

2 Corinthians 1:8-11

⁸ For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. ⁹ Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. ¹⁰ He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. ¹¹ You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

—2 Corinthians 1:8-11(ESV)

v 8 – “For we do not want you to be unaware...”

“unaware,” more lit. ignorant – *agnoeó*, without knowledge

We are strengthened in our own faith by knowing of the experiences of others

Particular as regards hardship—“it’s not just me”

For we were utterly burdened beyond our strength [power], so as for us to despair even to live.

“to despair” – *exaporéomai*, (from *ex*, “out of” which intensifies *aporéō*, “without exit, passageway”).

to see “no way out” of this situation—in this case, even “to live”

The apostles are not describing *depression*, they are describing *assessment* of their circumstances—although, no doubt, those circumstances had an emotional toll.

They were out of answers or solutions or visible resources—and they were forced to accept that their lives were forfeit. They just “weren’t going to make it.”

They were *in* God’s will—not *out of* God’s will.

God allows his children and servants to reach, what older writers have called, the end of themselves.

v 9 – “Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death....”

More lit. “But we had the sentence of death in ourselves...”

They accepted that their earthly lives were forfeit for Christ—but that their lives were also eternally safe *in him*. They died to self and gave up all “rights of possession” of their lives unto the will of God.

For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.—Colossians 3:3

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.—

Galatians 2:20

“in order that...”

Not dying for the sake of dying—or even “dying to self” for the sake of doing so

This is not the eradication of self, as in some Eastern religions

In order that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God, the One raising the dead...

We speak of placing all our faith in God, but much of our faith is often in ourselves, what we perceive, what we assess as possible, etc.

“the One raising [*pp*] the dead...”

He is actively doing this

Physical death

Delivering us in this life from burdens and perils that we are far too weak to overcome

v 10 – “He delivered us from such a deadly peril...”

more lit. – (continuing the same previous sentence) “who from such a great death has delivered us...”

Paul seems here to be referring to God’s deliverance of us from *eternal* condemnation and death [“such a great death”]—our salvation

“and will deliver...”

God’s faithfulness is absolute

He does not forget us

He does not forsake us

Deliverance is a *positive*—it is a purposeful act of God’s accomplishment of His will for our lives. It is pro-active, not defensive and reactive.

God’s deliverance of us is His next step in the unfolding of His eternal will for us

“in whom we have hope that he also will deliver us even now...”

Paul’s statement of faith regarding their current challenges

“hope” means a certain expectation, not a “wish” or uncertainty. We would say “we look forward to it.”

“your joining together also for us by supplication...”

The need for prayer

We are in disagreement with all of Scripture if we believe that prayers are meaningless, and that the same things will happen, whether we pray or not

We do not have to understand “the equation” of prayer and God’s actions in order to understand the authoritative teaching of God to us

“so that thanks may be given for us by many persons for the grace bestowed on us through the prayers of many.”

Through prayer, we are able to join in the very work of God

We can all “have a part”!

God’s answers to prayers then become a source of rejoicing and encouragement to all those who engaged in prayer together