "DIVINE DELIVERANCE."

*** AND WITHOUT ANY MORE INTRODUCTION, LET'S DIVE INTO OUR TEXT TODAY AND LOOK AT V. 8 PLEASE WHERE WE'LL START TO SEE OUR FIRST POINT, THE DESPAIR.

I. THE DESPAIR, (READ V. 8)

A. NOW PAUL BEGINS IN V. 8 BY EXPRESSING HIS CONCERN THAT THE CORINTHIANS NOT HAVE INADEQUATE INFORMATION ABOUT A HUGE TRIAL HE WENT THROUGH IN ASIA.

* PAUL DID NOT WANT THEM TO MISUNDERSTAND OR BE MISTAKEN ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM IN ASIA (ASIA MINOR).

** NOW SPECIFICALLY, THE SITUATION WHICH PRODUCED THE AFFLICTION WHICH CAME TO PAUL IN THE PROVINCE OF ASIA IS UNKNOWN.

*** AND THERE ARE ALL KINDS OF SPECULATIONS AND IDEAS ABOUT WHAT IT WAS.

**** BUT FOR TIMES SAKE AND BECAUSE WE DO NOT KNOW FOR SURE, I'M NOT GOING TO COVER THOSE SPECULATIONS.

1. BUT I CAN SAY, SINCE PAUL GAVE THE CORINTHIANS NO DETAILS ABOUT THIS AFFLICTION, THE TRIBULATION, THIS DISTRESS, IT APPEARS THAT THE INCIDENT MUST HAVE BEEN WELL KNOWN TO THEM, POSSIBLY THROUGH TITUS.

* YET THOUGH IT APPEARS THAT THE CORINTHIANS WERE AWARE OF THIS SITUATION, THEY DID NOT KNOW

ABOUT HOW SEVERE IT WAS TO PAUL OR HOW GOD WORKED IN IT AND DELIVERED PAUL.

** SO PAUL WANTED THEM TO HAVE ADEQUATE INFORMATION WITH NO MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT HOW DEEP A TRIAL IT WAS.

*** SO PAUL SAYS IN THE REST OF V. 8 TALKING ABOUT THE SEVERITY OF THIS TRIAL, "WE WERE BURDENED EXCESSIVELY BEYOND OUR STRENGTH, SO THAT WE DESPAIRED EVEN OF LIFE."

**** AND SEVERAL KEY WORDS HERE WHICH WILL OPEN THE DOOR OF HOW EXTREME PAUL'S TRIAL WAS AND WHOEVER WAS WITH HIM DURING THIS TRIAL FOR HE USES THE PLURAL PRONOUNS WE, OUR AND US IN VERSE 8, POSSIBLY TALKING ABOUT TIMOTHY.

2. AND THE FIRST KEY WORD IS BURDENED TRANSLATED PRESSED IN THE KJV AND PRESSURE IN THE NIV.

* AND THE GREEK VERB USED HERE LIT. MEANS A BURDEN TOO HEAVY TO BEAR, TO WEIGH DOWN, TO DEPRESS.

** AND THE PICTURE WE HAVE HERE WOULD BE LIKE A SHIP WEIGHED DOWN TO THE POINT OF SINKING OR A

PACK ANIMAL THAT WOULD CARRY THINGS THAT FALLS UNDER ITS LOAD ON ITS BACK SO THAT IT CANNOT GET UP.

*** AND WHATEVER THIS TRIAL WAS, PAUL WAS UTTERLY AND UNBEARABLY CRUSHED BY IT THAT HE COULD NOT GET UP.

**** NOW THE NEXT KEY WORDS IN V. 8 ARE “EXCESSIVELY BEYOND” OR BEYOND MEASURE DEPENDING ON WHICH TRANSLATION YOU HAVE.

3. AND THIS GREEK COMPOUND WORD MEANS ABOVE OR BEYOND AND THROW. SO IT LIT. MEANS A THROWING BEYOND. THIS TRIAL WAS FAR BEYOND PAUL, BEYOND HIS POWER OF SURVIVING AND GOING THROUGH IT.

* THEN THE THIRD KEY WORD HERE WHICH FINISHES THE PICTURE OF HOW DEEP THE TRIAL WAS IS “DESPAIED.”

