



When Life Takes a Left Turn-Part 2

Connecting With God's Sustaining Resources

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Glad that you're here this morning; we're in a little excurses from the book of First Corinthians as we work our way through a brief 2-week mini-series on something that is needed, not only in my life, but I trust in many of yours. And that is, how we can navigate our way through the painful left turns of life.

I realize that, making your way through the painful left turns of life, they can be mentally and physically taxing and can be draining as was evidenced by a comment that my wife made to me this week as we traverse our own bend in the road; I knew she was tired when, in the middle of a discussion about calendars and appointments and everything that's coming up this week, next week next month, she blurted in the middle of a conversation. She said, "So Mike, what's your plan for yesterday". I looked at her like what kind of weird philosophical question is that? I said, "I don't have any plans for yesterday, honey; and you know we got a good laugh out of it at the time. And later that night, I was lying in bed and I was thinking about that question as I often do and pondering the profundity of "what's my plan for yesterday", and I said that's just like the painful trials of life. No matter how much we may want to, there's no making any new plans for yesterday. You can't go back to find your way to the beginning of this turn in the road and kind of steering your way into something else. You're on the road and like many of you, it's a road that you'd never really choose for yourself in a million years, but God has chosen it for you. And now you're there.

And last week we tried to look into scripture to find out how God would have us think. This week I'd like to look into scripture to see what God would have us do. And God holds out for us an incredible amount of resources for us – not just for the future – because we talked a little bit about the future being uncertain and just like in looking at the past and being frustrated about the fact that we can't change the past. Really, Jesus, in His teachings, made it really clear there's really not a lot you can do about the temporal future either. He said, in the end of a sermon in Chapter 6 of Matthew, He said, "Don't worry about tomorrow"; He said, tomorrow - no matter how much you worry about that, He said, you can't add an inch to your stature or a minute to your life. He said you better focus on today. Here's how He put it; He said, "Each day has enough trouble of its own". His focus was on grabbing the resources for right now.

What is it that God would have us take from Him that we need to make it through the painful left turns and bumpy roads of our lives?

I want to look this morning, starting in 2 Corinthians 1 for an answer to that question and see how God would have us respond – in our schedules – in our life – in our time – with our energy in the midst of our trials and our struggles. For us, as many of you know, a couple weeks ago, we found out about our unborn daughter's birth defects, and we're reeling from all that information, and all of that was going on in our minds; and instantly I started to figure out how God would have us respond to this. And last week I said, here are some things that are

really clear – jumped right out of the pages of the text. Here’s how God would have us think. I want you to know that God also has us cued up in scripture to make sure we know what to do. And look what He says here in 2 Corinthians 1; 2 Corinthians 1, as He gives us a wonderful statement of re-assurance that God is a God that can comfort. He puts it this way in verse number 3, it says, “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort.” That’s fantastic! He comforts us in all of our troubles. Now here is the interesting turn in the sentence – “so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ, our comfort overflows.” Notice this logic. Verse 6: “If we’re distressed, it’s for your comfort and salvation. If we’re comforted, it is for your comfort which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is firm because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.”

That’s a wonderful statement about God who looks at people that are hurting in the midst of trials, and He’s a God that can provide comfort. But what’s interesting and weaved throughout all of these sentences about that comfort is the means of it is something we may not expect. Keep your finger here and turn to seven chapters later to Chapter 7 of Second Corinthians. If that wasn’t clear in that statement, it becomes crystal clear in this one as Paul talks about his own suffering as he came into the region of Macedonia and people were throwing rocks at him and chasing him out of town, and he was struggling. Look at how he puts it in verse 5. He said, “We came into Macedonia and this body of ours – it had no rest,” 2 Cor. 7:5. “And we were harassed”, he said, “at every turn. There were conflicts on the outside and fears within. But God (here’s the truth of Chapter 1) who comforts the downcast, He comforted us”. Here’s the means, the agency. Look at this phrase: “by the coming of Titus” – a person. There’s a real person here. It wasn’t by just sitting out on some rock watching some sunset over Macedonia and God just infused him with comfort. The comfort came by a human agent, and not only that the people of Corinth who would encourage Titus. Look at verse 7: “Not only by his coming, but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me so that [notice this – the upshot of it all was this] that my joy was greater than ever.

Now you might expect Paul, with all that was going on, according to verse number 5 that he had conflicts on the outside and fears within, would be really down in the dumps but the text says that the joy was greater than ever. Now how was he picked off the ground; how was he so encouraged? The text here is really clear. It came through the human agency of other Christians, like Titus and the Corinthian Church.

Back to our passage, and jot this down as we settle in to how then Paul must respond in the midst of trials. Jot it down in number 1.

“We must connect with God’s people”. If that is the agency for encouragement; if that’s the agency for comfort, we cannot, like so many of us want to, withdraw into our own little circle, our home, our own thinking, our own private corner of the world and say, “Well I’m hurting; I’ll just have to work through this on my own”. The scripture says no; there’s got to be this



opening of the circle of my pain. I've got to let people into this because God, His divine comfort, it comes through people. Look at how he puts it in verse number 8. This is where we dropped off. Pick it back up here. He says, "Therefore, we don't want you to be uninformed brothers"; like so many of us are tempted to do – keep all of our pain and struggles to ourselves. He says, "No, you need to know about the hardships that we suffered in the Province of Asia. We were under great pressure." That's what we were feeling, "far beyond our ability to endure that we even [notice how transparent he is] that we even despaired of life. Indeed, we felt in our hearts the sentence of death, but this happened to us, that we might not rely on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. And He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and He will deliver us and on Him we set our hope that He will continue to deliver us. Now note this; underline this – verse 11 – as you help us by your prayers. See that confidence, that encouragement, that comfort that he has. It's coming by these people's prayers. And not only that; tack on to verse 11, "then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many." Listen, if you connect with God's people, you can be sure of this – the second half of that first point: You can anticipate comfort. You can anticipate a mitigation of your pain. You can anticipate that the bad feelings that come along with the trials of life can be helped; can be soothed and can be encouraged. Not by retreating; not by keeping it private; not by just keeping it to the few people in your life that you think are the closest, but by broadening the circle of your pain. And just like the Apostle Paul is saying, "I don't want people to be uninformed about what I'm going through".

Okay, can this be abused? Yeah, you know the person, "Oh poor me – it's always about them. Prayer request this, prayer requests that. Look, I'm not talking about abusing it into some selfish, self-centered – you know – a fixation on my own needs and everybody is there to minister to me. But you know what I'm talking about. I'm talking about "when your life makes a left turn". Is this going to be public or private? Are you going to let people know about this? Is this something that's going to be just reserved for the private few? Don't fall into that temptation because we need comfort; we need encouragement, and it comes when we're willing to be open about our pain. And that's why it's so important, when your life takes a left turn. Relational situations, marital problems, financial problems, lose your job, medical crisis. Man, people need to need know; it needs to get out there. That may feel weird for some of you; certainly in south Orange County, where so many are concerned about keeping up appearances; we'd feel so uncomfortable saying what the Apostle Paul says: "We despaired even of life". I mean, we didn't even feel like living anymore. And yet the Bible says we've got to be honest with people about what we're going through. And I trust that in your crisis you'll make that your pattern, and that what you'll find is that God will use human beings – imperfect though they are. And at times some people don't know the right things to say, but you will find, in the midst of all of that, God will use them to comfort you. I don't know how it works in God's economy, but look at verse 11 again. Apparently, more prayers are better than few prayers. I don't know how come that's true. I just think that why do we need one hundred people praying – I mean – God is a God who can respond if one person prays, right? Why do I need one hundred people praying for this? And yet, in this passage, Paul says that he had this confidence, this strength, this encouragement, this comfort, when many people were praying. He was helped by the prayers of many. That means people need to



know and you need to encourage people to pray. You need to be more like the Apostle Paul who, almost in every letter in the New Testament he wrote, he asked the people to whom he was writing to pray for him.

“Got big trials here, got a problem, we’ve been prison, help us, pray for us, put us on your prayer list. Paul was real open and real forthright about prayer. He needed people around him to pray. And not only that, here’s another practical reason, into verse 11. Look at it again. “When God then answers” – what happens – “then many people give thanks on behalf of Paul, for the gracious favor that was granted to Paul and the answer to the prayers of many. Now that makes sense.

Keep your little crisis to yourself and what happens? Well, when God delivers you from that one, and God helps you through that; when God answers your prayer, who gets to rejoice in that? Well, let 3 people know and 3 people do. Let 30 people know and 30 people do. Let 300 people know and maybe 300 people get to rejoice in God’s answer to your crisis. And that’s why it’s so important for us to broaden the circle, which goes against the grain of which so many of us tend to want to do. Keep it to ourselves, keep it to the holy huddle – the little few – the inside circle – circle the wagons. This is a family crisis; let’s keep it in the family. Be careful; get it out there. And not only that; as we learned up in verse number 4 of this passage, when we end up being comforted, because we broaden the circle and lots of people get involved in this crisis, we learn how to comfort others. And that is so important because when people know my crisis, see then I can become the resident expert now in being able to help the next person who goes through a similar crisis. And that’s what the text says. When we receive comfort in our troubles, it is so that God can allow us to comfort others down the road; keeping it private and we’ll never know that and you’ll never learn it.

