

Chapter 7

Trusting God in Difficult Situations

There are several ways that all Rescue Mission workers could agree on the description of the work of Rescue. One of those frequently mentioned is that there are plenty of difficult situations that crop up on a regular basis. We won't be talking about how to curtail such experience, but we will look at how to get in a right place to minister. There are questions I need to have answered securely in my heart.

What is my belief about God?

MY GOD IS GOOD!

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 "Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, comfort and strengthen your hearts."

Nahum 1:7 (MSG) "God is good, a hiding place in tough times. He recognizes and welcomes anyone looking for help, no matter how desperate the trouble."

MY GOD IS ABLE!

2 Corinthians 9:8 (NIV) "And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."

Ephesians 3:20 (MSG) "God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, His Spirit deeply and gently within us. Glory to God in the church! Glory to God in the Messiah, in Jesus!"

MY GOD IS TRUSTWORTHY!

Hebrews 6:17-19 "In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil."

What is my perspective on pain?

I wrestled with this question for several years. After all, days are filled with seeing the pain in lives of clients. In fact, the journey to understanding in this challenging area came gradually and with personal cost. I began the journey as a counselor, given to the belief that...

Pain is to be avoided.

A little while into the ministry, I discovered that clients were choosing addictions over pain, so I came to the conclusion that...

Pain is inevitable.

As I continued in my quest to find answers, I had to come to the difficult truth that...

Pain is useful.

Perhaps the most difficult part of the journey was to finally arrive at the belief that, for many lives, including my own...

Pain is necessary.

Apostle Paul's life was full of difficult situations. Thankfully, he wrote a lot about how to trust God in each of these. What was Paul's approach?

2 Corinthians 1: 3-4 "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 will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

2 Corinthians 1: 5-11 "For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are sharers of our comfort.

"For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us, you also joining in helping us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through the prayers of many."

What is my understanding of earth-life?

Clients will often believe earth-life is all there is, and it stinks. We know it is a temporary assignment, a beautiful place created by God for providing opportunity to prepare for our future home. Jesus was willing to experience earth-life because He wanted to do God's will. Do I see the same opportunity? Is it a burden or a blessing? The answer probably depends on whether I accept what Jesus said:

John 16:33 "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." - Jesus

If you are bothered by earth-life, I suggest you check out Paul's view in 2 Corinthians 11:24-27 and Philippians 4:11-13. Once I understand the purpose of earth-life, I am ready to endure whatever it takes.

What's Next?

After making sure our beliefs are in order, we have to make sure we are getting a regular refresher dose of Hope every day. So where does Hope come from?

Romans 15:4 "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."

Psalms 62:5 (NIV) "Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from Him."

How do I lose it?

1 Timothy 4:10 "For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers."

Psalm 118:8 "It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man."

How do I regain it?

John 14:1, 27 "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."

Psalm 27:13 "I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living."

Psalm 42:5 "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him for the help of His presence."

How do I make it last?

Romans 8:25 "But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it."

How Do I Encourage the Hurting?

Avoid counterfeit encouragement/false hope.

Jeremiah 6:14, 8:11 "They have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, saying, 'Peace, peace,' but there is no peace."

Jeremiah 14:13,14 "But, 'Ah, Lord GOD!' I said, 'Look, the prophets are telling them, 'You will not see the sword nor will you have famine, but I will give you lasting peace in this place.' Then the LORD said to me, 'The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds.'"

Ezekiel 13:10 "It is definitely because they have misled My people by saying, 'Peace!' when there is no peace. And when anyone builds a wall, behold, they plaster it over with whitewash."

Learn how to assist in grief work.

Isaiah 61:1-4 "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners; to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified. Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, they will raise up the former devastations; and they will repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations."

Learn to confront fear.

Proverbs 3:21-26 (NIV) “My son, do not let wisdom and understanding out of your sight, preserve sound judgment and discretion; they will be life for you, an ornament to grace your neck. Then you will go on your way in safety, and your foot will not stumble. When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. Have no fear of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked, for the Lord will be at your side and will keep your foot from being snared.”

Speak truth.

Romans 15:4,13 “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Hold on to real promises.

Hebrews 13:5-6 “Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,’ so that we confidently say, ‘The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?’”

2 Corinthians 4:7-11,14 “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh...Knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you.”

Psalm 34:4,6-7,18 “I sought the Lord, and He answered me, and delivered me from all my fears...This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them...The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

Focus on Jesus.

1 Peter 1:13 “Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

Summary

Get in the right place to minister – beliefs, perspectives, and understandings.

Provide a better understanding of Hope.

Be willing to face hard reality.

Be ready for grief, fear.

Encourage by truth, focusing on realness.

You can do all things through Him who strengthens you...He works through you to accomplish His plan!

2 Corinthians 9:8

“And God is able to
make all grace abound
to you,

so that always having
all sufficiency in
everything,

you may have an
abundance for every
good deed.”