** AND THIS VERB MEANS TO BE UTTERLY AT A LOSS, TO BE IN DESPAIR. IT LIT. MEANS NO PASSAGE OR NO WAY OUT, NO EXIT.

*** MEANING PAUL SAW NO ESCAPE FROM THE DESPERATE SITUATION THAT THREATENED HIS LIFE.

**** PAUL FELT AS IF HE WAS AT THE END OF HIS ROPE AS FAR AS LIFE WAS CONCERNED.

4. SO THIS TRIAL WAS SO SERIOUS THAT IT WAS BEYOND HOPE, PAUL WAS A SINKING SHIP, BEYOND ESCAPE, NO EXIT. THIS TRIAL WAS HUGE, GINORMOUS, BEYOND ORDINARY POWER TO ESCAPE.

* AND EVEN PAUL TOPS OFF HOW SERIOUS HIS DESPAIR WAS IN V. 9A. LOOK AT V. 9A PLEASE.

B. READ V. 9. NOW THINGS WERE SO BAD FOR PAUL AND POSSIBLY TIMOTHY AT THIS TIME, THAT HE BELIEVED THEY WERE GOING TO DIE, THAT A DEATH SENTENCE HAD BEEN GIVEN TO THEM.

* AND PAUL IS TALKING ABOUT HIS STATE OF MIND AT THIS POINT, "WITHIN OURSELVES."

** SO WE ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT AN OFFICIAL DEATH SENTENCE FROM GOVT, BUT IN HIS MIND HE WAS GOING TO DIE AT THAT TIME FOR THE GOSPEL.

*** AND I DON'T THINK IT WAS THE FEAR OF DYING THAT BROUGHT DESPAIR, FOR PAUL LOOKED FOR THAT TIME AS GAIN IN OTHER PASSAGES AND HE WILL GROAN FOR GLORY IN II CORINTHIANS 5. (QUOTE II COR. 5:1&2&8, PHILIPPIANS 1:21&23)

**** BUT THE DEATH SENTENCE THAT PAUL THOUGHT WAS PASSED UPON HIM, THAT HE WAS IN DESPAIR

ABOUT WAS, IN HIS BELIEF, HE HAD NOT FINISHED HIS COURSE, HE HAD NOT FULFILLED HIS MINISTRY.

1. FOR WHEN PAUL COMES TO THE END OF HIS LIFE IN II TIMOTHY 4:6-8, THERE ARE NO REGRETS, NO DESPAIR, FOR HE KNEW HIS WORK WAS DONE. (QUOTE II TIMOTHY 4:6-8)

* NOW PAUL DID NOT HAVE THIS SENSE IN II CORINTHIANS 1:8&9. FOR THIS AFFLICTION CREATED A PARALYZING WEIGHT UPON HIM AND THERE WAS NO EXIT. HE WAS BURDENED AND IN DESPAIR AND HE THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO DIE WITHOUT FINISHING HIS COURSE, HIS MINISTRY.

** NOW THE QUESTION CAN BE ASKED AT THIS POINT, WHY DID PAUL'S LORD PUT HIM THROUGH THIS DESPAIR THERE?

*** WELL THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION IS FORMED IN THE REST OF V. 9. FOR THE NEXT TWO WORDS IN MY BIBLE AFTER WITHIN OURSELVES, ARE "SO THAT," A HINA PURPOSE CLAUSE IN THE GREEK. SO THAT, FOR WHAT PURPOSE?

**** "SO THAT WE WOULD NOT TRUST IN OURSELVES, BUT IN GOD WHO RAISES THE DEAD."

2. AND BELOVED GOD HAD A GREAT PURPOSE IN HIS PROVIDENCE FOR PAUL'S TRIAL AND HIS DEEP DESPAIR, TO TEACH HIM NOT TO TRUST IN HIMSELF!!

* BELOVED, GOD TOOK PAUL TO THE EXTREME FROM WHICH NO HUMAN RESOURCES COULD DELIVER HIM TO TEACH PAUL TO TRUST ALWAYS IN GOD'S POWER IN EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES.

** AND TO TRUST IN THE GOD WHO RAISES THE DEAD IS HERE USED AS A SYNONYM FOR THE OMNIPOTENT GOD, THE ALL POWERFUL, ALMIGHTY GOD.

*** FOR THE ONE WHO CAN RAISE THE DEAD IS THE ONLY HOPE OF A MAN THAT IS DOOMED TO DIE, AS PAUL CONSIDERED HIMSELF TO BE.

