

September 12th – Down But not Out

“We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed – always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.” (2 Cor. 4:8-10)

Think about some of the hard times you’ve been through – the death of a spouse or a child, the diagnosis of cancer, the loss of a job, etc. When you were in the midst of the valley, were you tempted to throw in the towel? Be honest – when life was the hardest, did you consider taking your own life? If we’re not careful, everyone can reach the point of despair – that point when you think there is no hope left and life is not worth living.

I’m sure Paul and his missionary companions experienced the sorts of things I listed above, but his suffering was even worse. Listen to the things we suffered for the cause of Christ: “In labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness – besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches” (2 Cor. 11:23-28). And we thought we had it rough!

Yet, amid all the suffering Paul and his companions didn’t lose heart. He explains in verse 16: “Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.” When Satan harasses you about your present, remind him of his future! You may be down, but you’re not out!