What does God say about…
“Opposition”

1 Corinthians 2:1-5 (AMP)
“1 AS FOR myself, brethren, when I came to you, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony and evidence or mystery and secret of God [concerning what He has done through Christ for the salvation of men] in lofty words of eloquence or human philosophy and wisdom;
2 For I resolved to know nothing (to be acquainted with nothing, to make a display of the knowledge of nothing, and to be conscious of nothing) among you except Jesus Christ (the Messiah) and Him crucified.
3 And I was in (passed into a state of) weakness and fear (dread) and great trembling [after I had come] among you. 4 And my language and my message were not set forth in persuasive (enticing and plausible) words of wisdom, but they were in demonstration of the [Holy] Spirit and power [a proof by the Spirit and power of God, operating on me and stirring in the minds of my hearers the most holy emotions and thus persuading them],
5 So that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men (human philosophy), but in the power of God.

No one my friends likes opposition, yet, as Christians we must face the fact that this will be a real part of life at times

* Why does God allow opposition into our life?

* What purpose does God see in our struggles with opposition?
God usually helps us in one of two ways when opposition strikes us:

1. He may shield us from the terrible storm
2. He may have us face directly into it

In either case He is trying to teach us to hold on to Him ... we must adopt the strategy of the vine!”

John 15:1
“I am the *true vine*, and My Father is the vinedresser”

John 15:4
“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, *unless it abides in the vine*, neither can you, unless you abide in Me”

John 15:5
“I am the *vine*, you are the *branches*. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing”

In Opposition branches attached to a vine have the right position

The Vine has developed one of the most successful methods of survival in nature

It is capable of developing in any climatic condition, it is able to grow as tall as the tallest tree or building

The vine winds itself around or grows circular in motion – it wraps upward and becomes unshakable
No matter what direction a storm comes from is will not be shaken off or lose – because of the way vines tend to grow they attack themselves to things as they grow or wrap themselves around something so if a storm comes at them from any direction it will drive it into what it is attacked to – you see there is always protection for the vine from storms that come in any direction – the vines growth its branches can only come down if that which its attached falls

**John 15:4**

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, *unless it abides in the vine*, neither can you, unless you abide in Me”

**Psalm 121:3**

“*He will not allow your foot to be moved*; He who keeps you will not slumber”

**Jeremiah 4:1**

“If you will return, O Israel,” says the LORD, “Return to Me; And if you will put away your abominations out of My sight, *Then you shall not be moved*”

**Acts 17:28**

“For *in Him we* live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring”

**John 15:5**

*I am the vine, you are the branches*. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing”
1 Corinthians 2: 2-3 (AMP)
“2 For I resolved to know nothing (to be acquainted with nothing, to make a display of the knowledge of nothing, and to be conscious of nothing) among you except Jesus Christ (the Messiah) and Him crucified. 3 And I was in (passed into a state of) weakness and fear (dread) and great trembling [after I had come] among you”

Here we find Paul addressing The Corinthian church that was deeply divided

* The church desperately needed to understand what preaching really was

* Only if they understood what God intended preaching to be could they hope to solve their differences

One of the strong solutions to division is sound preaching

**Opposition** - [I like to say “An opposed – position”]

**Means:**
An act of setting opposite or over against : the condition of being so set
Means a hostile or contrary action or condition
Means defiance, resistance

The Bible teaches us that in any type of opposition God has promised to be with us ... His presence will enable us to survive any type of opposition ... in fact, not only survive it but to actually continue growing in spite of it!
5.

**Emotional Opposition**

**Acts 17:32-34 (AMP)**

“32 Now when they had heard [that there had been] a resurrection from the dead, some scoffed; but others said, We will hear you again about this matter. 33 So Paul went out from among them. 34 But some men were on his side and joined him and believed (became Christians)...”

**Disappointment**

* Paul was no stranger to disappointments

* In Athens he preached his heart out to an audience that was largely unresponsive.

* He was sneered for his convictions – **verse 32** says they scoffed

* According to **verse 34** only a few people responded to the call of salvation.

**It was not one of Paul's more successful evangelism campaigns!**

* Before arriving in Athens Paul had also had a rough time, agitators had created problems of opposition for him before he got to Athens in Thessalonica!

