

## Thriving in the midst of pressure

### Preamble

“Forget about what’s happened; don’t keep going over old history. Be alert, be present. I’m about to do something brand-new. It’s bursting out! Don’t you see it? There it is! I’m making a road through the desert, rivers in the badlands. **Isaiah 43.18-19**

- Jesus People Emerging
- The Lord is doing something fresh and new
- There is both a sense of excitement about it but maybe some apprehension too

### Introduction - A season of pressure

- Social pressure - Societal norms have and are shifting
- Political pressure - Psalm 2
  - The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, [3] “Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles.” **Psalm 2:2-3**
- Financial pressure - Both in the world around us but also personally
- Personal pressure - The things we face internally, relationships, family
- Spiritual pressure - Very real spiritual battle Ephesians 6.12
- Peer pressure - What are others doing and so what should I be doing

Pressures of:

- Reforming, reshaping, rediscovering - Pioneering the new (Isaiah 43.18-19)
- A changing, shifting season
- Leaving the familiar
- Embracing the unknown

### Enemies Strategy

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. [9] Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. **1 Peter 5:8-9**

so that Satan will not outsmart us. For we are familiar with his evil schemes.

### **2 Corinthians 2:11**

- Confuse - Make something more complex or less easy to understand
- Distract - Divert attention, prevent someone from concentrating
- Disorient - Lose one’s sense of direction
- Deter - Discourage from doing something by instilling doubt or fear

Your hand-to-hand combat is not with human beings, but with the highest principalities and authorities operating in rebellion under the heavenly

realms. For they are a powerful class of demon-gods and evil spirits that hold this dark world in bondage. **Ephesians 6:12** TPT

**God's Purpose** - Maturing, Harvest, Preparing his Bride

- Bringing us to maturity - the person
- Who you are becoming is more important than what you are doing
- Getting his Bride ready - the Church

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, [3] because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. [4] Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. **James 1:2-4**

My fellow believers, when it seems as though you are facing nothing but difficulties see it as an invaluable opportunity to experience the greatest joy that you can! [3] For you know that when your faith is tested it stirs up power within you to endure all things. [4] And then as your endurance grows even stronger it will release perfection into every part of your being until there is nothing missing and nothing lacking. **James 1:2-4** TPT

Life at work

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; [9] persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. [10] We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. [11] For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. [12] So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you. **2 Corinthians 4:8-12**

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. [11] Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

**Ephesians 6:10,11**

... Be supernaturally infused with strength through your life-union with the Lord Jesus. ... PASSION

**Application**

**1. We need the Humility & Holiness of Moses**

- **Moses** - Wouldn't fight but gave it to the Lord to prove who was right.

Miriam and Aaron oppose Moses

Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth. **Numbers 12:3**

- The Lord himself responded to Miriam and Aarons challenge

Korah, Dathan, Abiram

When Moses heard this, he fell facedown. [5] Then he said to Korah and all his followers: “In the morning the Lord will show who belongs to him and who is holy, and he will have that person come near him. The man he chooses he will cause to come near him. [6] You, Korah, and all your followers are to do this: Take censers [7] and tomorrow put burning coals and incense in them before the Lord. The man the Lord chooses will be the one who is holy. You Levites have gone too far!” **Numbers 16:4-7**

**Remedy** - Cultivate Humility

“These are the ones I look on with favour: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word. **Isaiah 66:2b**

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. **1 Peter 5:6**

## **2. We need the Focus & Fortitude of Nehemiah**

Nehemiah - Had a grace to not allow the words of Sanballat, Tobias, Geshem

- Are you rebelling against the King? (Geshem)
  - I answered them by saying, “The God of heaven will give us success. We his servants will start rebuilding, but as for you, you have no share in Jerusalem or any claim or historic right to it.” **Nehemiah 2:20**

Chapter 4

- *A fox climbing on your wall will break it down,* (Tobiah) V3
  - They prayed V4
  - But didn't stop
- *Plots of war* V7,8 - (Sanballat, Tobias, Arabs)
  - Prayed and posted a guard V9
- *Threats and people growing weary*
  - They learned to both BUILD while ready for BATTLE V16
- *Distraction* V1-3 'Come lets meet' Sanballat & Geshem
  - so I sent messengers to them with this reply: “I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?” **Nehemiah 6:3**
- *Intimidation & motives questioned* V5-7
  - I sent him this reply: “Nothing like what you are saying is happening; you are just making it up out of your head.” [9] They were all trying to frighten us, thinking, “Their hands will get too weak for the work, and it will not be completed.” But I prayed, “Now strengthen my hands.” **Nehemiah 6:8-9**

After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes." **Nehemiah 4:14**

**Remedy** - clear prophetic vision

When there is no clear prophetic vision, people quickly wander astray. But when you follow the revelation of the word, heaven's bliss fills your soul.

**Proverbs 29:18** TPT

If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; But when they attend to what he reveals, they are most blessed. **Proverbs 29:18** MSG

### **3. We need the Security & Stability of Jesus**

- Jesus - was not moved by the praise or criticism of people, rooted in Father's love

"I do not accept glory from human beings, [44] How can you believe since you accept glory from one another but do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? **John 5:41,44**

The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. **John 3:35**

Jesus gave them this answer: "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. [20] For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed. **John 5:19-20**

**Remedy** - Abide in Father's Love

"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. **John 15:9**

But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. **Luke 5:16**

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