

Christ's Grace Is Enough

“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”
2 Corinthians 12:9

Intro:

Most Christians, when going through trials of suffering and pressure, simply want the trial to go away. And this was the case with Paul when he was going through this, but the statement Christ gave to Paul is the same one he is giving to all of us today and that is “My grace is sufficient for thee”, or “Enough for you the grace of me”

Paul then goes on to explain exactly what occurs in Christ's grace for all of us and he breaks it down further into five categories. There is the one overall concept of pressure, which comes because we live here in this world ruled by Satan, because we live in these corrupted bodies of flesh, and because we have to deal with a world filled with demons who operate under Satan's rule. These five categories are: **infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions and distresses.**

But before we get into a in-depth look into these five concepts, which encompass every sort of trial and pressure we will be exposed to in this life, we need to see what it was that led up to Paul's statement, how Paul tried to get out of it, what the Lord told him and finally his conclusion on the matter that summarized in Christ's strength given to him in these five categories.

G. The messenger of Satan. v.7

“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.”
2 Corinthians 12:7 - και τη υπερβολη των αποκαλυψεων ινα μη υπεραιρωμαι εδοθη μοι σκολοψ τη σαρκι αγγελος σαταν ινα με κολαφιζη ινα μη υπεραιρωμαι.

“Through the abundance of the revelations”, or, “And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations” – kai te hyperbole ton apokalypseon. The word for **surpassing** is hyperbole and it meant beyond measure, to go beyond something, exceeding, to go beyond what one would normally expect.

The word for **revelations**, which is in the plural, denotes either the revealing of deity, or the things that deity reveals to you. If one is going to know anything of a spiritual nature, then it must be revealed to you by God. If one is going to know God, then he cannot know God unless God reveals himself to us, which is his divine prerogative. And God reveals himself to us through Bible Doctrine.

Now Paul had many revelations come to him from God. There was that time on the Damascus road where Christ appeared to him in person, Acts 9:4, *“And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?”*; and then there was that time when he was caught up to the third heaven, 2 Corinthians 12:2, *“I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.”*; and then there are all the things that the Lord had revealed to him over the years through his Spirit and his study of the Word.

“*And lest I should be exalted above measure*”, or, “*For this reason to keep me from exalting myself*” - *hina me huperairomai*. Paul was just like anyone of us; he was born again, he did have a new nature, but he still also had an old nature! And in the old nature there is always the problem of **pride** kicking in to make us think higher of ourselves than we ought to. Now for some people it's their good looks, for others it might be the money they have, or their material possessions, for others their place in society, and for others it might be their education or knowledge they might possess! This was a preventative measure by the Lord to keep Paul from being lifted up in pride because of the surpassing number of spiritual revelations that was given to him.

We see this in the statement of *hina me huperairomai*. To **exalt** is the present passive subjunctive of *huperairo* and when combined with *hina*, where *hina* plus the subjunctive mood introduces a purpose clause, we see that something is being done for a purpose. **Christ is assigning to Paul a “thorn in the flesh” for the purpose of keeping him from exalting himself!**

But there is another side to this because of the use of the passive voice and it is somewhat indicated in the only other place *huperairo* is used outside this passage and that is with the antichrist, who will exalt himself above every so-called god or object of worship. “*Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*” 2 Thessalonians 2:4 And that would be to prevent other believers from exalting Paul above the other Apostles.

It depends upon whether one takes the passive voice in its true sense of receiving the action of the verb. In that case it would refer to the idea of preventing Paul from being exalted by other believers, who would put him on a pedestal as some super-spiritual Apostle, who had more revelations than the others. Or if the passive voice is used in a special sense of speaking like a middle voice, then it would be **to prevent him from exalting himself**.

“*There was given to me*”, or, “*There was assigned to me*” - *edothe moi*. The word **given** is the aorist passive indicative of *didomi*, which tells us the **reality of this event with the indicative mood**, that he received it from the Lord with the passive voice, and that he received it at a point in time after the revelations with the aorist tense.