* Paul was going from being harassed by the Jews in Thessalonica to having few positive responses in Athens!
Opposition toward a ministry or disciples witness can bring disappointment to the level of severe emotional discouragement ... even for those who are normally very strong!
The enemy loves to get you to look at success as it is packaged in the world as to bring a spirit of failure or what I call ‘a give up spirit’ - upon the children of God.
When you are under heavy opposition know that the enemy is after you – cause of your potential – you see many times the enemy sees your potential way before you do.

* Genesis 50:19-20 (AMP)  
  “19 And Joseph said to them, Fear not; for am I in the place of God? [Vengeance is His, not mine.]  
  20 As for you, you thought evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring about that many people should be kept alive, as they are this day”

* Wow!

* If no one else saw the potential in Joseph it was the enemy

**Joseph stayed the course in much opposition in his life**

* Listen now – even at the top of his game when things were going right – the enemy tried to oppose his faith by bringing the opportunity to get the pay-back on the wrong his family had done him

**Joseph in the midst of an opposing spirit spoke forth:**

“For I am in the place of God”
The only way to come against and defeat the spirit of opposition is to be in the place of God!

“Emotional Opposition will always try to attach you to disappointment” [Pastor Keith e. Taylor]

* Many today are walking around under an attack by Emotional Opposition – this spirit longs for you to give up

* Hear me, you are targeted by this spirit the moment you become Active in Gods Work – you must understand this in order to defeat it

* Joseph was in the place of God – He was in Gods presence – and it that place it all becomes Gods work and His resources, His purpose, His Plan, His Grace

The Apostle Paul made a powerful statement in:

1 Corinthians 2: 3-5 [Amp]

“3 And I was in (passed into a state of) weakness and fear (dread) and great trembling [after I had come] among you.
4 And my language and my message were not set forth in persuasive (enticing and plausible) words of wisdom, but they were in demonstration of the [Holy] Spirit and power [a proof by the Spirit and power of God, operating on me and stirring in the minds of my hearers the most holy emotions and thus persuading them],
5 So that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men (human philosophy), but in the power of God”
Of all cities to go to for ministry, after a disappointing ministry in [Terre Haute - you put your city or situation in this place]

* For Paul it was Athens - he comes to a city with a church full of conflict and a city full of sin and hostility to the Gospel and his leadership but most of all Jesus!

* Corinth was a city of great sin; it was the Las Vegas of the first century

* It was not an easy city to minister in, preachers were not exactly welcomed

* It was not easy in your Las Vegas – not easy in your assignment

Drained!

1 Corinthians 2:3 (AMP)  
“3 And I was in (passed into a state of) weakness and fear (dread) and great trembling [after I had come] among you”

Paul gives us insight into his emotional state when he arrived in Corinth in his own writings … here Paul states that when he arrived in town he did so “IN WEAKNESS; AND FEAR, AND WITH MUCH TREMBLING”

* Clearly 3 tough situations in a row had taken its toll on him, and he reflects honestly his response to the constant opposition and hostility, not just from the world … but even from within the church!
Paul was not exempt being drained emotionally just like you and me!

**Opposition can bring on emotional bankruptcy!**

* A great man of God is honest about his emotional nature ... he writes this to the church at Corinth!

It was in this condition that Paul first came and preached to the Corinthians!

* Sometimes we minister from an exhausted condition

* Sometimes we do life from an exhausted condition

* Ministry, Marriage, Family, Work

It is amazing how God enables us in our weaknesses to still minister!

* Perhaps today some Christians would have questioned whether Paul had hidden sin in his life ... they would have looked for some explanation for Paul's emotional state, at best they would have questioned Paul's faith!

We need to be honest as God's people, we all experience discouraging times!

* Even the best can become emotionally drained!

* You see the enemy, if he can’t get you to succumb he will try to overwhelm you or bring you under constant relentless opposition and all that’s attached to it
It is not always sin or lack of faith that is at the basis of a saint's discouragement, it that the spirit of opposition is at them

* Paul was spent emotionally when he arrived to minister in Corinth!

* What does Paul do while in this state of mind?

His actions are very instructive for each one of us – what should we do when we are drained because of opposition?

