

Embrace Your Reality

I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again.

Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one.

Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea,

I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles;

in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea;

and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.

In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

2 Corinthians 11:23-27 (NIV)

A most difficult yet necessary thing to do in long term suffering is to embrace your reality. The great apostle Paul had incredible suffering in his Christian journey through life. The suffering he endured only ended when he was executed for his faith. Some of us in our suffering long for death like Job. Job 3:20-21 (NIV)

“Why is light given to those in misery, and life to the bitter of soul, to those who long for death that does not come, who search for it more than for hidden treasure...”

We, like Job, need to come to the place where we accept the new reality and move on. A fine Christian man of my acquaintance looked at life from a wheelchair. He had been a pastor but some disease infected

him. In order to stop his abdominal convulsions—a symptom of the sickness—the doctors had to operate and sever certain nerves to quiet his body down. The surgery left him paralyzed from the waist down.

He took to writing and made a living by his pen. He was published in many Christian and secular journals and newspapers. I worked alongside him for 3 years and never heard a word of complaint. That is not to say he did not miss mobility. Indeed he must have been distressed at times—especially when some of us young men daily lifted him and his wheelchair up a flight of stairs to his office. That man embraced his reality and redirected his life and work to accommodate his physical limitations.

Can you see your way to redi-

recting your life to accommodate your new reality? Never in the New Testament do we hear promises of health and wealth. Indeed we are warned again and again that tribulation waits all who follow Christ. So embrace your reality and find in the grace of God all you need to persevere.

But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. “Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”

2 Corinthians 12:9 (NIV)

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