



ISSUE

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Faithful Sayings

BULLETIN OF
THE OL-
SEN PARK
CHURCH OF
CHRIST

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter

Brady McAlister

Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Ben Hight

Blake McAlister

Walker McAnear

Sam Nunn

Lance Purcell

Justin Smiley

Kevin Wise

Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

Optimism in the Face of Adversity

By Kyle Pope

The Holy Spirit can paint word pictures more beautiful and stirring that any master artist could ever produce. In 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 Paul through the direction of the Holy Spirit paints such a picture demonstrating the overwhelming optimism that can characterize the Christian life. Consider what is written:

“We are hard pressed on every side but not crushed” (vs. 8a). The word translated **“hard pressed”** is the Greek word *thlibō* (θλίβω) meaning, *“To press (as grapes), press hard upon, properly. . . a compressed way, i.e. narrow, straightened, contracted, metaphorically to trouble, afflict, distress”* (Thayer, 291). The picture here is that of being squeezed (much like a bunch of grapes) by trials and persecutions. However, even though Paul uses such a graphic description of hardship, in Christ he could recognize that he was not

“crushed.” The Greek word for **“crushed”** is *stenochōreō* (στενοχωρέω) meaning, *“To crowd together into a narrow place, straiten; passively to be in straits, to be cooped up, to be cramped from action, to be cramped in feeling”* (Moulton, 375). Although Christians may face many pressures, the hope and assurance offered in the gospel can allow the Christian not to be choked and destroyed by such pressures.

“We are perplexed, but not in despair” (vs. 8b). The wording here is subject to a few different interpretations. Paul may refer to his state of mind or his material status. The word translated **“perplexed”** is *aporeō* (ἀπορέω) meaning, *“To be without resources, to be in straits, to be left wanting, to be embarrassed, to be in doubt, not to know which way to turn. . . Middle to be at a loss with one’s self, be in doubt; not to know how to decide or what to do, to be perplexed”* (Thayer, 66). The word translated “despair” is *exaporeomai* (ἐξαπορέομαι) meaning, *“To be at a loss. To be wholly without resource, to despair utterly”* (Zodiatas, 600). *“Be in great difficulty, doubt, embarrassment. . . despair of living”* (BAGD, 273). If Paul is commenting on his material resources, although he was virtually without financial resources, in Christ he could recognize a spiritual treasure that would never leave him impoverished. If instead, he is commenting on his state of mind, he demonstrates the attitude of contentment the Christian



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can have with only the basic needs of life. He taught Timothy: **“having food and clothing, with these we shall be content”** (1 Tim. 6:8).

“Persecuted, but not forsaken” (vs. 9a). In Greek the word for persecution is tied to the idea of being pursued by one’s enemies. The word rendered **“persecuted”** is *diokō* (διώκω) meaning, “1. To make to run, to run or flee, put to flight, drive away; 2. To run swiftly in order to catch some person or thing, to run after. . . 3. In any-way whatever to harass, trouble, molest one. . . to be maltreated, suffer persecution on account of something. . . 4. Without the idea of hostility, to run after, follow after some one; 5. Metaphorically. . . to pursue i.e. seek after eagerly, earnestly endeavor to acquire” (Thayer, 153). Just as Paul had once pursued the church trying to destroy it, he now found himself “pursued.” In Christ, however, he could have the confidence that the Lord had not left him to himself to face such trials alone. The word for **“forsaken”** is *egkatalaipō* (ἐγκαταλείπω) meaning, “To leave in a place or situation, to leave behind; to forsake, abandon; to leave as a remnant from destruction” (Moulton, 113). The picture here is that of one pursued by the enemy but not left behind by the Lord.

No matter what hardship might lay before us Jesus has promised **“I will never leave you nor forsake you”** (Heb. 13:5).

“Struck down, but not destroyed” (vs. 9b). At the time Paul wrote these words he had already faced thirty-nine lashes five times, beatings with rods three times, and stoning once (2 Cor. 11:24-25). Yet none of that could affect his spiritual condition. The word for **“struck down”** is *kataballō* (καταβάλλω) meaning, “To throw, cast. To cast down, used transitively for example from heaven, In the sense of to prostrate. . . In the middle to lay down a foundation” (Zodiatēs, 826). One can picture



the blessed apostle thrown prostrate before his enemies in persecution, but even in such a dreadful condition his relationship to the Lord and hope of salvation could not be destroyed. Jesus taught, **“do not fear those who kill the body but**

cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28 NKJV). The word for **“destroyed”** is *apollumi* (ἀπόλλυμι) meaning, “1. Actively. a. *ruin, destroy*. . . b. *lose*; 2. middle. a. *be destroyed, ruined*. Of persons *perish, die*. . . Of Things *be lost, pass away, be ruined*, b. *be lost”* (BAGD, 95). Nothing man can do can destroy the soul if we stay true to the Lord. This confident optimism is not only accessible to Paul. It is available to all in Christ who will recognize that **“the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal”** (2 Cor. 4:18).



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