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Learning How To Allow God Into the Challenges That Come Our Way  
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It's God's plan but it is our choice to learn how to endure and stay focused on what God's purpose or design is for us, many times this plan is aborted or miscarried along the way of life because of the challenges that we meet. God isn't a respecter of a person, but He is a respecter of faith and it is important that we become grounded in faith in order to be overcomers and walk in a place of victory regardless of what is going on around us.

Phil 1:6 "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:" KJV

2 Tim 1:9 "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and \*grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," KJV

Paul teaches that what God has begun in our lives, He will continue until Jesus returns or we go to heaven. The purpose or plan that God has for us was decided on before the world began. \*Grace or mercy is always associated with power and is mentioned in 2 Corinthians 12 and James 4, as His ability working in us enabling us to do what we can't do in our own strength.

In the previous teachings we have learned that Paul has fought a good fight, has kept the faith and has finished the course.

How are we able to do this when the storms come? The disciples were able to sit at the feet of Jesus and be taught. Earlier in Mark 4 the teaching was about the sower sowing the word, (the teaching is also found in Matthew 13 and Luke 8) but then Jesus began to teach the disciples, giving them special tutoring and instruction. However, later after being taught they still didn't understand what He had been saying to them, He tells them they have no faith. Many times believers will say that if Jesus were here teaching us that things would be alright, but this is not always true, faith comes by hearing and we must hear the word over and over in order to build up that faith.

Mark 4:35-40 "And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. 36 And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. 37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. 38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? 39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" KJV

God's purpose and plan was to go to the other side of the lake of Galilee, not start and then come back or sink, but to go over. However, a great storm arose, totally unexpected, coming out of nowhere and began to cause concern for those on board. On the other side there were demons in different people and it was God's plan to deliver and minister life to all those involved.

This same thing will happen to believers at times, when things in the natural seem to be going along great and we are blindsided with a storm spiritually, there may be a tendency to become discouraged or despondent, making us wonder how we can continue with the Lord. Just because

we are starting to pursue the plan that God has for us doesn't mean that we won't be challenged in our life, in fact, we will be challenged because of Satan, who doesn't want us going to the other side.

When the storm is unexpected, not being prepared for it, we begin to question what have we done wrong? Have we really received a word from the Lord and are we to continue on with the plan? If we know that we have heard from the Lord, we cannot drawback, we must continue on knowing there are those who are waiting for us and the answers we have, we must keep pressing through in order for others to receive what God has for them.

We see that Jesus didn't get excited about the storm, He remained peaceful and God is not going to get excited in the storm either because He is Lord and He cares. Our tendency is sometimes to be looking more at the storm and not at the outcome, we must remain steady, focusing on the finish because it is not over yet.

Paul is on his way to Rome to stand before Caesar, he is going by boat, he had tried to get them to wait because of the seasons changing and the weather would be challenging on the sea, but since everything was calm they chose to go ahead, however a violent storm came up after they had begun their journey.

Acts 27:20-25 "And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away. 21 But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. 22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. 23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, 24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. 25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me." KJV

v. 20 - there was no hope, all would be lost, but God had a plan for Paul to go to Rome and stand before kings to share the gospel with them.

v. 21 - Paul reminded the people that they should have listened, but they were like the children of Israel, they wouldn't listen and it got them in trouble

v. 22 - they were encouraged with the words that none shall be lost, only the ship

v. 23 - the angel never talked about how bad it was, but he talked about the purpose that God had for Paul.

Paul and the people received a word in the midst of the storm that all would be alright. We as believers must chose to believe that things will be alright if we are doing the plan that God has set before us, we will have peace in the midst of the storm.

Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." KJV

As we continue to believe God and allow Him into the storms of our lives, how do we do that? The result and peace that comes, will bring hope to our lives. We are all going to go through challenging times, hopefully not as difficult as Paul where there was no hope. When we lose our

hope, the bible says it makes the heart sick, our emotions and will, our thinking process becomes damaged, that soulish part becomes sick, because we think that we are not going to fulfill the purpose and plan of God.

Examples were given of two men who knowing in their hearts that there was a call of God on their lives and even though circumstances arose, were able to continue with that call and be successful in what Gods plan for them was. One had a wife who was not interested in the things of the Lord nor in becoming an evangelists wife, chose to leave, he lost everything, his denomination took his papers, and he lost his church, but he knew that he was called of God so he started over and eventually his ministry grew to be worldwide; the other started out small in the area of prosperity, going bankrupt three times, but each time was able to come back because he knew that God had a plan for his life and eventually he became a multi-millionaire continuing with Gods plan, is now able to help others all over the world. Neither man gave up, knowing that they had received a word from God and because they chose Gods plan were successful.

When God speaks to us about big things, the devil will challenge us, but God will make those things come to pass if we hang on to the word that He has given to us not letting the storms overtake us, keeping our eye on the goal and finishing the race set before us. There is always timing in the things of God.

1 Thess 2:17-18 "But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire. 18 Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan \*hindered us." KJV

\*Hinder means to break up a road which you are traveling

Paul is speaking to the church even though he wasn't present with them, they were in his heart and he had his best interest for them. His desire was to be with them, but Satan hindered him, detained him from getting to the Thessalonians, but it didn't change Paul's will for them. What Satan meant for evil God turned it around and Paul was able to write to them. God has a plan and just because we have difficulty in our lives doesn't mean that we should set down, but we should be thanking Him, not for the difficulty but for the answer that He is making a way.

Isaiah 43:19 "Forget about what's happened; don't keep going over old history. Be alert, be present. I'm about to do something brand-new. It's bursting out! Don't you see it? There it is! I'm making a road through the desert, rivers in the badlands. Wild animals will say 'Thank you!' —the coyotes and the buzzards— Because I provided water in the desert, rivers through the sun-baked earth, Drinking water for the people I chose, the people I made especially for myself, a people custom-made to praise me." MESSAGE

God is telling us that He is making a way for us, He is going to take care of us, sustaining us, making provision for us. If we get out of His way, we are forfeiting His plan for us, in the challenging times look for a way out, don't just set down and quit, He is making a road for us.

Psalms 81:10-16 "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. 11 But my people would not hearken to my voice; and *Israel would none of me*. 12 So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels. 13 Oh that my people had hearkened

unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! 14 I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. 15 The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever. 16 He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee." KJV

Psalms 81:10-16 "I am the Lord your God, Who brought you up from the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide and I will fill it. 11 "But My people would not listen to My voice, And *Israel did not [consent to] obey Me.* 12 "So I gave them up to the stubbornness of their heart, To walk in [the path of] their own counsel. 13 "Oh, that My people would listen to Me, That Israel would walk in My ways! 14 "Then I would quickly subdue *and* humble their enemies And turn My hand against their adversaries; 15 Those who hate the Lord would pretend obedience to Him *and* cringe before Him, And their time *of punishment* would be forever. 16 "But I would feed Israel with the finest of the wheat; And with honey from the rock I would satisfy you." AMP

Gods plan for the children of Israel was for them to be full and overflowing, but they wouldn't listen, they couldn't see His plan. He was willing to turn their adversaries in order for them to be able to subdue them. God wanted to favor them and bless them.

So many times it is easier for us to walk in our own counsel, and we quit hearing the voice of the Spirit. Gods plan is for us walk in His plan in order that He may give to us the best He has to offer. When we encounter those difficult times in our lives, if we have had a word from the Lord, hang on tightly. God delights in taking chaos and making something great out of it.

Genesis 1:2-3 "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. 3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." KJV

Did God question what was going on or did He act on the situation and make something happen? God began to say what He wanted it to be.

Man has a choice of their destiny in what they do, God isn't in charge, man is in charge because of his will and the choices that he makes. If God were in charge, then all would get saved and we would be out of here tomorrow, God is not willing that any should perish so He is longsuffering and continues to wait. He is waiting for us to make a choice that would change it.

2 Cor 4:13 "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;" KJV

We have that same spirit of faith to say what we want it to be. It is challenging in the midst of those chaotic situations to begin to speak what God says and to frame our world by the words of our mouth. God can turn it around and bring us through it. Gods plan hasn't changed.