**** PAUL'S ONLY HOPE WAS TO TRUST IN A GOD WHO HAS THE POWER TO RAISE PEOPLE FROM THE DEAD AS HE DID WITH HIS SON AND WILL DO THAT IN THE FUTURE FOR THOSE SAVED BY HIS GRACE WHEN CHRIST RETURNS ON THE DAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE JUST.

3. PAUL WAS TAUGHT THROUGH A GREAT TRIAL TO TRUST IN HIS GOD MORE, TO TRUST IN HIS POWER, RATHER THAN TO TRUST IN HIMSELF.

* AND PAUL MOVES FROM GREAT DESPAIR TO GREAT DELIVERANCE. AND WE SEE THIS CLEARLY IN V. 10 WHERE WE'LL SEE OUR 2'D POINT TODAY, THE DELIVERANCE. LOOK AT V. 10 PLEASE.

ii. THE DELIVERANCE, (READ V. 10)

A. NOW PAUL WILL USE FORMS OF THE VERB DELIVER IN 3 DIFFERENT TENSES IN V. 10.

* THE FIRST BEING PAST (HE DELIVERED US FROM SUCH A GREAT PERIL OF DEATH), THE TRIAL HE WAS GOING THROUGH, THE SECOND BEING IN THE NEAR FUTURE IN OTHER TRIALS (AND HE WILL DELIVER US).

** AND THE THIRD IN THE ULTIMATE FUTURE, IT APPEARS IN HEAVEN (AND HE WILL YET DELIVER US.)

*** AND PAUL KNEW NOW THAT HIS ALL POWERFUL GOD WOULD DELIVER HIM SAFELY THROUGH EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE UNTIL IT WAS GOD'S APPOINTED TIME FOR HIM TO DIE AND ENTER HEAVEN.

**** AND THE POWER OF GOD'S COMFORT AND SOVEREIGNTY LED HIM TO DESCRIBE GOD AS "HE ON WHOM WE HAVE SET OUR HOPE."

1. AND BOTTOM LINE, THE MORE BELIEVERS SUFFERS AND EXPERIENCE GOD'S COMFORT AND DELIVERANCE, THE STRONGER THEIR HOPE IN OUR ALMIGHTY LORD GROWS. (QUOTE ROMANS 5:3-5)

* AND BELOVED ONE OF SUFFERINGS PURPOSES IS TO BUILD HOPE AND MORE TRUST IN THE LORD AND MORE DEPENDENCE ON HIS POWER THAN IN OUR OWN STRENGTH.

** AND AS THE CORINTHIANS READ WHAT PAUL SAID, HE DELIVERED US, HE WILL DELIVER US, AND HE WILL DELIVER US AGAIN, THE CERTAINTY OF DELIVERANCE FROM CRUSHING CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD HAVE BUILT MORE HOPE IN THEM TO GO THROUGH TRIALS, THAT NOW OR IN THE FUTURE, OR ULTIMATELY WITH THE LORD, GOD WILL DELIVER US FROM ALL TRIALS.

*** AND AGAIN, KNOWING THAT OUR ALL POWERFUL GOD WHO RAISES THE DEAD IS OUR DELIVERER SHOULD EVOKE PEACE, JOY AND GRATITUDE.

**** BUT ALSO SHOULD MAKE US MORE DEPENDENT TO TRUST IN THE LORD AND MORE DEPENDENT ON OTHER'S PRAYERS FOR US, FOR DELIVERANCE. LOOK AT V. 11 PLEASE WHERE WE'LL SEE OUR LAST POINT TODAY, THE DEPENDENCE.

III. THE DEPENDENCE, (READ V. 11)

A. NOW PAUL'S CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S PAST DELIVERANCE WAS BUILT UPON GOD'S FAITHFULNESS AND ON THE PRAYERS OF BELIEVERS FOR HIM AND IN THIS CONTEXT, THE CORINTHIANS.

* AND PAUL HAS ACKNOWLEDGED HIS DEPENDENCE AND TRUST UPON HIS ALL POWERFUL LORD AT THE END OF V. 9 AND IN V. 10.

** BUT HERE IN V. 11, PAUL ACKNOWLEDGES HIS DEPENDENCE UPON OTHERS FOR PRAYER IN GOD'S PROVIDENCE AND PLAN OF DELIVERING FOR HIM.