Right now I have lots of people that have surrounded my wife and I and have been a tremendous encouragement to me; and those that are an encouragement to me, in a real profound way, they become the model for me the next time I have to comfort someone in their trial. What a tremendously important thing. Connect with God’s people. Sometimes I meet people and I realize they haven’t been to church in awhile; where have you been? Well, we’ve been going through a real big struggle. I’m thinking then you ought to be here every time the doors are open. I mean the opposite response often is the natural response. But fight it; connect with God’s people and anticipate comfort.

By the way, I think of things like tonight – this beach gathering. It may seem like to you like a real frivolous, superfluous ancillary meeting and what’s the importance of it? You know what I’m saying? When you get the Body of Christ together without an agenda, and there’s not some big list of things to do and we’re not sitting here, got the music, now we’ve got....it’s the perfect time. The Body of Christ gets to sit there and network together; you get encouragement. People need it and they get it. It’s the perfect place. I don’t know what you’re...you’re going to sit around and watch TV tonight? I don’t know what you’re up to this afternoon. But we need to get together as the Body of Christ, without an agenda, so we can sit around and get to know each other and see God work through us, conduits of comfort and



encouragement to each other. Man, it's important. Connect with God's people. If you do you can anticipate comfort.

One more passage – turn over to the second passage I want us to focus on. It's found in Psalm 19 – Ps 19. As I think through, "what does God want me to do"? Well one thing He wants me to do is connect with people - His people – because God gives and He brokers His peace and comfort and encouragement through them.

Well here's another promise for us. It's another discipline, it's a place where definitely Satan will come in and fight us. And see if this isn't true in your own life when crisis hits. Man, it's like our enemy would love to keep us away from this because God has promised this is a source of encouragement and revival in our hearts.

Look at verse 7. The law of Yahweh is perfect reviving the soul. And if there's something I need when I'm hurting it is for my heart to be scraped off the ground, picked up and revived. Well, the encouragement, in one sense, the comfort, the mitigation of my pain, comes through the comfort of people, but also in the text, it says here that the law of God, the writing of God, the text of scripture becomes this source of encouragement or revival to my heart.

Look at the next line. It is in the statutes of the Lord, they're trustworthy, making wise the simple. I don't know about you, but when there's pain in my life, my thoughts are scattered, I don't know what to think. Scripture – it hones my focus in. It gives me the wisdom, it creates the bearing in my life to manage through it. The precepts of the Lord, vs. 8, they're right, giving (this is what I need when I'm hurting. Giving what? Joy! It gives joy to the heart. The commands of Yahweh – they're radiant – giving light to the eyes. I mean – look at that list of things. Those are all the things I need in the midst of my crisis. And God says I have it for you – it's right here. It's in this Book and it's sitting on your shelf. And though in the midst of your pain you may wake up, as so often happens in the midst of a real crisis and trial. You wake up. You know what it's like. You just don't even feel refreshed, don't even feel like going to work, don't feel like doing anything. You certainly don't feel like pulling off an ancient document – off the desk – sticking it there on the kitchen table, opening a notebook, studying it to find out what God has to say to me today. I mean, it's hard to do. The disciplines of this kind of stuff, for a lot of people in the midst of their crisis, it just gets set aside. And it's what we need because the Bible says, when we connect with [#2 on your outline] **God's Word**; then we can anticipate **strength**. He gives us that strength. Let me quantify it; first let's platform off of vs. 11 in this passage, if you're still there.

Ps. 19, vs. 11 – By them, that is the precepts and ordinances of the Lord, your servant is warned; we know which directions not to turn, and in keeping them and doing what it says, there is great reward. Let's quantify that over in Matthew 7. Turn to Matthew 7 with me as Jesus is ending His sermon on the Mount, and He's talked about in our lives as it relates to (you name it – right) marriage, relationships, forgiveness, hatred, our thought life. Go on and on – He's talked about all kinds of things that relate to the Christian life. And then He ends His sermon with this statement. Look at the bottom of Chapter 7. Start in verse 24.



