

# 00(M044) – Knocked Down But Not Out! CD SUN

*2 Corinthians 4:1,6-9; 1 Corinthians 4:13; 2 Corinthians 1:8; Genesis 42:36; Psalms 74:17; 2 Chronicles 20:12; Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5*

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## Application

By Pastor Jeff Wickwire

## Bible Verse

2 Corinthians 4:1,6-9 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.

<sup>6</sup>For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

<sup>7</sup>But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

<sup>8</sup>We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair;

<sup>9</sup>persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.

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## Note

Verse one sets the stage for the rest of our text—Paul says “we do not lose heart.”

Paul and the other apostles suffered greatly in their ministry.

He tells us,

## Bible Verse

1 Corinthians 4:13 (NIV)

<sup>13</sup>when we are slandered, we answer kindly. We have become the scum of the earth, the garbage of the world—right up to this moment.

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## **Note**

And there were times it was worse than that!—He wrote,

## **Bible Verse**

### **2 Corinthians 1:8 (NIV)**

<sup>8</sup>We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself.

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## **Note**

He's describing here what he refers to in the text we read where he uses the words, "hard-pressed, perplexed, persecuted, knocked down." Now, the thrust of what he's saying is that the devil and wicked people did their best to take them out, but through Jesus they survived and won the battle every time!

Let me bring this down to where we are today. We're living in increasingly perilous times in our world and in our own nation. America is boiling over with anger, hatred, division, offenses, lawlessness, and even anarchy. And the church itself is experiencing persecution on a level I've not witnessed personally—and it will probably grow worse.

Hence, Paul's words encourage us because he also says "In spite of all our trials we were not CRUSHED, not left to DESPAIR, not FORSAKEN, and not DESTROYED!"

Like Paul, many of you feel HARD-PRESSED on every side as I speak. Or you feel PERPLEXED—you don't understand what's going down in your life and you're asking God for wisdom and mercy. Or perhaps you're being PERSECUTED for your faith as the Apostle described—even from your own family and friends! Or you're CAST DOWN and wonder how you'll get up again.

If so, this word's for you! So let's unpack these verses and see what God has to say to us. The first thing we hear is:

1. Pressure will not defeat us

"We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed" (Vs.8a). The word "pressed" is from a word meaning "to constrict or compress, to be confined, hemmed in, restricted to a narrow place."

I don't like elevators, especially when they're full. Because when they're full you're pressed in tight with people pressing against you on every side. That's the picture here! It's when the trials of life seem to gang up together and come at you from every side where you're pressed in from every corner.

## **Bible Verse**

Genesis 42:36 (NIV)

<sup>36</sup>Their father Jacob said to them, "You have deprived me of my children. Joseph is no more and Simeon is no more, and now you want to take Benjamin. Everything is against me!"

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## **Note**

Now, Paul says that when this happened to him and his fellow companions, the Lord did not allow the multiple trials to crush them. In other words, God had his hand on the dial of their trials and when they reached a certain point the Lord said, "Far enough!" "No further!" "Stop here!" The God of the Bible is a God of boundaries;

## **Bible Verse**

Psalms 74:17 (NIV)

<sup>17</sup>It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth; you made both summer and winter.

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## **Note**

And this includes the boundaries of your trials! He won't always stop them from coming, but He will NOT allow them to crush you! The second thing we learn here is:

2. Confusion will not discourage us

"We are...perplexed, but not driven to despair" (vs 8b). Perplexed is from a Greek word meaning "at a loss, to be without resources, to be in straits, to not know which way to turn." Sometimes life throws us curve balls. Out of nowhere a trial comes knocking that leaves us at a loss, we don't know which way to turn, we're taken by surprise. I can tell you there have been times in my life when all I could do was look

up and say, “Jesus, help me—I don’t what to do—Have mercy on me—This is bigger than I am and I don’t know where to turn.” And you know what? Somehow or another, He always stepped in and carried me through to the other side!

## **Illustration**

One day life threw King Jehoshaphat a major curve ball. He was informed that a vast army of Moabites and Ammonites were coming to destroy him and Judah. He was perplexed, at a loss, and didn’t know what to do. But he prayed the right kind of prayer:

## **Bible Verse**

2 Chronicles 20:12 (NIV)

<sup>12</sup>Our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.”

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## **Note**

Jehoshaphat was perplexed, but not driven to despair! And God mightily delivered him and the people of Judah. When perplexing trials come, it helps to remember that when we are confused, Jesus isn’t! When we are overwhelmed, He’s not!

Then thirdly, we learn in our text that:

3. Opposition will not deter us

“We are...persecuted, but not forsaken” (vs. 9a). Persecution is opposition. The word means “to hunt down, like a hunter pursuing a catch.” Paul knew exactly what this felt like. The unbelieving Jews of his day pursued him from town to town, always there to undo the work he accomplished. They threatened his life, spread lies about him, and stirred up frenzied mobs to attack him. Yet Paul says, “I was not forsaken, left in the lurch, abandoned or deserted. He’s referring to Jesus not forsaking him, not men. Because men DID desert him throughout his ministry, but JESUS NEVER DID!

Folks, people can and will fail you, and YOU will fail people, but the Captain of our salvation will NEVER DESERT US! Jesus promised.

## **Bible Verse**

Matthew 28:20 (NIV)

<sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

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**Bible Verse**

Hebrews 13:5 (NIV)

<sup>5</sup>Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”

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**Note**

So—PRESSURE will not defeat us, CONFUSION will not discourage us, OPPOSITION will not deter us, and lastly:

4. Hard hits will not destroy us

“We are...struck down but not destroyed.” Struck down is a wrestling term meaning “to be cast or thrown to the ground.” If you live long enough you will experience being cast down. It comes by a sucker punch—a trial that comes out of nowhere and knocks you down. We’re confident we can handle the normal trials of life—not enough money to pay a bill, cranky kids, cranky spouse, a car breaking down, and so on. But a sucker punch is the trial you didn’t see coming that is a big deal—you lose your job, get a bad doctor report, find out your spouse was unfaithful....That’s when all our coping skills melt away.

**Quote**

Mike Tyson put it this way, “Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth.”

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**Note**

But listen: Paul triumphantly testifies that, “The sucker punches didn’t kill us!” We were DOWN but NOT OUT! If you’ve been knocked down by a sucker punch, let me make a prediction—you’re DOWN but not OUT. Our Lord was killed on a Cross for our sins, and buried in a tomb. But He got up again! And the same Lord of

resurrection is in you! Say with me, "Down!" "But not out!" Thank God for His amazing grace!!

Have you been sucker punched today? Do you feel perplexed, harshly criticized for your faith, are you hard pressed from every side? Let's look up to Jesus!