The word *didomi* needs to be interpreted in its context. If a subject went before his king with a request, then *didomi* would mean the request was **granted**. In a context like this, where Paul was “*given*” something, where there was no consultation of Paul's will in the matter, where there was something being done by a superior to an inferior party, then *didomi* would be translated as being **assigned**.

“*A thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan*” - *skolops te sarki angelos satan*. Literally speaking a thorn in the flesh was just that, a literal thorn in one's flesh. It is something that causes pain, or discomfort, something that results in one never being able to settle down comfortably. But it was an expression used in those days, (and even today), that was taken **figuratively** not literally.

Now many since then have tried to guess as to what it could be ranging from Paul's poor eyesight all the way to some other physical condition that caused him pain. But before we go outside the context to speculate as to what it could be we should stick with what has already been presented to us in context! In context Paul states what his “*thorn in the flesh*” was and it was a messenger of Satan! It was a literal demon that had been assigned to him to buffet him whenever he operated outside the divine spiritual life dynamic.

“To buffet me” - *hina me kolaphize*. To **buffet** me is the present active subjunctive of *kolaphizo*, which meant to beat with the fist, to box the ear, to ill treat someone. This maltreatment could be mental, physical or both. We notice that once again we have *hina* used with the subjunctive mood introducing a purpose clause. **This messenger of Satan, or angel of Satan, had been assigned to Paul for the purpose of punching him.**

It was used for the beating Christ received in his crucifixion trial. “Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands,” Matthew 26:67. And the treatment Paul and the others received because of their doctrinal ministry of the Word of God. “Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace;” 1 Corinthians 4:11

Being subject to this was not a pleasant experience for Paul, but it was necessary to keep him from relying on the flesh nature and dependent upon the grace provision of God. It kept him in that place of grace humility of depending upon the spiritual provision of Christ's strength, rather than being prone to lapse back and trust in his own strengths and abilities.

H. Paul wanted him or it to go away. v.8

“For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.” 2 Corinthians 12:8 - υπερ τουτου τρις τον κυριον παρεκαλεσα ινα αποστη απ εμου.

For this thing three times – *huper toutou tris*. Or, on behalf of this, or concerning this three times I entreated the Lord. Evidently Paul knew what was going on when the demon was assigned to him. He had the doctrinal insight to be able to distinguish demonic activity in the Christian life from the problems caused by the flesh nature and the world system. But it didn't mean that he liked what was happening to him, nor did he want it in his life because he had no choice in the matter for the demon had been assigned to him.

I besought the Lord thrice – *ton kurion parekalesa*. **Besought** is the aoist active indicative of *parakaleo*, which is a culminative aorist emphasizing the results of that action. It meant to call upon someone in a time of need, to implore, to entreat, to appeal to. Not once did he appeal to the Lord in this matter, but three times. It must have really bothered Paul because he not only called upon the Lord three times to have to go away, but he didn't use the usual word for a request, instead he used a word that carried great urgency; he was actually begging God for relief.

That it might depart from me – *hina aposte emou*. **Might depart** is the aoist active subjunctive of *aphistemi*, plus we have the ablative of source of emou or me. *Hina*, when used with the subjunctive mood, introduces a purpose clause, so here we see the **purpose** of Paul's entreaty to the Lord and that is to have this demon go away from him.

Evidently this demon caused Paul so much personal distress that it was way beyond his personal ability to deal with it or capacity to handle it. So he begged God and begged God and begged God for it to depart from him, but this is where we have a situation that a believer's prayer was not answered, that is, with the answer **he wanted!** Instead Christ had allocated to him a provision of his grace whereby he could handle it! So what Paul had to accept is utilizing Christ's grace provision in this area as well. When faced with a situation we can't handle, and one that the Lord won't remove, then we need to find out and apply the specific grace provision he has supplied.