He says, “Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice, he’s like a wise man who built his house on the rock; and you know what that’s like, when the rains came, the streams rose the winds blew and beat against that house”/ beat against that person’s life, it did not fall.” Why? Because it had it’s foundation on the Rock. Vs 26 – “And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not put them into practice [that Book sits there on the shelf, there’s no bible study, there’s no application, there’s no serious attempt to continue in learning what God has to say in His Word; it just of goes to the wayside because we just don’t feel motivated. We feel blaze, we feel bland, we feel melancholy; we don’t want to do it. Well, this is what it’s like for that person. It’s like he builds his life on the sand – this shifting sand. And in verse 27 it says, “The rains came down, the streams rose, the wind blew and beat against that house and it fell with a great crash. I don’t want that being characteristic of my life in the midst of trials.

You want to prepare for trials; if you’re not experiencing now, get into the Word every day. Make sure that you are taking out of the Word your studies – something to do and you’re applying it every day. When you do that, you’ll prepare for trials; if you’re in the midst of trials - same thing. You want to build your house on the Rock. You’ll need that strength, that perspective; then you gotta continue to connect daily with God’s Word. Connect with God’s word and you can anticipate strength.

In my life, just to get personal in the midst of this current crisis, we find out that my daughter has Spinabifita, we’re kind of working through all of that; when I start getting into scripture, it does things to my life and gives me strength in situations like this. I’ll give you one example: studying this week 1 Sam. 1. I don’t know how many times I’ve looked at that passage, but looking at it again was tremendously strengthening for me. Because here I identify with Hannah’s pain. She wants this child so bad, she’s infertile, she’s crying out; wants everybody to help her – there’s no help to be found. And the text even puts it – it almost seems crassly that the Lord had closed her womb/the Lord had caused her infertility. And in all that she’s crying, she’s weeping, she’s wailing; and I’m thinking to myself, “Listen Hannah, you need the whole picture here. Don’t worry, be strengthened. Why? Because I know what’s going to happen. You’re going to get to the place in all of this to commit this child to God. He’s going to grow up in the Temple, he’s going to learn the ropes. He’s going to become the most influential person in the early theocracy of Israel. He will be the pivotal person, and Samuel will not only install Saul as King, he’ll one day anoint the future type of Christ, David; this guy is important! It’s okay. And I’d look at all of that, in all that confusion and pain and all that she’s going through, and then I shut the Bible, shut the notebook; look at my own life now, march off to work and I’m thinking, “You know what, God knows what He’s doing here.” I can’t figure it out. I don’t know what it’s all about, but my study of scripture gives me strength to face my own crisis. It’s like those computer generated 3-D pictures. Remember those – when they were real popular. The first time I saw it in Mission Viejo Mall, I’m walking there; there’s this big picture on a little tripod. It’s got all those weird squiggly lines and colors and I’m looking at it thinking, “That looks like something exploded”, you know; “that’s just chaos.” And the guy was like a carnival guy, “Step right up..stand right there and look... I am watching people do it and I am thinking, “this is a candid camera skit or something”, right? There’s nothing in there; they just want to make me look foolish; so I’m looking at it, walking



by, watching people looking into it. Well I saw that for awhile and I knew something was going on with all that. Then someone at the church bought me a book full of the pictures – page after page was these computer generated deals. But one day I finally said, “I’m going to see something here; if there’s something to be seen.” I closed the door, pulled the blinds. And I’m looking into this book and I’m looking into this book and I’m staring; and after about 10, 15 or 20 minutes, woo! There it happened. Do you know what I’m talking about – those 3-D pictures? All of a sudden - crystal clear man, 3-D. Wow! And then it’s like – you just want to see it on every page. Wow, this is so cool! And that’s what it’s like in the study of scripture for me. I mean, that book is like my life – it is so confusing – looks like scattered colors and squiggly lines. But I go to God’s word and I stare into that for a half an hour, 45 minutes to an hour; then I march off to face my own battles in life. And what happens? There’s clarity there. I see God in the middle of it all. Now I cannot find God in the middle of my trial by spending the evening watching television. I’m not going to get it reading the morning paper. I’m going to find it when I connect with God’s word. Do not let your personal bible study time shift into oblivion in the middle of your pain. You need to connect with God’s people, you can anticipate the encouragement and comfort that comes from that, and you need to continue to connect with God’s Word. And when you do that, you can anticipate the strength that comes with that.

