

*We are hard pressed from every side, but not crushed...*

*2 Corinthians 4:7-9*

Have you ever “crushed” your finger in the car door? I’ve done it before. I remember my whole body twitching and trying to run; but it couldn’t because my finger was stuck securely in the door. I had to calm down long enough to open the door with my other hand, and then try to nurse some life back into my finger when I was finally released.

Sometimes life is like a meat grinder, trying to crush our spirit. It is all that we can do to withstand the pressure; fortunately for us we have God within us pushing out to keep us intact. Paul describes this so well in 2 Corinthians 1:8b and 10a: *“We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life... He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us.”*

This pressure reminds me of the depths of the ocean, or the relentless attack of expanding ice. When Ernest Shackleton took his expedition close to the Antarctic ice cap, his ship *Endurance* was caught there and literally crushed. The description of its slow death, with groaning timbers and cracking ice, was surely horrifying to those who had to abandon it and spend months trying to get back home.

Sometimes the crush is directed in a very personal way, as a result of political, or business, or marital troubles. Job felt this as he was attacked by Satan and was stripped of virtually everything that he had. He was put in a form of exile, for he even felt the crush from his friends (Job 19:2). He was cut off from his children, his wealth, and his friends; Satan’s real goal was to cut him off from God. But Satan did not understand the power of God in Job’s faith. And so, rather than Job feeling abandoned on a desert isle with “no phone, no lights, no motorcar”, he hung on to his belief in the ultimate Goodness of God.

At other times the crush is more global, and nations are involved. In ancient times, heathen nations tried to crush Israel (Psalms 74:8 and 94:5), and God directed that Israel crush other nations for their wickedness (Deuteronomy 20:17, 1 Samuel 15:18, 2 Kings 13:17, and many times in the book of Jeremiah). God especially promises to crush those who oppress the weak (Psalms 72:4) and warns us about this evil (Proverbs 22:22 and Amos 4:1).

When God talks about crushing someone, He has the power to totally destroy it. The Bible speaks in several places of something that is devoted for complete and total destruction. The Hebrew word used here is *charam* or *cherem*. You may find it defined in a footnote in your Bible. We must remember, however, that only God has this awesome power. Inside us this power can keep us from suffering the ultimate crush.

Remember that Satan has been at work to crush us ever since man was put on the planet. When he was successful in causing man to sin, God pronounced a similar judgment for him in this way: *“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel (Genesis 3:15).”* And Isaiah prophesied that the Christ would be crushed for us: *“Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, ...the LORD makes his life a guilt offering (Isaiah 53:10).”*

Satan accomplished this at Calvary, when he induced mankind to crucify the Son of God. It is interesting to note that Christ spent His time immediately prior to His death in the garden of Gethsemane, which literally means “place of crushing”. It was named so because olives were crushed there for their valuable oil. In the case of olives and grapes, this crushing produces something of great value.

Christ felt the pressure of the world on him as he prayed there that night. But rather than being completely crushed, the blood which poured out of His body is able to save those who are washed in it. And of course He rose to live again. So Satan was as unsuccessful with Jesus as he was with Job. Actually, it was much worse, for Paul tells us in Romans 16:20, “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.” Thus God will completely destroy evil some day. Daniel predicted that the kingdom of heaven would be so powerful that it would crush all other kingdoms and bring them to an end (Daniel 2:40-44), but that it in turn would endure forever.

So the next time you feel the crushing pressure, don’t give in. Just let the Spirit of God in your heart to prevent it from collapsing. God will indeed deliver us from this deadly peril.

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