

When You Feel Overwhelmed  
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Allen Power

Over the past month, we've all had our breath taken away at the devastation of the earthquake in Haiti killing more than 150,000 people.

Lauren Robin Derby, a UCLA history professor who recently returned from the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic described the situation:

*Even the smallest rural clinics in the Dominican Republic are treating dozens of Haitian earthquake victims, often without the equipment and medications necessary to treat such serious injuries as broken limbs, she said.*

*"None of the medical aid is getting to them," said Derby, who spoke this week to a UCLA Latin American studies class about her recent trip to the border area. "They don't have morphine or trauma specialists or any of the medical personnel and medications that we take for granted in the U.S.," she said. "These are small rural clinics that are set up to treat diarrhea and provide maternal care, but they are not prepared for the injuries that are coming out of Haiti."*

*One makeshift hospital in the Dominican border city of Jimani was performing 60 amputations daily last week, Derby said.*

Source: Letisia Marquez, "UCLA history professor witnesses devastation of Haitian earthquakes," UCLA Newsroom (online), 27 January 2010 (accessed 31 January 2010). Available from the Internet: <http://www.newsroom.ucla.edu/portal/ucla/ucla-history-professors-witnesses-153120.aspx>

Pastor Johnny was quoted in the Baptist Press Friday saying that one of the doctors sent to Haiti from Woodstock said he had performed more amputations than he could count.

- The situation is OVERWHELMING
- Though not on the scale of the Haiti tragedy, right here at home, there are overwhelming situations.
- We've recently seen some of our own class members OVERWHELMED by situations and circumstances
- What are some situations in life that can be overwhelming situations?
- Scripture doesn't promise to keep believers from overwhelming situations...in fact, quite the contrary we see them in overwhelming situations over and over again.
- But here is the promise:

Isaiah 43:2 (New International Version)

2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

- I like how the Message paraphrase says it:

"Don't be afraid, I've redeemed you.  
 I've called your name. You're mine.  
 When you're in over your head, I'll be there with you.  
 When you're in rough waters, you will not go down.  
 When you're between a rock and a hard place,  
 it won't be a dead end—  
 Because I am God, your personal God,  
 The Holy of Israel, your Savior.  
 I paid a huge price for you:  
 all of Egypt, with rich Cush and Seba thrown in!  
 That's how much you mean to me!  
 That's how much I love you!  
 I'd sell off the whole world to get you back,  
 trade the creation just for you.

- In Mark 13, Jesus prepared his disciples for events and situations that would threaten to overwhelm them.
- We can learn from that teaching so that we are prepared for times when WE FEEL OVER WHELMED.
- In the first few verses of Mark 13:
- Jesus is leaving the temple with His disciples
- The disciples are admiring the beautiful temple structure
  - “Look teacher, what massive stones! What magnificent buildings!
- Jesus said:

*<sup>2</sup>"Do you see all these great buildings?" replied Jesus. "Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."*

- The disciples must have gasped in shock!
- Then they climbed the Mount of Olives overlooking the scene and Jesus sat down to teach what we call “The Olivet Discourse”
- Peter, James, John and Andrew asked Jesus privately:

*<sup>4</sup>"Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?"*

*<sup>5</sup>Jesus said to them: "Watch out that no one deceives you. <sup>6</sup>Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive many. <sup>7</sup>When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. <sup>8</sup>Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.*

- Let's reflect a moment on these first few verses of Mark 13

- The Jews were proud of their temple!
- It must have been terribly shocking when Jesus said it would be destroyed
- They asked two questions:
  - When will this happen?
  - What be the signs that these things are about to happen?
- Historically we know that the temple was indeed destroyed by the Romans 40 years later in A.D. 70
- Jesus wasn't just giving them information...he was giving them instructions...look at verse 5: He says "Watch out!" The Greek here translates "Keep your eyes open...BEWARE."
- Beware of what? False Christs.