*** PAUL WAS HELPED THROUGH THE CORINTHIAN'S PRAYERS. IN OTHER WORDS, THE PRAYERS OF THE CORINTHIANS WERE PART OF THIS DELIVERANCE, A MEANS ORDAINED BY GOD TO FULFILL HIS WILL AMONG PEOPLE.

**** BELOVED, GOD HAS ORDAINED PRAYER AS A MEANS TO THE END OF FULFILLING HIS WILL AND GLORIFYING HIMSELF.

1. THUS THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER IS NOT TO MANIPULATE GOD, BUT TO EXALT HIS GREAT POWER AND SUBMIT TO HIS WILL. GOD USES PRAYER AS A MEANS TO THE END OF ACCOMPLISHING HIS WILL. PRAYER IS POWERFUL, PRAYER IS NOT A FUTILE EXERCISE.

* AND PAUL UNDERSTOOD THE BALANCE BETWEEN GOD'S SOVEREIGN PURPOSE AND THE BELIEVER'S RESPONSIBILITY.

** PHILIP HUGHES INSIGHTS HELP US AT THIS POINT AND I QUOTE: "PRAYER IS INDEED A MYSTERY, BUT IT IS STRESSED OVER AND OVER AGAIN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AS A VITAL PREREQUISITE FOR THE RELEASE AND EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S POWER. IT IS TRUE THAT IT IS GOD WHO DELIVERS, AND THAT GOD STANDS IN NO NEED OF HUMAN PRAYERS BEFORE HE CAN ACT ON BEHALF OF HIS AFFLICTED SERVANTS. YET THERE IS THE MANWARD AS WELL AS THE GODWARD ASPECT OF SUCH DELIVERANCE, AND THE MANWARD SIDE IS SUMMED UP IN THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS TO INTERCEDE IN PRAYER FOR THEIR FELLOW-BELIEVERS WHO ARE ENDURING AFFLICTION...IN PRAYER, HUMAN IMPOTENCE CASTS ITSELF AT THE FEET OF DIVINE OMNIPOTENCE. THUS THE DUTY OF PRAYER IS NOT A MODIFICATION OF GOD'S POWER, BUT A GLORIFICATION OF IT."

*** R. KENT HUGHES IN HIS COMMENTARY ON II CORINTHIANS SAID THIS AT THIS POINT AFTER HE

ACTUALLY QUOTES PHILIP HUGHES, HE SAID AND I QUOTE:

**** “PAUL FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE HUMAN SIDE OF DELIVERANCE AND RESURRECTION POWER- AND THAT IS WHY HIS LETTERS BEAR REPEATED REQUESTS FOR PRAYER.” (END QUOTE)

2. AND BROTHERS AND SISTERS, PAUL NEVER MINIMIZES PRAYER BUT IS DEPENDENT UPON IT TO ACCOMPLISH GOD’S PURPOSES THROUGH HIS POWER.

* AND AS WE GO BACK TO V. 11, WHEN GOD ANSWERED THE CORINTHIAN’S PRAYERS FOR PAUL, THANKS WOULD BE GIVEN BY MANY PERSONS ON THE APOSTLE’S BEHALF FOR GOD’S FAVOR, GOD’S GRACE BESTOWED ON HIM THROUGH THE PRAYERS OF MANY.

** AND I WANT YOU TO GET THE PICTURE HERE. THE WORDS MANY PERSONS IN V. 11 LIT. MEANS MANY FACES.

*** AND HERE’S THE PICTURE. THERE IS POWER IN MANY FACES LIFTED UPWARD TO GOD IN PRAYER.

**** IMAGINE MANY PEOPLE, A CROWD, A MASS OF FACES LOOKING UP TO THE LORD IN PRAYER, OF MANY PEOPLE’S FACES UPTURNED TO GOD IN PRAYER. AND THE BLESSING OF GOD’S POWER AND DELIVERANCE AS

MANY PEOPLE LOOK UP TO GOD AND ARE DEPENDANT UPON HIM.

3. AND PAUL WAS DEPENDENT ON THE PRAYERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE WHO LIFTED THEIR FACES TO THE LORD UPWARD AND GOD RESPONDING IN PRAYER POWERFULLY.

