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MORE THAN YOU CAN HANDLE

“God won’t give you any more than you can handle.” We’ve heard these words so often when it seems like we are being buried beneath the weight of troubles so heavy we find it difficult to breathe. It sounds like a reasonable comforting assurance of the fairness of God. There is no way He would allow us to be pummeled by an unfair amount of burdens to the point where we are unable to remain standing, right? But wait. Did God give the Israelites more than they could handle when He led them to a dead end escape on the shores of the Red Sea with the entire Egyptian army closing in behind them? From their perspective, it certainly seems that’s the way they saw things. “As Pharaoh drew near, the sons of Israel looked, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they

became very frightened; so the sons of Israel cried out to the LORD. Then they said to Moses, ‘Is it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us in this way, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness,’” (Exodus 14:10-12). Unable to fight, they were defenseless with nowhere to run, and their hearts began to melt. Then, Moses assured them that God had set them up to witness how truly great their faithful God was by letting Him rescue them in a way no one else would be able to. “But Moses said to the people, ‘Do not fear! Stand by and see the

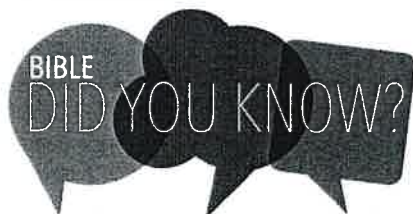
salvation of the LORD which He will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. The LORD will fight for you while you keep silent,” (Exodus 14:13-14). Which would be more impressive to see; witnessing the Israelites bear up under the mounting weight of stress and anxiety, or witnessing God part the waters for His people to cross and then close them back up behind them drowning their enemies? One simply gives glory to our own unimpressive strength while the other highlights the awesome power of the One who protects and delivers us like no one else can. “Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD swept the sea back by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land, so the waters were divided. The sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on the dry land, and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left... Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. When Israel saw the great power which the LORD had used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the

LORD and in His servant Moses,” (Exodus 14:21-22,30-31). The entire Old Testament is full of people who had more than they could handle and watched God deliver them in ways that gave more glory to the God who is able to save than their own ability to handle the hardship. Paul tells of a moment in his life when he most certainly was given more than he could handle and was forced through it all to rely on the deliverance of God. “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,” (2 Corinthians 1:8-11). Notice how Paul says they were burdened “beyond our strength.” In other words, it

was more than they could handle. But isn't God supposed to keep that from happening? Yes, but that's in regard to temptation. There's a difference. "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it," (1 Corinthians 10:13). God will not allow us to face any insurmountable temptation that is too difficult to bear, but notice why this is true. Does God leave us to face temptation completely on our own and simply limit those temptations to the ones we are strong enough to fend off with our own abilities? That's not the idea Paul conveys. Notice, the reason they are not beyond what we are able is because God faithfully provides the way for us to escape. It is not entirely up to us to muster our own resistance and fight with our strength. The reason we are able to endure it is because God provides the way to do so. We are able because God delivers. So when we see others drowning in the sea of burdens this life is capable of hurling upon us, let's pray to God for their deliverance through His

mighty ways and encourage each other to wait for that deliverance. Like Israel, and like Paul, we will at times be given too much to handle. Turn to God not simply for the strength to bear up under it and endure, but rather for the patience and faith to wait for God's glorious deliverance. "My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all day long, 'Where is your God?'...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...All Your breakers and Your waves have rolled over me...I will say to God my rock, 'Why have You forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?'...Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God," (Psalm 42:3,5,7,9,11).

– Daniel Ruegg



"Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off." Rom. 11:22



DIRECTIONS: Each first Sunday of the month, we will have challenges that you should attempt to complete by the end of the month. If we all, as members, complete these challenges, our church will grow in spirit and in number.

1) Encouragement Challenge

Hebrews 3:12-13 *"Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called 'Today,' so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."* Sin has a deceitful nature about it. It is not only full of deceit in the way it entices us to commit it, but it wounds us with a deceitful way we see ourselves and how God sees us after we commit it. When we allow that deceit to take full effect on us it leads us into the darkness of discouragement. We can help each other overcome that tendency by seeking to be an encouragement to each other. Let's set a goal to offer words of encouragement to our brethren this month that we may all fight the deceitfulness of sin with strength and courage.

2) USING YOUR BIBLE IN THE WORLD

Share the following verses with someone who does not attend this congregation at least twice this month:

Galatians 6:1-10

"Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. For each one will bear his own load. The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him. Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith."