

# “Living on the Brink”

2 Corinthians 1:8-11

East Berlin Community Church

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## Introduction

- Example of Jerald H. Maxwell
- Identification of possible “brinks” in our lives.
  
- Our discomfort with wanting to die.
  - 1 Corinthians 10:13-- *“God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”*
- Paul lives **“on the brink”**
  - 2 Corinthians 1:8-- *“For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.”*
  
  - List of the hardships that Paul faced.
    - 2 Corinthians 11:23-29-- *“Are they ministers of Christ? —I speak as a fool —I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness — besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?”*
  
  - Paul lives on **“death row”**
    - 2 Corinthians 1:9-- *“Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead”*
  
- Our attempts to eliminate stress in our lives.

## “Living on the Brink!”

### A. Why does God allow His children to feel overwhelmed with pressures and stress so that they live **“on the brink”**??

1. **Answer: So that we put our confidence in the right person.**
  - 2 Corinthians 1:9b--*“Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead”*
2. Self-confidence verses God-confidence.
3. **Why can God be trusted? What God can do that we can't?**
  - a. God can **“raise the dead”**!
    - 2 Corinthians 1:9b--*“Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead”*
  - b. God can deliver us from despair.
    - 2 Corinthians 1:10-- *“who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us”*

### B. How can Christians living on the brink find renewed confidence in God?

1. **Our confidence in God grows as we review past experiences of God's deliverance and help.**
  - 2 Corinthians 1:10--*“who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us”*
- a. David's confidence from past experiences
  - 1 Samuel 13:35-37--*“I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it. Your servant has killed both lion*

*and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God.” Moreover David said, “The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.”*

- b. Paul’s confidence from past experiences
    - 2 Timothy 4:16--“*At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me...But the Lord stood at my side and gave me the strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion’s mouth.*”
    - 2 Timothy 4:17-- “*The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom!*”
  - c. Hebrew Christian’s confidence from past experiences
    - Hebrews 10:32-35-- “*...recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward.*”
  - d. Our confidence and past experiences
2. **Our confidence in God grows as others pray for us!**
- 2 Corinthians 1:11--“*you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many*”.
- a. Hearing others’ confidence expressed in prayer causes our own confidence in God to grow.
  - b. As they pray for us, God answers their prayers and our confidence grows.