

# Dumb Things: God Won't Give You More Than You Can Handle

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Date: 02 April 2023

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[ 0 : 00 ] Welcome here for this Sunday, April 2nd, Palm Sunday. So I remember being a kid and thinking, Palm Sunday, do I need to show someone my palm?

Do I need to high-five someone? What is Palm Sunday? Well, it's my pleasure to be the pastor here. My name is Kent Dixon. So welcome to you here this morning. And this morning we recognize this day on the church calendar.

It is known as Palm Sunday. So there isn't a lot of high-fiving, as you've noticed. But what is Palm Sunday? What does it mean? What's it all about? Palm Sunday is recognized by Christians around the world and throughout history, actually, as the beginning of the week that leads to Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

It marks the recognition of Jesus in a very public way that began with celebration. and ended, as we've been singing this morning, reflecting on his crucifixion.

Palm Sunday is reflected in the words of Matthew 21, verses 1 to 11. And you can listen as I read this. As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her.

[ 1 : 26 ] Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, tell them that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away. This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet.

Say to the daughter of Zion, See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt, placed their cloaks on them, and Jesus sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

The crowds went ahead of him, and those that followed shouted, Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest! When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred, and asked, Who is this? The crowds answered, This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.

[ 2 : 37 ] This passage of Scripture is one of the few places where the Gospels record that Jesus' glory, just a sense of his fullness, his majesty, was recognized on earth.

Jesus boldly declared himself as king, and the crowds joined him. But we also know how this story ultimately plays out.

Those same people who celebrated him would ultimately desert, condemn, and crucify him just a few days later.

My friends, this public, earthly declaration and recognition of who Jesus was is what we recognize on Palm Sunday. This morning we're concluding our sermon series called Dumb Things Smart Christians Believe.

And through this, that always gets a chuckle, and I like that it gets a chuckle, because it makes me laugh when I think about it. Through this series we've looked at just a few of the dumb things, now dumb, we mean incomplete or mistaken concepts, that Christians have come to believe over time.

[ 3 : 50 ] And now we believe these things often with the best of intentions, with no reason to doubt what they've heard, what we've been told by others over time. We believe it because we probably trust the source.

And we've considered the following dumb things in this series. Everything happens for a reason. God helps those who help themselves.

God has a blueprint for your life. And you can check out any of those messages on our website or podcast. And so this morning we're wrapping up this series by considering the idea that God won't give you more than you can handle.

Maybe you've seen that in Christian greeting cards. Maybe you've written it in a card yourself. Maybe you've had it said to you or said it to someone else with the best of intentions.

Actually meaning to encourage them in a difficult season. But this morning we're going to consider this statement from a different perspective. Many of you know the journey of the injury and rehabilitation of my hand.

[ 4 : 59 ] Did God give that to me? Did he send it my way as a test? Knowing that it would send me to the very edge of my emotional and physical and mental capacity and reserves in so many ways.

But also knowing that I would get through it. But did God allow a dear friend of ours, Michelle's and mine, to welcome a child into his life with complex and multifaceted health conditions.

Many of which will never resolve. For him to be told over and over things to the effect that, well it's a good thing this little girl was born into their family because her father, as an emergency room surgeon, can afford the significant financial burden of his child's care.

Does that feel like God's character to you? Well the suggestion that God won't give you more than you can handle is meant to bring encouragement and comfort. There is a dark side to that statement.

What if you feel overwhelmed by your circumstances and you're struggling? Does that mean it's somehow your fault? Does it mean that it's on you that you're just failing somehow because, well God wouldn't allow you to go through something you couldn't get through on your own.

[ 6 : 27 ] Oh, if you're struggling, oh, we should pray for you or you should pray more. So if you're feeling like you can't do it or you're not up to the task, is that somehow a flaw in you?

A weakness in you as a person because the suggestion is that God won't give you more than you can handle? I believe this expression also suggests that everything that comes your way, even the bad things, have been sent your way.

But that's not correct either. God won't give you. It's a troubling perspective to me. God doesn't give us struggles or pain or difficulties in our lives.

Sometimes life is just life. In a broken world where sin and weakness and sickness and death can affect all of us, suffering and grief can and will come our way.

But that does not mean that God is giving them to you, is not intentionally directing them into your life. What about the idea of something being more than you can handle?

[ 7 : 43 ] I believe that may also suggest in some ways that God knows your breaking point. It suggests that God knows your maximum capacity.

He knows your ultimate limits. And it suggests that He might well push you right to the edge. But is that true? Nope.

Friends, I believe this generally well-known and well-meant statement, God won't give you more than you can handle, suggests that if you're struggling under the weight of the difficulties and challenges in your life, it might be a character flaw or a failure on your part somehow.

Because if I personally can't handle what I'm going through and then God wouldn't give me more than I can seemingly personally handle under my own strength, then what's the matter with me? Do you see that perspective, how that begins to happen? This perspective is also deeply untrue because it suggests that God gives us a challenge and then it's all on us to carry the weight ourselves.

[ 9 : 00 ] So where do we find the truth in all of this? This is what we've done with all of these statements. Where do we find the kernel of truth or the real truth? Where did this expression or idea come from?

