

A Real Life “Survivor”

The American series “Survivor” has enjoyed enormous success. It has completed 34 seasons and is considered by Time magazine to be one of the 100 greatest TV shows of all time. However, when contestants on shows such as “Survivor” go through what they do, it is never very appealing to me, but people are willing to do a lot for money. There was one person, though, that was a real life “survivor” — the apostle Paul. While we think that we have endured many deprivations, we do not hold a candle to Paul.

People sometimes enumerated accomplishments; for example, the emperor Augustus, boasting of his exploits, numbered some of them, such as three gladiatorial games he sponsored for the Roman people. Paul wrote, “... in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches” (2 Corinthians 11:23-28). He had said previously, “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed ...” (2 Corinthians 4:8-9).

Paul also wrote in other places about the circumstances in which he preached the gospel. In the end he could write, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (2 Timothy 4:7-8). Although we will probably never have to endure these desperate conditions, we may have to endure persecutions. Jesus said, “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2:10). Would you not like to be a “survivor” and inherit eternal life? If so, obey the gospel of Christ now.

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