

## **Living by Faith, Part 3**

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### I. Introduction.

A. Text: 2 Corinthians 1:8ff.

### II. God's people often found themselves faced with impossible circumstances.

A. Abraham, though he doubted, had faith that God would give him a son in his old age. (Genesis 12:1ff; Genesis 15; Genesis 16; Genesis 17; Genesis 21:5ff; Romans 4)

B. God leads the Israelites to be trapped between the Egyptian army and the Red Sea and then opens an alternate route for them. (Exodus 14:1-13ff)

C. Jehoshaphat looks to God in the face of a rapidly approaching army. (2 Chronicles 3:2ff)

D. Jesus challenges his disciples to feed 5,000 men without many resources. (John 6)

E. Paul struggles with difficult circumstances in ministry. (2 Corinthians 1:8-9)

### III. When faced with hopeless circumstances, we are forced to rely on God. (2 Corinthians 1:9)

A. In order for our faith to grow, it has to be stretched to its breaking point. (Numbers 11)

B. Often, our own creativity and resources define the limits of our faith and so our faith is small. (2 Kings 6:24ff-7:1ff ; John 6)

C. Sometimes the purpose of our circumstances is to help us realize our inability and God's ability.

### IV. There are several observations we can make from the scriptural examples above.

A. God always delivers his children out of impossible circumstances in His own way.

B. God's working always involves the prayers of His people. (2 Corinthians 1:10)

1. Prayer recognizes our helplessness.

2. Prayer recognizes the power of God.

3. We should always recruit prayer partners in difficult circumstances. This allows many to give thanks. (2 Corinthians 1:11)

4) We should pray in faith and ask God to increase our faith when we doubt.

C. God is not limited to our creativity in how He responds to our prayers.

**Application questions:**

1. Consider the circumstances that you are currently facing in your life. Are you trying to figure out how God is going to solve them? How can you release those things to God more?

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2. In what areas is your faith being stretched to its breaking point right now? Consider asking a few friends to support you in prayer in those areas.

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3. How has being forced to rely on God helped your faith grow in the past?

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