That old adage is true, “The Bible that is falling apart likely belongs to someone who isn’t.” Have you ever heard that? And it’s true, man. So let’s get into it in the midst of our pain and God will give us strength. He’ll keep us from falling apart.

Thirdly, look at another passage with me if you would. It’s found in Phil. 4; I apologize if this is too simplistic for you, but I’m telling you, in the midst of our pain, it’s time to get back to the fundamentals; and I’m telling you, not only is fellowship and bible study fundamental to managing and navigating our personal trials, but certainly Phil. Chapter 4 reminds us that God does not give us the permission to let our minds do what so many other people’s minds do in the midst of their trials. This word, “maridsamai” in verse number 6, translated anxiety or anxious; now that certainly vividly portrays, in just the meaning of that word, what goes on in our minds in the midst of the trial. Our temptations have our mind split into pieces, “maridsamai” – torn apart and thrown into different directions. And I’m telling you that is the temptation. Where is this going, what’s going to happen, uncertainty, not sure; and we fall into all this mental gymnastics. And here the text says, listen, that’s not for the Christian. There’s no place for that in the Christian mind.

He says in verse 6, “Do not be anxious about anything”. I don’t care how bad it is; I don’t care how tough it is, how painful it may be – “don’t be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition, flavored with thanksgiving, because there is plenty to be thankful about, present your requests to God”.

Listen, you don’t set here and let your mind go in a million directions into all these terrible thoughts. Listen, take those terrible thoughts and all that concern and channel it into a request. Just make a clear request. Let God know what you’re concerned about. Here it is, God.



See, not only do you need to connect with God's people and God's word; thirdly, I need to connect with God.

Number 3 on your outline: "I need to connect with God". I need to make sure that, in my life I do not neglect my prayer time. Because I need to go to God and say, "God, here's what I'm afraid of – here's what I found out about my daughter, now; You've known this, but here's my concerns." And with this my mind can go in a million directions, but God, here's what I'd like you to do. Here are my requests: bang, bang, bang, bang, bang! Please. And now I put it on His desk; see, and when that happens....Look at the next verse – verse number 7. We can be guaranteed and anticipate this: When that is the pattern, the peace of God, which transcends all understanding [people won't understand it; you might not understand it. You may scratch your head – why am I feeling so much peace about this. Look at the text. It says, "It will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Look at that! God put a suit of armor around your heart and around your mind, if you will make it your pattern to bring your concerns directly to God. Not sitting there and theorizing and thinking: "what if, and this might, and where are we going with this?" Just bring it to God. That may sound simplistic to you, and to non-Christians, well that sounds ridiculous. Man, we who know what it's like to go to God's Word and find strength; to go to God's people and find comfort. We know what it's like, don't we, to go to our time of prayer and get off our knees after we're done and feel that incredible sense of peace. It's okay. It's on God's desk. I've told Him; He knows. And God says He will put in our lives something that the world's going to go, "I don't understand, shouldn't he be stressed out right now? Shouldn't he be anxious right now? I thought you should be; you know what, maybe it's not healthy – I don't know. You need to see my shrink, because you seem like you really should be down and depressed..." No, we are just doing what we are told to do. It's like those miners in the whole this weekend, right? I'm thinking of those guys; did you read the paper this morning? Here they are getting out; all they want is their donuts, a shower and they want to go home. And the guys with their lab coats going, "You should have post traumatic stress disorder." And they're like, "give me a glazed donut and get out of my way." You know. "We're miners, we know what we were doing, we followed the procedures, we did what we were told to do; it's over, we're on with it." And it's the same thing for us Christians. We entrust our trials to God. We say, "You know what, He'll get us through; one day He'll establish us, this will be ancient history. Now we walk through it; we just trust Him. We say, "God, it's Your deal." And we can go through the trial with a great sense and a tremendous sense of peace in our lives.

Connect with God; you can anticipate peace. Did you already write that down?
Second half of this: Number 3, Anticipate Peace. Anticipate it; expect it!

I get people sometimes saying, "I expect you to be a downcast, frustrated, torn apart, depressed; you ought to be anxious...now come on....something's wrong with you. You're not healthy; you're not doing that." You know what, say, "Listen, why would I need to do that if God has provided me His incredible resources? His family, His Word, His ear. He wants to come...and when all this happens, man! He infuses our heart with strength.



You want to know what it looks like? I'll give you one last passage, Psalm 62. Psalm 62; look at what it looks like in the midst of trials. Here's the prescription for you. And the Psalmist knew what it was like. He had to tell his soul what to do. Here it is, verse 5. I mean the whole chapter is great, but, just jump into verse 5, the heart of the passage.