The Lord told us that he would not allow us to be tested beyond what we're able to bear, but make a way of escape. But he doesn't say that he will make the way of escape **what we want!** *“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make **a way to escape**, that ye may be able to bear it.”* 1 Corinthians 10:13

If we're faced with a situation we can't handle, and it won't go away and the Lord won't remove it, and if we're going to have to go through it, then what we have to do is lean upon the spiritual provision that he has supplied to us in his grace. Christ's statement to Paul still echoes to us today, *“Enough for you the grace of me, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.”*

I. The sufficiency of Christ's power. v.9

“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” 2 Corinthians 12:9 - και ειρηκεν μοι αρκει σοι η χαρις μου η γαρ δυναμις μου εν ασθενεια τελειουται ηδιστα ουν μαλλον καυχησομαι εν ταις ασθενειαις μου ινα επισκηνωση επ εμε η δυναμις του χριστου.

The word **said** is the perfect active indicative of *eipon*, which shows a progress in an action that has come to a completed state with the results existing on into the future. Which says to us Christ has made his reply to Paul and that's final. **He stated to me that his grace is enough for me and that's the end of the matter.**

Eipon meant to **say** or speak something, but has the idea of bidding or command. Paul kept entreating the Lord for this fallen angel to depart from him, but received an official declaration from the Lord that this was not going to occur and he would have to learn to lean upon Christ's grace provision; and **with the perfect tense we have the finality of his reply to Paul.**

This is an important point of doctrine for all believers to understand and accept. We all have our various prayer requests to God asking him for this thing or that and we expect an answer to our prayers along the line of what we have prayed for! But sometimes his answer is not what we want; sometimes it's something altogether different and here is one of those cases. Paul asked the Lord for this demon to be removed from him, but the Lord did not grant that request, instead he told Paul that the spiritual life provision that he supplied in his grace was more than enough for him, so he was going to have to live within it! And the same thing goes for us today; we are going to have to live in the sphere of Christ's power when going through our trials in life.

The word for **sufficient** is the present active indicative of *arkeo*. *Arkeo* deals with the idea of having enough strength, or whatever else that one may need, to be strong enough for a thing. A pickup truck is rated to carry, or haul a certain weight load. Now if you want to haul something heavier than what it is rated for, then you have to have a larger truck. Certain size rocket motors are needed to carry a certain amount of payload into space.

When we go through various trials, and many of them are very serious, we need strength, spiritual strength, power that strengthens our souls, so that we will have the sufficiency to handle them. We do not possess this strength in our own right, that is, in our flesh natures, so what we want is for God to remove them from us. But Christ says that his grace is enough for us. He says that what he provides to us in his grace is enough for us to meet the trial and prevail over it in victory!

When we read “**my grace**” we know that what we are looking at is all that Christ can do for us in his infinite power and wisdom. Of course when we read about the men and women who suffered for the name of Christ and how Christ's grace and strength got them through all that, we are encouraged by that. But we think, that's them and not me! But when it comes to our turn, we become frightened and want it to go away. But his words are for us too, “My grace is enough for you”! Christ's provision of grace in the spiritual life dynamic is more than enough to get us through what we're going through.

“My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness” – arkei soi he charis mou he gar dunamis mou en astheneia teleitai. “Enough for you the grace of me: for my strength is made perfect or complete in the sphere of weakness.” We cannot handle these trials because we are weak! But we do not have to go through them in **our** strength, but the strength of Christ! “**My strength**”, he says.

The word **for** is *gar* and it explains why Christ's grace was sufficient for Paul to strengthen him in his daily ordeal with this fallen angel, because the power of Christ was perfected in the sphere of personal weakness. We have *en* plus the locative of sphere of weakness telling us that the activity of the verb takes place within the sphere of something; here it's **within the sphere of human weakness**.

The laws of the state of California operate within the borders (sphere) of California; electricity operates within the sphere of the wires that carries it; gasoline combustion operates within the sphere of the chamber; our hearts pump blood within the sphere of the blood vessels within our bodies; the Spirit of Christ dwells within the sphere of the bodies of born again believers in Christ; and the Spirit of Christ comes to full power and operation within the sphere of our personal weaknesses.

The word for **power** here is *dunamis* and it speaks of that unseen force that accomplishes something; electricity is power, wind is power, magnetism is power, atomic energy is power; and the Holy Spirit is the power that accomplishes the will of the Father. Here it is the power that enables us to withstand all the attacks of Satan's minions and the trials we go through.

