

Pressed Down on All Sides



David Wilkerson (1931-2011) July 15, 2020

For centuries, the most powerful witness of God's people to the world has been the shining forth of Christ through deep suffering in their lives. Christ's manifest character has touched those around them and ministered to atheists, Muslims, and unbelievers of all kinds.

The apostle Paul said, "We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body" (2 Corinthians 4:8-10).

Paul knew firsthand the meaning of despair; after all, he wasn't superhuman. He faced troubled times that he never thought he would survive. He testified: "We do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us" (2 Corinthians 1:8-10).

Do you understand what Paul is saying? He's telling us, "We were pressed down beyond all human strength and we were utterly at a loss to understand it. We came to the point of thinking it was all over."

At that very moment, at Paul's most trying time, he remembered his ministry and calling. Staring death in the face, he reminded himself, "The whole world is watching me. I've preached many sermons on God's power to keep his servants and now everyone is looking to see if I believe it."

Afterward, Paul tells the Corinthian church, "It was your prayers that helped us. You enabled us to come through it all with a song of victory." He writes, "You also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf" (2 Corinthians 1:11).

Never take lightly the matter of praying for your brothers and sisters in need. Paul says the prayers of the Corinthians were a gift to him and, likewise, our prayers can bless others.

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