

PRESSED OUT OF MEASURE

2 CORINTHIANS 1:8; 4:8-10

Text: 2 Corinthians 1:8; 4:8-10

2 Corinthians 1:8

⁸ For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:

2 Corinthians 4:8-10

⁸ *We are* troubled on every side, yet not distressed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

Introduction:

This week many have had multiple problems from last week's storm.

Many have had their houses damaged, some have had their cars destroyed, and several thousands have lived with our electricity.

Like the events that transpired on 9/11, I believe that God wants our attention!

The surge of trouble is nothing new. The Bible is filled with stories of those in trouble.

- The Hebrew children had their fiery furnace.
- Daniel had his lion's den.
- Joseph was cast into a pit, sold as a slave, and then cast into prison.
- Job lost his children, his wealth and health.
- Paul was shipwrecked and beaten.
- Peter was sent to prison.
- John was exiled at Patmos.
- James had his head cut off.
- David was pursued by Saul.
- Samson had his eyes put out.

Note:

Psalm 34:19

¹⁹ Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.

Illustration:

There was a man whose name was Clyde Gordon who was completely paralyzed from his neck down, edited a magazine called “The Triumph.”

In it he said:

"Christ is no security against storms,
But He is perfect security in storms.
He does not promise an easy passage,
But He does guarantee a safe landing."

Someone else has said, “The road to success is always under construction. It seems that those who seem to have it hard always get more done.”

Note what we read in 1 Corinthians 10:13:

1 Corinthians 10:13

¹³There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.

Certainly we do have many answers about the problems that many are experiencing this week, and remember no doubt it could be worse, but I want us to consider how God may use being “Pressed Out of Measure” in our lives.

1. To DIRECT US

Sometimes God must light a fire under us to get us moving. Problems often point us in a new direction and motivate us to change.

Proverbs 20:30

³⁰The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil: so *do* stripes the inward parts of the belly.

The world deceives us. But after a serious bout with trouble, we don't usually care as much about what people think.

Pride is plowed under, the world loses its value, the appetites for sin lose their taste. God could have kept Daniel out of the lions' den, Paul and Silas out of jail, the Hebrew children from the fiery furnace; but it was good for all these to go through these experiences.

2. To Inspect Us

People are like tea bags...if you want to know what's inside them, just drop them in hot water!

God at times tests our faith with a problem?

James 1:2-3

²My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; ³Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

3. TO CORRECT US

Some lessons we learn only through pain and failure.

Illustration:

Often parents warn their children not to touch a hot stove. But many truly learned the lesson by getting burned.

Sometimes we only learn the value of something by losing it.

Psalm 119:71

⁷¹ *It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.*

4. To Connect Us

When someone dies in the family, loved ones gather from far and near for the funeral. People want to be together when in trouble. When someone is seriously ill, their friends and neighbors gather in to check on them and make sure things are all right.

Trouble not only draws people together, but it also draws them to the Lord.

Note Psalms 119:67

Psalm 119:67

⁶⁷ Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.

Trouble also draws people to church. It is not uncommon to see a whole family show up at church after a funeral.

Sometimes when people get bad news from the doctor about their physical condition, they take a renewed interest in church. So trouble can unify.

5. TO PROTECT US

A problem can be a blessing in disguise if it prevents you from being harmed by something more serious.

Joseph said to his brothers:

Genesis 50:20

²⁰ But as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive.

6. To Protect Us

Problems, when responded to correctly, are build character.

REMEMBER

God is far more interested in your character than your comfort.

Your relationship to God and your character are the only two things you're going to take with you into eternity.

Romans 5:3-4

³ And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; ⁴ And patience, experience; and experience, hope:

Note what David said to God in Psalms 71:

Psalm 71:19-21

¹⁹ Thy righteousness also, O God, *is* very high, who hast done great things: O God, who *is* like unto thee! ²⁰ *Thou*, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. ²¹ Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.

Here we find the effect of trouble. It was a blessing in disguise, a benefit to the life of this good servant of God.

Remember:

Romans 8:28

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

Remember:

The graduate degree of spirituality comes from attending the University of Hard Knocks.

7. To Project Us

Being pressed out of measure forces us to focus on what is most important.

Philippians 1:12

¹² But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;

Remember:

For God to give us songs in the night; we first must experience the night.

Illustration:

An eagle knows when a storm is approaching long before it breaks? The eagle will fly to some high spot and wait for the winds to come. When the storm hits, it sets its wings so that the wind will pick it up and lift it above the storm. While the storm rages below, the eagle is soaring above it.

The eagle does not escape the storm. It simply uses the storm to lift it higher. It rises on the winds that bring the storm.

When the storms of life come upon us we can rise above them by keeping our eyes and mind upon the Lord.

The storms do not have to overcome us. We can allow God's power to lift us above them.

It's not the burdens of life that weighs us down; it's how we handle them.

Isaiah 40:31

³¹ But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint.

Close:

Someone has said:

“For God has marked each sorrowing day
And numbered every secret tear;
And Heaven's long age of bliss shall pay
For all His children suffer here.”

Those who go through fire or water should remember it is God's way of refining and cleansing you for your good and His glory.

Trouble is simply the factory God is using to manufacture the right type of product in our lives.

A poet wrote once wrote:

He sat by a fire of sevenfold heat
As He watched by the precious ore,
And closer He bent with a searching gaze
As He heated it more and more.
He knew He had ore that could stand the test;
He wanted the finest gold
To mold as a crown for the king to wear--
Set with gems with a price untold.
So He laid our gold in the burning fire,
Though we fain would have said to Him "nay,"
And He watched the dross that we had not seen
As it melted and passed away.
And the gold grew brighter and yet more bright,
But our eyes were so dim with tears
We saw but the fire, not the Master's hand,
And questioned with anxious fears.
Yet our gold shone out with a richer glow
And it mirrored a form above
Of Him bent o'er the fire, unseen by us,
With a look of ineffable love.
Can we think that it pleases His loving heart
To cause us a moment's pain?
Ah, no, but He saw through the present cross
To bliss of eternal gain.

So, He waited there with a watchful eye,
With a love that is strong and sure;
And His gold did not suffer a bit more heat
Than was needed to make it pure.

When Adam and Eve were in trouble, God stepped in
and met their need; Noah's problems were solved by
the God who cared. Joseph was released from prison;
the children of Israel were delivered as they crossed
the Red Sea; Elijah got God's help in getting some rain;
Paul and Silas were set free from the Philippian jail.
And God's saving hand is in motion still today.

May we learn from this truly how dependent we are on
God.