Psalm 62 vs. 5, he tells his soul this: He says, "Hey soul, find rest, okay?" Find rest and find rest in God because that's the only place you are ultimately going to find that peace. "Find rest, oh my soul in God along, because my hope comes from the Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation. He is my fortress [I love this]; I will not be shaken." Why, because this is God's deal; I'm giving it to him. "My salvation and my honor, they depend on God; He is my mighty rock and my refuge. Trust in him." Now he turns to the people and exhorts the people. "Trust in Him at all times, oh people."

You want a definition of prayer in the midst of trial? Here it is: "Pour out your hearts to Him". Just let it go. Give it to Him. Cry out to God in your prayers; pour out your hearts, for God is our refuge!

See, we belittle the refuge, the power, the strength of God when we walk around and act like, "well God can't give me peace in the midst of this". Well, He can. We trust Him; He is a God that can handle this; so we give it to Him.

Now some people will misunderstand this sermon; I know they will. They misunderstood last week's sermon (some people did); they said this is all just a façade, it's a pretend, you know, trials are really hard, you're not giving trials their due. Listen, I know trials are hard and I know it is disappointing to have unanswered prayer. And I know it's hard for us to hope for the best and to see something go south. I was reminded of that when I looked through my prayer journal this week. I looked at my entry for the morning before I went for the ultrasound with my wife to check to see whether we were having a son or a daughter. Here is what I wrote that morning in my prayer journal. (or part of it)

I said in the middle of this discussion to God, I said, "Please God," I said, may this little boy or this little girl be healthy. God, please, may he or she be developing perfectly."

In 30 minutes she would call me to say, "I'm there, I'm ready, we're going to have our ultrasound". I zip on over the doctor's office and I find out the answer to that prayer and the answer was "No". She will not be. In that I realize there's pain, there's frustration, there's hurt. I realize that; I recognize that. That's a valid feeling. But I know this about God. When I pray for Him to make a nice even-level path and I say, "God, I don't want any bumps, I don't want any mountains"; and God says, "No, that mountain isn't going away". And I say, "But in the Bible I know you can. You could toss that mountain in the sea." And God says, "No, I'm going to leave it right there." His response is not to move the mountain to us. He's saying, "Listen, Carlyn, Mike, you're mountain climbers. But, you know what, I don't want you worrying about the future, you can't affect that; I don't want you worrying about the past; you can't change that. What I want you to do is worry about your next step. Every day has enough trouble. Take the next step, and I will provide you what you need. You need



comfort? I've got a means for that – it's called the Body of Christ. You need some strength? I've got a bible right there on your shelf. Get it. You need some peace? I'm here; let's talk." And God says, you do that, I'll give you every single bit of strength, comfort and encouragement and all the peace you need. Just trust me – step at a time. Day at a time, trust Me.

Tell you what, I know it's painful! But what we need to do, is not only think right, keep the right perspective, but please, please, let us not neglect the resources that God holds out, the sustaining resources He holds out the next time you find yourself in a painful trial.

Let's pray. "God help us – often so prone to respond wrongly to trials, to retreat into our own little corner, not let anybody know what we're feeling, what we're going through. Oh God help us; give us the boldness, the courage, the humility to be able to tell other people, "I need your prayers; I need them now. I need your support. Help us to find that comfort in the Body of Christ, even tonight at the beach, as we all get together, without an agenda, we sit around and get to know each other's heart and each other's lives. Oh God, too, I know sometimes bible study can seem like a burden in the midst of our pain. We lose motivation for just about everything. Help us God never to lose our motivation; to open that Book and to look into that Book to see what You've said and what You want us to do knowing that when we do it, when we put your principles and precepts into practice, that You make our lives like this house that's built on a rock. And You tell us, "You are going to be firm, you are going to stand strong." God, I know that's a reality and it can be for each one of us if we don't neglect your Word. And then Lord, of course, we need to pray. Oh, it's instinctive to cry out to You, but to really pour out our heart to You is what we need to do; to be disciplined to spend those times, those hours on our knees and just say, "God, here's what we're feeling. Here's what we need, here's our request. And God, how good it is to know that Your resource is constantly available, to get up off the floor and feel that peace just shroud and guard our hearts and our minds. Oh God, the world will expect us to be just a basket case in the midst of our trials, but help us to emanate, to reflect the wonderful resources available to us in Christ and in His people and in Your Word. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.