If it's not actually accurate, what's the source? Well, 1 Corinthians 10, 13 says, So I think, do you recognize potentially the root of this idea here?

But it's critical for us to recognize that Paul is addressing sin here. Paul is speaking of sin. He's speaking of temptation.

He's not speaking of suffering. He's not speaking of grief. He's telling us God will not allow us to be tempted to sin beyond what we can bear with his help.

So this passage actually has nothing to do with the challenges or pain or suffering that we may experience in our lives as human beings. but it's been adapted into, it's been morphed into, an expression that means something different than what Paul is saying here.

[10:25] So thankfully, Paul is helpful. Paul gives us a clearer understanding of relating to hardship or suffering in our lives in 2 Corinthians 1, 8 to 11.

And I've got a couple of slides because it's a big passage. We do not want to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia.

We were under great pressure, far beyond our abilities to endure, so that we despaired even in life. Indeed, in our hearts, we felt the sentence of death.

I almost need glasses still. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves, but on God who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril and He will deliver us.

On Him we have set our hope that He will continue to deliver us as you help us by your prayers.

Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted to us in answer to the prayers of many.

[11:34] So Paul is quite clear here that human beings can definitely experience more suffering than they can handle on their own. Have you ever experienced, this is a rhetorical question because I know the answer is yes for all of you, have you ever experienced heartbreak where the grief of struggle or loss or pain felt like your heart was literally going to stop beating?

The ache, the agony, the anguish of it. Do you want some hope? I want to suggest the most important thing that we can do in difficult or painful circumstances is to stop and recognize the opportunities that these seasons in our lives can bring.

And in that, remember that God always uses even the bad things that happen to us. Challenges in our lives are opportunities to grow closer to God and others.

I'm not telling you you need to be better, you need to bear up under the weight, you need to tough it out. Do you hear me saying God and others? I'm not saying anything about doing this on your own. Not at all. Nor does God expect you to. cry out to him in prayer. Ask for his help and strength in difficult times.

[13:04] I remember hearing the news that Shelby Weeb had passed. And I wept. I wept for Nelson and Marshall and Joy and Eldon and Lauren and TJ and that entire family.

And I said out loud, no, Father. Cry out to him in anguish. Ask God to give you a sense of his presence in every moment and he will do that.

If you're ever struggling, I think I've shared this with you before, if you're ever struggling about how you feel insecure in yourself, you feel judged, you feel criticized, you feel like you're not enough somehow, take a moment by yourself ask God to give you a sense of how he feels about you.

It will brighten your day, I promise. This is easier said than done in our busy world, but pay attention. Because sometimes we can easily miss God's action.

God's speaking through other people and their actions directed towards us. God will send you and me encouragement through the words and actions of other people.

[14:23] I fully believe that. God will use others to speak to and encourage you. And above all, remember that you are not alone.

God is with you. And even though it's not always easy, let go also of your fear and pride of asking someone else for help.

We're afraid to do that. We're afraid to say, you know what, I just need a hand. I just need someone to listen. I just need something. I don't know if it's because we're Christians and we have a sense that we're supposed to do it on our own.

Wrong. Or that we're Canadians and we don't want to bother someone else. Wrong. Let go of your pride and ask for help. Be willing to receive help.

Because that false humility of saying, no, no, I got it. Do you? Because you don't have to. Chances are other people would love to pray for you.

[15:29] Would love to encourage you. Would love to support you and help you in practical ways. And engaging other people when you're struggling does not make you a failure.

Do you hear me saying that? When you engage other people for help or encouragement or support, it doesn't make you weak. It makes you wise.

My friends, when you come to the end of your energy, your capacity, your ability to endure and continue on, that is exactly the time when you definitely need God's help.

Both directly through his encouragement and through others. I believe most of us generally tend to live our lives under our own strength.

Is that you? Sure, we recognize God has promised to be there for us. Pastor Kent said God is here for us. But when do we usually reach out?

[ 16 : 34 ] When we're at the very, very end of our rope. Right? When we're in crisis mode is when we begin to seek help.

So what if we remembered that the rhythm of our lives could be such that in all things and at all times, we reached out to God and remained plugged in to that source?

What if we made it an intentional practice in our lives to praise him for all the good things and all the blessings that he gives us every day?

One of the greatest antidotes to negativity or depression or anxiety is praise. Gratitude works well. I believe if we did that, became people who were thankful for blessings and reached out to God in the good times, if we practiced that perspective, we'd be better equipped, better aware to reach out to him when crisis is beginning to come our way.

[ 17 : 53 ] We'd have a better compass reference for where to turn as the clouds roll in. And when we begin to struggle before crisis hits, friends, as we enter this holy week leading up to Good Friday, be reminded and encouraged that because we couldn't handle sin, because we couldn't handle death, God sent Jesus to die to take it all on himself.

so that by receiving him as our Savior and Lord and submitting our lives to follow him, we can be forgiven and restored into relationship with God, our ever-present refuge and strength, our ever-present help in times of trouble.

Amen. Christ will advance ■■ or breathe and blessP