

Pastor Matthew Ude  
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2 Corinthians 4:6-10

# What Is A Father? A Father Is Gentle

**6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.**

*– 2 Corinthians 4:6,7*

There is no doubt about the strength of our God. God's strength is seen all around us. This is the same God that brought light into being when there was nothing but darkness. He is the same God who spread out the heavens and carved the continents and ocean. This same God reached out and held the sun still while Joshua and his army fought.

There is no doubt of the strength of our God, but it is one thing to be strong. It is another thing to use that strength to hold

gently and carefully that which is weak and fragile and easily broken.

The name God means the one who has all strength, but the name Our Father means that He uses that strength to protect us from all evil.

It is the glory of a warrior to have strength. It is the glory of a father to use his strength in gentleness. What does Paul say "the excellence of the power of God" is shown in us because "we are earthen vessels." In our weakness our Father's great gentleness is shown, because He can mold us through fire and the striking hammer. He can mold us carefully into that which we ought to be without breaking us.

## Pressure

**We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed;**

*– 2 Corinthians 4:8*

I can't help but think of Luke, Han, Chewy and Leah as the walls slowly move in on all sides. If you don't know who I'm talking about it, it doesn't matter. The point is that sometimes it feels like the walls are closing in all around us. Like there is no hope. Like every hand and mouth is against us. But we have more than a steel pole to keep the walls apart. In fact we have the

Lords promise that although the walls may close in they will not crush us.

How many times have I thought in my life Lord I cannot continue? I cannot handle this. The truth is of course we cannot but it is not my strength that sustains me or you. And here we still are. As Paul says we are not crushed.

The kids have the story of Paul and Silas in prison this morning. Do you think they sang songs because they were joyful? No, rather they were joyful because they sang songs of praise to the Lord. The stocks they were put into was incredibly uncomfortable, but in their grief they turned to the Lord and his strength.

When you feel the weight of the world pressing down upon you, turn to the Lord, in prayer, in His word, in song. The Lord knows how to press just hard enough to form us into what we ought to be, without crushing us.

**Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way  
which leads to life, and there are few who find it.**

*- Matthew 7:14 NKJ*

The word "difficult" there is the same word we have in our text, pressed down. The way of our salvation is difficult that is through great pressure but never more than we can bear.

**No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.**

*-1 Corinthians 10:13 NKJ*

## **Confusion**

**we are perplexed, but not in despair;**

*- 2 Corinthians 4:8*

Being hard-pressed often leaves us confused and perplexed. Why is this happening? Why is God allowing this? Think of Job. How much of Job is taken up with arguing with his friends and his wife? Why is this happening? We don't understand. We can't see the reason. But in our confusion we come back to this truth: "if God is for us" " he who did not spare his own son." The crucifixion is not just the payment for our sins. It is also the absolute proof of God's steadfast love. Whatever is happening "I know that my Redeemer lives and that when he stands upon the earth I shall see him, with these eyes, in my own body I shall behold him with these very eyes"

**And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments.**

*Luke 24:4 NKJ*

The women Easter morning were greatly perplexed at the tomb but the end result was joy. So often when we are perplexed and confused the end is not good, but in this case it is the best news ever.

There is so much we don't understand about God, about our salvation, about other people, about our life, but however much we are confused we don't need to doubt. We don't despair because we know that God is our Father, who does know everything and holds us safely in his hands. His strong but gentle hands.

## **Persecution**

**persecuted, but not forsaken**

*– 2 Corinthians 4:9*

We will face trials and tribulations. Our gospel reading this morning reminds us "the world does not know us because we are not of the world." Yet never will our father forsake us.

It is the glory of a Father to be there for his children.

Our children grow up and pretend they don't need us. Then someday they really don't. What a wonderful day it is when they are in trouble and they do need us again? Not that a father is happy that his child is in trouble but he is joyful his child trusts him and knows to come to him and that he is able to help. It is never an imposition for a child to call his/her father. A father is happy when their children need his help.

How much more so our Father in heaven. He delights in the day when His children remember that He is their Father. When we call upon him, He delights to use his strength to aid us in our trouble.

**Blessed are those who are persecuted for  
righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of  
heaven.**

*Matthew 5:10 NKJ*

**Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will  
suffer persecution.**

*2 Timothy 3:12 NKJ*

We will have trouble in this life. We will be persecuted, but our Father will never forget us.

**And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"**

*Matthew 27:46 NKJ*

Jesus was forsaken by His Father so that we never will be.

**"Can a woman forget her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you.**

*Isaiah 49:15 NKJ*

We are persecuted but Our Father will never forget us and will hold us in His strong hands.

## **Struck**

**struck down, but not destroyed**

*– 2 Corinthians 4:9*

Paul knew well what it meant to be struck down. He was beaten, robbed, thrown in prison, whipped, stoned and left for dead, but he just kept on going.

Sometimes we are struck down. Sometimes it is our Father who strikes us down. Sometimes we have built ourselves up in

pride and it is necessary that our Father tears us down so He can rebuild us in humility and love not in pride and sin.

Yet even when He tears us down He knows how to do it without destroying us.

## **With Christ**

**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 Corinthians 4:10*

We don't always live up to the example of fatherhood with which our Father in heaven treats us. We often forget to call upon Him. Our prayers are frequently weak and sinful. But in all things through all sin, in every depression and persecution we carry with us the greatest gift the Father has ever given us the death of His son our Lord Jesus Christ. As Paul says we carry this death with us always so that having been forgiven by His blood we will also share in His life.

We are weak and sinful and easily broken, but He is strong and gentle and will never forsakes us.

**Amen**