



#36 - A STRATEGY FOR SURVIVING SPIRITUAL STORMS

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. **Ephesians 6:12** (NIV)

...Paul decided^(a) to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. "After...there," he said, "I must visit Rome also." **Acts 19:21** (NIV)

...I am so eager to preach the gospel ... in Rome. **Romans 1:13-15** (NIV)

1. MY _____ WILL NOT BE _____.

...it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius...² We boarded a ship ... and we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us...⁷ We made slow headway for many days and had difficulty arriving off Cnidus. When the wind did not allow us to hold our course, we sailed to the lee of Crete, opposite Salomone.⁸ We moved along the coast with difficulty and came to a place called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea.⁹ Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was after the Day of Atonement. **Acts 27:1, 2, 6-9a** (NIV)

WHY? Difficulty _____ my _____.

But there is another urgency before me now. I feel compelled to go to Jerusalem. I'm completely in the dark about what will happen when I get there. I do know that it won't be any picnic, for the Holy Spirit has let me know repeatedly and clearly that there are hard times and imprisonment ahead. But that matters little. What matters most to me is to finish what God started: the job the Master Jesus gave me of letting everyone ... know all about this incredibly extravagant generosity of God. **Acts 20:23** (MP)

WHY? Difficulty _____ my _____.

It felt like we had a death sentence written upon our hearts, and we still feel it to this day. It has taught us to lose all faith in ourselves and to place all of our trust in the God who raises the dead. **2 Corinthians 1:9** (TP)

...you are harassed by all kinds of trials and temptations. This is no

accident—it happens to prove your faith, which is infinitely more valuable than gold, and gold, as you know, must be purified by fire. This proving of your faith is planned to bring you praise and honor and glory in the day when Jesus Christ reveals himself. **1 Peter 1:6** (Phillips)

Let us keep looking to Jesus. ...He paid no attention to the shame of the cross. He suffered there because of the joy he was looking forward to. So think about him. Then you won't get tired. You won't lose hope. ⁴You struggle against sin. But you have not yet fought to the point of spilling your blood. ⁵Have you completely forgotten this word of hope? It speaks to you as a father to his children. It says, "My son, think of the Lord's training as important. Do not lose hope when he corrects you. ⁶The Lord trains the one he loves. He corrects everyone he accepts as his son." (Proverbs 3:11,12)⁷ Put up with hard times. God uses them to train you. He is treating you as his children. What children are not trained by their parents? ⁸God trains all his children. But what if he doesn't train you? Then you are not really his children. You are not God's true sons and daughters at all. ⁹Besides, we have all had human fathers who trained us. We respected them for it. How much more should we be trained by the Father of spirits and life! ¹⁰Our parents trained us for a little while. They did what they thought was best. But God trains us for our good. He does this so we may share in his holiness. ¹¹No training seems pleasant at the time. In fact, it seems painful. But later on it produces a harvest of godliness and peace. It does this for those who have been trained by it. **Hebrews 12:2-11** (TLB)

Don't ever forget those wonderful days when you first learned about Christ. Remember how you kept right on with the Lord even though it meant terrible suffering. ³³Sometimes you were laughed at and beaten, and sometimes you watched and sympathized with others suffering the same things. ³⁴You suffered with those thrown into jail, and you were actually joyful when all you owned was taken from you, knowing that better things were awaiting you in heaven, things that would be yours forever. ³⁵Do not let this happy trust in the Lord die away, no matter what happens. Remember your reward! ³⁶You need to keep on patiently doing God's will if you want him to do for you all that he has promised...³⁸And those whose faith has made them good in God's sight must live by faith, trusting him in everything. Otherwise, if they shrink back, God will have no pleasure in them. **Hebrews 10:35, 36, 38** (TLB)

NOTE: _____ disciples produce _____ churches.

However, we are not the kind who shrink back and are destroyed; on the contrary, we keep trusting and preserve our lives! **Hebrews 10:39** (CJB)