

GREATER WORKS CHRISTIAN CHURCH



"WHERE HIS PRESENCE IS OUR PURPOSE"



MAJESTY

GRACE

MAGNIFICENT

WORTHY

STRENGTH

SPLENDOR

ELEGANCE

VIRTUOUS

GRANDEUR

GLAMOUR

Beauty

FOR

ashes

INTERNATIONAL

Freedom comes with
responsibility

Faith in Christ means
Freedom and Liberty

Galatians 5:13-15 (NKJV)

¹³ For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

¹⁴ For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this:
"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

¹⁵ But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

16th President of the United States 1861-1865

America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose, our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves.

Apostle Paul's first letter written to believers throughout southern Galatia was to the churches he founded during his first missionary journey.

Acts 13:14

Acts 14:23

Flag of Freedom

Picture it, you are the self-appointed
chief inquisitor, the Christian killer
extraordinaire, all in the name of God.
His mindset, these followers of Jesus
must be stopped, stoned, and killed if
need be!

Acts 9:3-4 (NKJV)

³ As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven.

⁴ Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

Galatians 5:16-18 (NLT)

¹⁶ So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves.

¹⁷ The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.

¹⁸ But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.

Galatians 5:19-21 (NLT)

¹⁹ When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures,

²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division,

²¹ envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these.

Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT)

²² But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

Galatians 5:24-26 (NLT)

- 24** Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there.
- 25** Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.
- 26** Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another.

Faith comes with challenges.

Salvation is by God's grace
through faith in Christ and
nothing else.

Pauls 3 year journey in Ephesus

Acts 19

So many people were turning to the Lord that it was shutting down Pagan idol businesses. The worship of the false goddess Artemis was being dethroned. Enraged, the silversmiths and pagan artisans rioted.

Riot broke out at the Temple

Acts 21-28

What comes out of the book of Ephesians was the mystery that had been hidden for many ages.

Christ's' glorious bride and the church.

2 Corinthians 1:8-9 (KJV)

8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:

9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:

Notice the first part of verse 8, where Paul says, "For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of the *trouble* which came unto us in Asia...." The word "trouble" is the Greek word *thlipsis*, which was used to convey the idea of a *heavy-pressure situation*. In fact, at one point this word was used to depict a victim who was first tied up with rope and laid on his back; then a huge, heavy boulder was slowly lowered upon him until he was *crushed*). This, indeed, would be a *very heavy situation* for the man underneath the boulder! He would be in a *tight place, under a heavy burden, or in a great squeeze*.

By using this word, Paul is saying, "We were under a heavy load—an unbelievably heavy amount of stress and pressure! We were in very tight circumstances. Our minds were being 'squeezed.' It felt like our lives were being pushed right out of us!"

You might think Paul is referring to *physical suffering*. Of course, physical suffering is difficult, but the greatest suffering of all always occurs in the mind—*mental suffering*. A person can live with pain in his body if his mind is still in control. However, when the suffering begins to work on that person's mind, both his body and his mind could eventually break and fold.

Paul's greatest suffering was not physical, but mental. This is why he goes on to say, "... that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life" (v. 8). Particularly pay heed to that first phrase, "that we were pressed out of measure." This is the Greek phrase *kath huperbole*, and it is extremely important in Paul's testimony. It literally means *to throw beyond, to excel, to exceed, or to go beyond anything normal or expected*. It also describes *something that is excessive and beyond the normal range of what most would experience*.

By using this word, Paul says, *"We were under an amount of pressure that is not normal. It was FAR BEYOND anything we had ever previously experienced. It was excessive, unbelievable, unbearable, and far too much for any one human being to endure."*

"We would not, brethren, have you ignorant of the horribly tight, life-threatening squeeze that came to us in Asia. It was unbelievable! With all the things that we have been through, this was the worst of all. It felt like our lives were being crushed! It was so difficult that I didn't know what to do. No experience I've ever been through required so much of me; in fact, I didn't have enough strength to cope with it. Toward the end of this ordeal, I was so overwhelmed that I didn't think we'd ever get out! I felt suffocated, trapped, and pinned against the wall. I really thought it was the end of the road for us! As far as we were concerned, the verdict was in, and the verdict said, 'Death.' But really, this was no great shock, because we were already feeling the effect of death and depression in our souls...."

The lesson he learned,
do not trust yourself.

2 Corinthians 11:23-24 (NKJV)

²³ Are they ministers of Christ?--I speak as a fool--I *am* more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.

²⁴ From the Jews five times I received forty *stripes* minus one.

This was one of the most vicious treatments of the ancient world. The tortured person's clothing was completely removed so he appeared before his persecutors naked. His arms were tied so he could not defend himself. Then the torturer would begin to lash the prisoner's bare body with a whip made of three long cords, one from calf hide and the other two from donkey hide.

Pieces of glass, bone, and metal were often attached to the end of the cords to make the lashing more memorable. The torturer would hit so hard that the pieces of glass, bone, and metal would lodge into the victim's skin. Then as the cords were jerked backward for the next lash of the whip, those pieces of glass, bone, and metal would rip out significant amounts of flesh. This left horrid scars on the victim's body—
permanently.

John 16:33 (NKJV)

³³ These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Then Jesus tells us, "I have overcome the world." The word "overcome" is the Greek word *nikos*, which is also the word for *victory*. But the grammar used in this statement does not imply a single victory in the past, but *a continuous and abiding victory*. Therefore, the idea that this Greek word presents is this: "I have overcome the world; I am still overcoming the world; and I will always be in an overcoming position over the world!"

MY PRAYER FOR TODAY

*Lord, You have never abandoned me, and You never will!
When the devil tries to crush me with stress, I throw the
weight of my cares upon You. I can't thank You enough for
taking all those pressures off my shoulders and freeing me to
walk in peace! My heart is simply overflowing with
gratefulness for the strength and power You have released
inside me. I know that with Your continued help, I shall be
victorious, and these problems will flee!*

I pray this in Jesus' name!

MY CONFESSION FOR TODAY

I confess that God's delivering power is mine! He has rescued me before; He will rescue me now; and He will rescue me when I need His power again in the future. I am "staying put" right where God called me. I refuse to move; I reject every temptation to give up; and I will never give in to the pressures to stop doing what God has told me to do. I will be faithful, and God will empower me to make it all the way through to my place of victory!

I declare this by faith in Jesus' name!



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