1 Corinthians 2: 3-5 [Amp]
“3 And I was in (passed into a state of) weakness and fear (dread) and great trembling [after I had come] among you. 4 And my language and my message were not set forth in persuasive (enticing and plausible) words of wisdom, but they were in demonstration of the [Holy] Spirit and power [a proof by the Spirit and power of God, operating on me and stirring in the minds of my hearers the most holy emotions and thus persuading them], 5 So that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men (human philosophy), but in the power of God”

At such times we need to do two things:

1. Get refilled spiritually ... but they were in demonstration of the [Holy] Spirit and power [a proof by the Spirit and power of God, operating on me and stirring in the minds of my hearers the most holy emotions and thus persuading them]
“The only way to keep a broken vessel full is by keeping the faucet turned on” [Source Unknown]

2. Keep ministering

Do as Paul did do not rely on yourself

* You see the spirit of opposition will get you to focus on your accomplishments through the eyes of worldly success

* Paul said – “4 And my language and my message were not set forth in persuasive (enticing and plausible) words of wisdom, but they were in demonstration of the [Holy] Spirit and power [a proof by the Spirit and power of God, operating on me”

Do as Joseph

Genesis 50:19-20 (AMP)
“19 And Joseph said to them, Fear not; for am I in the place of God? [Vengeance is His, not mine.] 20 As for you, you thought evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring about that many people should be kept alive, as they are this day”

Get refilled spiritually – Keep on keeping on and Minister

* I’m talking about when you are under a defined attack of opposition and you begin to feel discouragement and defeat trying to settle into you daily routine

* Do as Paul release to the Holy Spirit – do as Joseph get in the place of God
Paul was not going to sit back quietly when drained, emotional opposition only made him keep going!

1 Corinthians 2:5-7 (AMP)
“5 So that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men (human philosophy), but in the power of God. 6 Yet when we are among the full-grown (spiritually mature Christians who are ripe in understanding), we do impart a [higher] wisdom (the knowledge of the divine plan previously hidden); but it is indeed not a wisdom of this present age or of this world nor of the leaders and rulers of this age, who are being brought to nothing and are doomed to pass away. 7 But rather what we are setting forth is a wisdom of God once hidden [from the human understanding] and now revealed to us by God—[that wisdom] which God devised and decreed before the ages for our glorification [to lift us into the glory of His presence]”

* The Wisdom of God Himself will heal up divisions in any church and thus heal up individuals

* Remember that Paul addressing The Corinthian church that was deeply divided

The church desperately needed to understand what preaching really was because they needed Holy Ghost intervention released by Gospel Proclamation

* Only if they understood what God intended preaching to be could they hope to solve their differences

One of the strong solutions to division is sound preaching
The gospel shows how wise God has been in dealing with man and his world and more so demonic attacks

* Emotional and even economical opposition did not slow or prevent the message from getting out – Paul moved forward only through the wisdom and power of God

* Paul understood the spirit of opposition

He recognized and verbalized his state of attack and allowed the Lord to minister through him

* At some point, ministry needs to be evaluated and adjusted if there is no response.

There is something worse than being denounced by the spirit of opposition that is quitting or just continuing to do something that is unproductive over and over again!

1 Corinthians 2:15-16 (AMP)
“15 But the spiritual man tries all things [he examines, investigates, inquires into, questions, and discerns all things], yet is himself to be put on trial and judged by no one [he can read the meaning of everything, but no one can properly discern or appraise or get an insight into him].
16 For who has known or understood the mind (the counsels and purposes) of the Lord so as to guide and instruct Him and give Him knowledge? But we have the mind of Christ (the Messiah) and do hold the thoughts (feelings and purposes) of His heart”

There is the spiritual man or what the Greek calls the pneumatikos man
The word "spirit" (*pneuma*) is the word used for the Holy Spirit that means the spiritual man is a person in whom the Holy Spirit dwells

* A man is spiritual because the Holy Spirit dwells in him

“A man becomes spiritual because he has received the Spirit of God and is living under the influence of the Spirit of God – filled with the Spirit, led by the Spirit and walking in the Spirit”

[Pastor Keith e. Taylor]

**Conclusion**

Paul might have been tempted to do less at this point in time, arguing to himself that things just aren't going well, maybe he should do less ... he doesn't settle for less or second best

**Today's opposition is tomorrow's opportunities!**

* Though we will face opposition throughout our lives, we won't be crushed!

God has given us His promise to be with us at such times ... we are not alone even when we feel like it!