

I. When We Sense That We Are Being Stretched (7-12)

- A. Why God allows our hardships (7) - “But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.”
- B. How Paul defined our hardships (8-9) - “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.”
- C. What God extracts from our hardships (10) - “Always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. 11 For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So death is at work in us, but life in you.” **Through our struggles and sufferings, life and strength can be imparted to others**

II. What We Gain Through Being Stretched (13-15)

- A. What we believe dethrones what we sense (13) - “ Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, “I believed, and so I spoke,” we also believe, and so we also speak...”
- B. The undeniable outcome mitigates the current struggle (14) - “... knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into His presence.”
- C. An exalted view of suffering breeds endurance (15) - “For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.”

According to Paul, when we dethrone our senses and respond in faith, it benefits others, spreads grace, increases gratitude & glorifies God

III. How To Respond While Being Stretched (16-18)

- A. We press on (16a) - “So we do not lose heart...”
- B. We fully embrace two realities (16b) - “Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self his being renewed day by day.”
- C. We retain eternal perspective (17) - “For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison...”
- D. We rise above our sense (18) - “... we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”