



## Dear Crossroads Family,

You've heard the song many times:

Chestnuts roasting on an open fire  
Jack Frost nipping at your nose  
Yuletide carols being sung by a choir  
And folks dressed up like Eskimos

Everybody knows a turkey and some mistletoe  
Help to make the season bright  
Tiny tots with their eyes all aglow  
Will find it hard to sleep tonight

A description of the ideal Christmas season. But how often do these things actually happen? Jack Frost? Folks dressed up like Eskimos? In San Antonio?

The truth is, Christmas is often good, but rarely ideal. Weather doesn't always cooperate. Some family can't make it into town. There's not enough money to provide all the gifts for loved ones that you would like to give. A family member gets sick. A loved one passes away.

No Christmas is ever ideal. Life is never ideal. We always face circumstances that fall short of hopes and expectations. And that will be the focus of our Bible study and sermon this coming Sunday. How do we respond in faith when reality is less than ideal...sometimes far less? (Sermon notes are provided below.)

I hope you'll be present Sunday for Bible study and worship as we continue to celebrate together the birth of our Lord. Maybe the time we spend together will help us all be better prepared to handle those moments when circumstances disappoint.

By the way, I'll be disappointed if I don't see you there!

Love,

Bro. Doug

PS. The children's ministry will be presenting a wonderful Christmas drama this Sunday morning in the service. You won't want to miss it.

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### ***When Life Breaks its Promises*** ***2 Cor. 1:8-10 & 12:6-10***

Life often breaks its promises, leaving us frustrated and discontented. Even \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ face debilitating circumstances. On his letters, Paul tells of occasions where his circumstances fell far short of his hopes and desires. In 2 Cor. 1:8-9a, he describes his circumstances in Asia, "troubles," was one used to describe the process of \_\_\_\_\_ grapes or olives.

Paul didn't \_\_\_\_\_ to his circumstances or struggle in his own power to change them. Instead, he trusted God to use whatever circumstance he faced to \_\_\_\_\_ him into someone who trusted in God. Paul described this transformation in 2

Cor. 12. He was stricken with something he called a “thorn in the flesh.” This word for “thorn” was used to refer to fortification \_\_\_\_\_ placed around a military encampment or stakes used for \_\_\_\_\_ as a means of execution.

People often begin to follow Jesus with high hopes of \_\_\_\_\_ blessing. But at some point life happens. Everything that was once coming up roses is now coming up \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

I am convinced that it is at this point that a follower of Christ either moves toward real Christian \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_. They decide, ‘I’m not going to let this hardship \_\_\_\_\_ me away from God but \_\_\_\_\_ me closer to Him.’.

The mature Christian can say this because of God’s sufficient \_\_\_\_\_. Grace is God’s \_\_\_\_\_ toward something. Here, grace is God tendency to favor the \_\_\_\_\_ and powerless; to provide His power to a believer in \_\_\_\_\_ measure to the worldly power they possess. When your circumstances fall short and life breaks its promises, the mature believer trusts that God’s power will, in time, come through. So, failed circumstances don’t turn you \_\_\_\_\_ from God but \_\_\_\_\_ to His side than ever before.

If we take 2 Cor. 12 seriously, we can say when circumstances fall short, “I shall emerge \_\_\_\_\_,... I shall emerge \_\_\_\_\_,...I shall emerge \_\_\_\_\_ one day.

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#### **A Few Announcements:**

Don't forget there is a Wedding Shower for Mauricio & Olivia is this Sunday, December 14, from 4:00-5:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. We will be honoring them in advance of their upcoming wedding in January.

Christmas Eve: The Christmas Eve Memorial Service will be at 5:30 pm in the Choir Rm. Please RSVP with the church office (210.681.1911) by Tuesday, 12/23, so you will have a memorial card prepared for you. The Christmas Eve Lord’s Supper Service will be at 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary.

Help Needed for New Year’s Eve at Ft. Sam! Your help is needed to provide some refreshments for the medics in training at Ft. Sam on December 31. Brownies and/or cookies are requested. If you would prefer to make a monetary donation instead, please notate it for “Military NYE” or if you give online, choose “Military NYE” from the drop-down choices. Please bring your donations to the Fellowship Hall on December 31 between 11:00-11:30 am. Thank you for helping to brighten this time for these men and women serving our country!

End-of-Year Giving Contributions must be received or postmarked by Wednesday, December 31, to be eligible for the 2025 tax credit.

***Dr. Doug Diehl***  
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