This is the first point of dealing with overwhelming situations:

1. To be prepared for overwhelming situations in life, be a Christian with eyes wide open!

The second point:

2. Don't fall for "false messiahs" only depend on the real thing: Jesus Christ the Son of God!

- "Wars and rumors of wars" "Nation against nation" "Earthquakes and famines"
- He describes these things as "merely the beginning of birth pains"
- Interesting metaphor, "birth pains"
  - What do birth pains signal? Something new is being ushered into the world
  - When birth pains start how often do they come? Infrequently
  - How does the frequency change? How does the intensity change?
- These kinds of events will increase in frequency and intensity leading up to the GREAT TRIBULATION

Warren Wiersbe said:

*The birth pangs will come suddenly, build up gradually, and lead to a time of terrible sorrow and tribulation for the whole world. "Don't be deceived." Jesus listed the things that must not be taken as the "signs" of His coming. Rather, they are indications that the tribulation "birth pangs" are just beginning. These signs are the success of false Christs (Mark 13:5-6), nations in conflict (Mark 13:7-8a), natural disturbances (Mark 13:8b), and religious persecutions (Mark 13:9-13). They have been always been with us, but since these events are compared to "birth pangs," our Lord may be saying that an acceleration of these things would be significant.*

Mark 13:9-13

9>You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. 10And the gospel must first be preached to all nations.

11Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

12"Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. 13All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary tells us:

*Some interpreters limit the events of this section to the chaotic years preceding Jerusalem's fall (A.D. 66-70). Others relate them exclusively to the Great Tribulation at the end of this Age. But the details suggest that both events are in view.*

- These disciples WOULD be arrested and tried and flogged and persecuted.
- Talk about OVERWHELMING situations!
- Again, Jesus tells them to BE ON GUARD.
- He tells them DON'T WORRY ABOUT WHAT YOU WILL SAY WHEN THIS HAPPENS...the Holy Spirit will give you the words.
- You'll be HATED because of me (Jesus).
- But ones who stand firm will be saved.
- Great warning and preparation for those disciples.
- What about US?
- How would you compare these verses to circumstances we might face as believers?
  - Look at verse 9. What are the last four words? "As witnesses to them."
  - Then what does verse 10 tell us? "the good news must be proclaimed".
  - So even when we are mistreated or abused or intimidated by our circumstances what must happen? "the good news must be proclaimed."
  - How could verse 11 relate to us today?
  - One of the greatest fears of sharing the Gospel is "I may not know what to say!" What's the assurance of verse 11?
  - Now, that's not a license to be unprepared! It's a reassurance that if you are sincere and use the Word of God, the Holy Spirit will use your words to proclaim the good news!
  - What about verse 12? How might that apply to us today? Family divisions over the Gospel.

Look at

Luke 12:51-53 (New International Version) ALL THE WORDS IN RED....Jesus said,

51Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. 52From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. 53They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

- We've recently heard in this very class a member's testimony that talked about this kind of family division because of believing in Christ. Jesus predicted it.
- And in case you weren't feeling bad enough yet...look at verse 13: "You will be hated by everyone because of My name."
- But wait...there's a PROMISE at the end of that verse! What is it?
  - "The one who endures to the end will be delivered."

Here are points three, four, and five of this lesson:

3. Sometimes our BEST WITNESS comes when we are in OVERWHELMING SITUATIONS.
  4. We should EXPECT abuse for our Faith; but we can also EXPECT SUPERNATURAL help from the Holy Spirit.
  5. When we are in an overwhelming situation, we must ENDURE (in other words, keep doing what Jesus told us to do) and WE WILL BE DELIVERED! That's a PROMISE from the Son of God!
- Remember that scripture in Isaiah 43 a few minutes ago?
    - "Don't be afraid, I've redeemed you.
    - You're mine.
    - When you're in over your head, I'll be there with you.
    - When you're in rough waters, you will not go down.
    - When you're between a rock and a hard place, it won't be a dead end—
    - Because I am God, your personal God,
    - I paid a huge price for you: MY SON JESUS CHRIST
    - That's how much you mean to me!
    - We could just say AMEN and go home after that! But we're only halfway through.

Let's read Mark 13:14 -27

14"When you see 'the abomination that causes desolation'[a]standing where it[b] does not belong—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

15Let no one on the roof of his house go down or enter the house to take anything out.

16Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. 17How dreadful it will be in those days

for pregnant women and nursing mothers! 18Pray that this will not take place in winter,

19because those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now—and never to be equaled again. 20If the Lord had not cut short

those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them.

21At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ[a]!' or, 'Look, there he is!'

do not believe it. 22For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect—if that were possible. 23So be on your guard; I have told

you everything ahead of time. 24"But in those days, following that distress, " 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; 25the stars will fall from the sky,

and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'[a]

26" At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. 27 And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

- In Mark 13, Jesus described three stages in this tribulation period:
  - the beginning (Mark 13:5–13),
  - the middle (Mark 13:14–18), and
  - the events that lead to the end (Mark 13:19–27).
- One of the great debates among believers and Bible scholars is when the RAPTURE will occur and we'll be taken out of this world. BEFORE the GREAT TRIBULATION or AFTER the GREAT TRIBULATION?
- You hear a lot of talk about PRE-TRIB and POST-TRIB.
- We have a couple of charts courtesy of Jim Yancey, an end times specialist who will be speaking at our leadership meeting this month next Sunday afternoon (2/21) at 4:15. I would encourage you, even if you are not currently in a leadership position to come and hear him.
- Most of us here at Woodstock subscribe to a PRE-TRIBULATION interpretation of scripture.
- That being the case, all of these events Jesus describes in verses 5 – 27 of Mark 13 will happen AFTER we've been RAPTURED to meet Christ in the air.
- When we talk about the end times a lot of believers get uneasy
- It's stressful for them to wonder exactly what is going to happen when
- Here's my take on it:
  - Regardless of when the RAPTURE will take place what can you and I do to change that fact? Nothing.
  - So, what CAN we do about it?

John Walvoord writes:

*When will the rapture occur? It's a natural question that is often asked. The Bible doesn't give us a direct answer to that. But what we're seeing in our world today, in a very remarkable way, is the setting of the world stage for the events that will follow the rapture. Now if that's true, then it's also true that the rapture could be at any time.*

*If the rapture occurred, would you be ready?*

*Unless you're born again, you're not ready. I'm afraid there are thousands of people who claim to be Christians, sometimes members of the church, who are living an outwardly Christian life but not recognizing their need to put their personal trust in Jesus Christ as their God and Savior. Are you saved?*

*Once you know you're saved, here comes the second question: What are you doing about it? One of the facts of Scripture is, if you're going to face Jesus Christ at the judgment seat after the rapture, your life is going to be evaluated as to what you've done that is worthwhile from God's standpoint. You have to face the fact that Jesus is going to be not only your Savior but your Judge. Are you leading a Christian life?*

- That brings us to verses 32 – 37:

Mark 13:32-37 (New International Version)

32"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33Be on guard! Be alert[a]! You do not know when that time will come.

34It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

35"Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. 36If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. 37What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!' "

- No one knows the day or hour...so **BE ON GUARD** and **WATCH!**
- It's the picture of a night-watchman or a military guard on patrol
- If you're a military guard your job is to be **FAITHFUL** in carrying out the orders your commander gave you **NO MATTER WHAT OBSTACLES** you meet.
- That's the final point of this lesson:

When we feel overwhelmed by our situation or overwhelmed by fear of the future, our job is just to **BE FAITHFUL** and **DO WHAT CHRIST COMMANDED**, no matter what.

- So what's the takeaway?
  - We **WILL** face overwhelming situations in life.
  - Christians must live with our eyes **WIDE OPEN** and be prepared for them
  - We can't depend on anyone or anything but **JESUS** to deliver us when we are in overwhelming situations
  - Sometimes our **BEST WITNESS** comes when we are in **OVERWHELMING SITUATIONS**.
  - We should **EXPECT** abuse for our Faith; but we can also **EXPECT SUPERNATURAL** help from the Holy Spirit.
  - When we are in an overwhelming situation, we must be **FAITHFUL & ENDURE** (in other words, keep doing what Jesus told us to do) and **WE WILL BE DELIVERED!** That's a **PROMISE** from the Son of God!