



## God is Calling. #4: Will God Give You More Than You Can Handle?

Text: Exodus 13:17-14:31

Founding Pastor Ken Werlein

1. Have you ever had someone tell you, “God will not give you more than you can handle,” during a season of trial or suffering? Describe the situation and your response to that statement.
2. What in your life is causing you to feel overwhelmed right now?
3. **Read Exodus 13:17–14:10 and Romans 5:3–4.** The reality is that God *will* give you more than you can handle, but for his good purposes. One reason why is because *it is when we come to the end of ourselves that our character is most powerfully formed*. How might God be trying to transform your character into the image of Christ through the challenges you are currently facing?
4. **Read Exodus 14:11–12.** The Israelites’ problem was that they had lost perspective. They were focused on the immediate circumstances, not the big picture understanding of God’s promises and redemptive acts. Another reason God will give you more than you can handle is because *it will deepen your faith*. But we all know this isn’t always the case. Some people, perhaps understandably, question or lose faith in God when trials come. What do you think makes the difference between someone whose faith is weakened and someone whose faith is deepened and strengthened in response to seasons of encountering more than they can handle?
5. **Read Exodus 14:13–31.** God will give you more than you can handle because *our faith in difficult seasons shows others how awesome God is*. The Good News has always been spread through people’s stories. What story is your life telling right now? If someone was to base their understanding of God solely based on watching your life, what would their picture of God look like?

**Challenge:** Read the Study Deeper. “In times when life becomes unmanageable, we need to be willing to walk alongside one another. When we do this, we put flesh and bone on the person of Jesus. We can be with one another in the midst of suffering, helping each other carry the weight. Which means, that we, as the Body of Christ, have an opportunity.” Who do you know that is suffering? How can you move towards that person this week, not to fix their problem and not to offer trite and unbiblical platitudes, but to be the physical present of Christ with that person?

**Prayer:** Close your group time with a time of prayer, using Psalm 46 as a guide. The leader will read a verse out loud, and then individual group members will pray out loud specific prayers based on that verse. For example, if you were going to use Psalm 23 as your guide, the leader would read verse 1: "The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing." Then one group member might thank God for specific examples his provision. Then another group member might ask God for guidance and direction. And then after a few moments of silence, the leader would read verse 2, and the process would continue through the rest of the Psalm.

**Leader Read:** Psalm 46:1, "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."  
**Group Members Respond ...**

**Leader Read:** Psalm 46:2-3, "Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,"  
**Group Members Respond ...**

**Leader Read:** Psalm 46:4, "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells."  
**Group Members Respond ...**

**Leader Read:** Psalm 46:5, "God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day."  
**Group Members Respond ...**

**Leader Read:** Psalm 46:6, "Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts."  
**Group Members Respond ...**

**Leader Read:** Psalm 46:7, "The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress."  
**Group Members Respond ...**

**Leader Read:** Psalm 46:8, "Come and see what the Lord has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth."  
**Group Members Respond ...**

**Leader Read:** Psalm 46:9, "He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire."  
**Group Members Respond ...**

**Leader Read:** Psalm 46:10, "He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.""  
**Group Members Respond ...**

**Leader Read:** Psalm 46:11, "The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress."  
**Group Members Respond ...**

**Leader Close Out The Prayer Time ...**

## **STUDY DEEPER**

### **Yes, God Will Give You More Than You Can Handle**

Life will give us too much, and the promise is in the midst of it.

Recently, I was going back through my journals and I read words I had written years before: “God, I can’t handle this anymore. I don’t know what to do, but I can’t do this.”

The circumstances in my life had become overwhelming, everything was crumbling, and my world was falling apart.

To be honest, if someone had come alongside me at that point and tried to reassure me by saying, “God won’t give you more than you can handle,” I may have punched them square in the face.

That tired, old phrase often sounds more like a taunt than a comfort. When we are down and out and feeling discouraged, hearing those words can cause us to feel like we are not measuring up. It causes us to ask, “If I am supposed to handle this, then why can’t I handle it?”

The truth is, God never said He wouldn’t give you more than you can handle. There will be times in life when you will feel like you are drowning and there is no one to help you.

The words that are meant for encouragement can often serve to only create discouragement. Worse yet, this phrase can tempt us to ignore our suffering and pretend it’s not there. It can lead us to believe the lie that we can do it ourselves; that we can handle it. Which raises the question, “If we can handle anything that comes our way, then why do we need God at all?”

We need to realize that sometimes we can’t make it on our own.

So, where did the phrase about God not giving us too much come from? To answer that question, we need to go back 2,000 years to a small church in the city of Corinth. The Apostle Paul wrote them a few letters, and in his first letter, he reminded them that all people are tempted and often choose to do the wrong thing. Paul’s warning is tied to the reality of temptation and sin that meets us everyday.

With his warning he also gave a promise. He wrote, “No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And 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 endure it” (1 Corinthians 10:13). This is the verse that is so often misquoted.

With regard to temptation and sin, Paul pointed out that we always have a choice: engage in sin or run from it. The promise is that God will always provide a way for us to run from it.

Let’s be clear: Paul was talking about temptation, not suffering.

With temptation, we have a choice, but with suffering we often don’t have a choice.

A few months ago, I sat with a good friend who had just learned of his son's terminal diagnosis. He wept and said, "I'd do anything to give my life for him." It was one of the most powerless feelings I have ever experienced. All we could do was sit together and weep.

He did not choose this.

In moments like these we feel ground to dust. Rather than stand and proclaim that we can handle it, we should imitate Jesus.

The night before Jesus was executed, He cried out in the garden, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death" (Matthew 26:38). Jesus told His father, "This is too much for me!"

We see this kind of thing in the Psalms, too. The Psalmists ball their fists in rage, and shout at God, "Why have you forsaken me?" (Psalm 22) In their sadness they say, "darkness is my closest friend" (Psalm 88).

What these verses teach us is that it's OK to feel like we can't handle it, like we are going to give up. We can cry out, "My soul is overwhelmed to the point of death." And when we do this, we find God—the one who, in the person of Jesus, suffers with us.

When we become aware that life will give us more than we can handle and come to grips with this, we find a promise: God is faithful to meet us in the mess and in the pain.

And when He does, we learn to recognize our constant need to depend on Him. This is why Peter instructs the Church to cast our fears, worries, suffering and pain on God. He reasons we can do this because God cares for us. When life deals us more than we can handle, we can rest in the reality that God can handle it.

But, if we're honest, even this can seem like a tired old phrase. Because when it really hurts, God can seem so far away. This is where you and I come in. We need each other to move ahead, and we need far more than tired old phrases.

In times when life becomes unmanageable, we need to be willing to walk alongside one another. When we do this, we put flesh and bone on the person of Jesus. We can be with one another in the midst of suffering, helping each other carry the weight. Which means, that we, as the Body of Christ, have an opportunity.

When we are willing to sit in the pain, to walk with one another when life's path is difficult and to shoulder one another's burdens when they are too heavy, we become an embodied promise. We become living proof that while life can sometimes be too much, through the goodness of our loving of God displayed within us, we can move forward together.

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