* UNDERSTAND THAT PAUL SEES HIS DELIVERANCE FROM HIS DESPAIRING CIRCUMSTANCES WHATEVER THEY WERE THROUGH THE PRAYERS OF MANY PEOPLE. HE SEES HIS ESCAPE AS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE INTERCESSION OF THE SAINTS.

** AND HE SAYS THAT BECAUSE MANY HAD PRAYED, MANY PERSONS CAN NOW GIVE THANKS BECAUSE THEIR PRAYERS WERE ANSWERED.

*** CHRISTIAN, OUR PRAYERS ARE A PART OF GOD'S RESCUE PLAN IN HIS WILL OF DELIVERANCE.

IN WRAP UP AND IN APPLICATION: (1) IN OUR PASSAGE TODAY, PAUL FINDS OCCASION TO BE THANKFUL IN CIRCUMSTANCES OF GREAT DESPAIR, FOR THOSE AFFLICTIONS HAD GREAT BENEFIT.

* IT PROVIDED THE OCCASION TO EXPERIENCE GOD'S DELIVERANCE AND TAUGHT PAUL TO TRUST GOD MORE.

** AND IT PROVIDED THE OCCASION TO WATCH GOD ANSWER PRAYER AND USED HIS PEOPLE IN PRAYER AND BECOMING MORE DEPENDENT ON THE LORD AND ONE ANOTHER'S PRAYERS.

*** WITH THAT SAID, LET ME ASK THIS QUESTION. HOW DEPENDENT ARE YOU TODAY?

*** AND I UNDERSTAND THAT WE ARE TAUGHT EARLY ON TO BE INDEPENDENT, TO BE PROUD OF OURSELVES AND TO MAKE OUR OWN WAY AND BE QUIET ABOUT OUR DIFFICULTIES.

**** AND WE LIKE THE APPEARANCE OF HAVING IT ALL TOGETHER. BUT THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS NONE OF US DO!

(2) AND GOD'S WORD TEACHES US TO BE DEPENDENT ON THE LORD, TOTALLY TRUSTING HIM AND INTERDEPENDENT UPON ONE ANOTHER.

* FOR WE ARE TAUGHT THAT WE SHOULD BE AN ACTIVE PART OF A LOCAL CHURCH BODY IN WHICH INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER AND SERVE ONE ANOTHER AND USE THEIR SPIRITUAL GIFTS TO BUILD UP ONE ANOTHER. WE NEED TO BE INTERDEPENDENT, RELYING ON AND ASKING FOR PRAYER AND GOD'S PURPOSES TO BE ACCOMPLISHED IN OUR LIVES.

** AND WE ARE TAUGHT TO TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL OUR HEART, QUOTE PROVERBS 3:5&6, PSALM 62:8.

*** AND SOMETIMES GOD IN HIS GREAT LOVE, TO MAKE US MORE LIKE OUR SAVIOR AND THAT WE HAVE A GREATER CAPACITY TO GLORIFY OUR LORD AND PRAISE HIM, MUST GO THROUGH TIMES OF DESPAIR.

**** AND WHO CAN DELIVER US? OUR LORD USING THE PRAYERS OF HIS PEOPLE.

(3) ARE YOU SELF-RELIANT TODAY? ARE YOU GIVING OVER TO INDIVIDUALISM OR TO A TEAM? ARE YOU INDEPENDENT OR INTERDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENT?

* THIS IS A CHALLENGE FOR ALL OF US. PRAY, USE YOUR GIFTS, SERVE ONE ANOTHER, LOVE ONE ANOTHER, PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER, ADMONISH ONE ANOTHER. PLEASE DON'T ISOLATE YOURSELF!

** AND IF THE APOSTLE PAUL NEEDED HELP, CERTAINLY WE DO.

*** LASTLY, WHOM OR WHAT IS YOUR TRUST IN FOR SALVATION, FOR FORGIVENESS OF SIN? SELF WORKS IS THE WRONG THING TO TRUST IN, RELIGION IS THE WRONG THING TO TRUST IN, FOR YOU CAN ONLY COME IN RIGHT RELATIONSHIP TO A HOLY GOD BY GRACE ALONE THROUGH FAITH ALONE IN CHRIST ALONE. TURN

TO HIM TODAY IF YOU DON'T TRULY KNOW HIM. (LET'S
PRAY)