

## **Pots, Pain, and Power**

2 Corinthians 4:7-10 : But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

2 Corinthians 4, “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.”

In the next two verses, 2 Corinthians 4:8-9, we have the experience of Christian living: We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.

### **I. Hard Pressed**

John 16:33 - I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.

#### **Adelaide Pollard - Have Thine Own Way - 1902**

“Have thine own way, Lord, have thine own way. Thou art the Potter, I am the clay. Mold me and make me, after thy will. While I am waiting, yielded and still.”

### **II. Perplexed (completely baffled; very puzzled;confused)**

Romans 8:28 - And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Isaiah 55:8-9 - For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declared the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

### **III. Persecuted**

2 Corinthians 11:23-28 - Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I

spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

Bob Jones Sr. was fond of saying, "The door of opportunity swings on the hinge of opposition."

Joseph Matera said, God loved David so much that He didn't want him to be a king until he had every semblance of fleshly authority beaten out of him.

#### **IV. Knocked Down**

Proverbs 24:16 - for though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again or they will get up again.

Psalms 138:8 - I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

#### **V. Pressing On**

Philippians 3:12-14 NIV - Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Message Version - I'm not saying that I have this all together, that I have it made. But I am well on my way, reaching out for Christ, who has so wondrously reached out for me. Friends, don't get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward - to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back.