“My strength is made perfect in weakness”, the word for **made perfect** is the present passive indicative of *teleioo*. We notice right off the bat that this is in the passive voice telling us that it is not we who are doing this, but the Lord. *Teleioo* meant to complete or to finish something, such as, building an house, or finishing a project that one has undertaken. The power of Christ reaches its consummation and is completed within the sphere of our human weakness and it does so as the believer goes from relying on their own strength and starts leaning on the Lord in faith.

It goes back to the idea of grace versus works. *“And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”* Romans 11:6 Grace is what God can do and does for us, God's activity, while works refers to the activity of man. So it's either God is doing all the work, or it is man. If man is doing the activity, then that excludes God and his grace. But if God is doing the activity, then that excludes man's works.

This is the basis for Christ's strength being made complete in the area of our weakness. You see, weakness means we can't do it! We may want to do it; we may try to do it, but we can't do it because we are weak. So when we get into our areas of weakness, (actually **weakness** for the whole human frame is summarized as being weak by God), where our works are no longer involved, then, there, in that sphere of weakness we see God's grace and strength start to operate. So Paul speaks of several areas he and we are involved in that are way more than our ability to handle them in our own strength leaving Paul left with nothing else to do than trust the Lord!

Grace is grace and human works are human works and never the twain shall meet; they are **mutually exclusive**. If there is grace, then that rejects and excludes man's works. If there are works, which refers to man's activities: his ideas, his will, his strength and his efforts, then they reject God's grace. It's only when we stop trying to come up with our own ideas, stop relying on our own strength and stop trying in the flesh and start trusting God in faith that we start to see God's grace and strength in action.

Why the difference? Because the two, grace and works, are totally different things. **Grace** is a gift; it is a favor that God does for us. It is unearned, undeserved and unmerited. It's origin is totally in God where God provides it all and nothing from us. His idea, his thinking, his plan, his provision and power. While **works**, *ergos* – activity, refers to man's activity: his ideas, his will, his strength and his efforts. And at the end of works is man bragging about what he has done, or his ideas, strength, etc.. While at the end of grace is God getting all the glory.

The power of Christ comes to us in all these categories of trials out of the grace of Christ. They are totally separate concepts, but grace is the determiner on the matter of power flowing to us. This is why we see so many believers suffering and struggling so long in their trials without the benefit of Christ's grace and power. Why? Because **Christ is waiting for us to cease from our own brand of works**, whether they are intellectual activity or physical strength, so that his grace can go into operation. **This is why we see Christ's grace and strength operating in the sphere of human weakness, because there are no human works there!**

It is **grace** that authorizes the power to flow to the believer, but it is **faith** that provides the sphere in which the power of Christ can operate! And it is **faith** that is the antithesis of works! So **faith** is just a much a part of this divine dynamic as the grace of Christ and the power of Christ. Why? Because, like grace, in **grace** all the merit goes to the one extending the grace, God, and in **faith** all the merit lies in the object of one's faith, which is God again.

One of the things that the Scriptures teach us is that God puts his people in situations that are way beyond our ability to bear them, handle them, or come up with any kind of solution to solve them. He does this not to punish us, or make our lives miserable, but to bring us to the place where we come to the end of our works, strength and activity, so that we will turn to him and rely on his power to deal with the situation. *“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: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, **that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God** which raiseth the dead:”* 2 Corinthians 1:8,9

By trying to handle their pressure situation in their own strength, Paul and the others had driven themselves to despair. But when they stopped trying to deal with it themselves, (probably after realizing that nothing they did worked), and started trusting in the Father once again to deal with their problem, God, once again, empowered them and dealt with the situation. *“Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;”* 2 Corinthians 1:8-10

This is the secret of having the power of Christ operate in our lives! We have to get our thinking, our ideas, our planning, our trying and efforts, our works out of the picture. Once we are in our weakness trusting him to do it, then his power can go into operation and handle the problem. Whatever God does for us has to be on the basis of his grace and for grace to be there, then our works have to go, which means that our works are no longer a factor in the matter. For our works exclude his grace and his grace excludes our works!

“Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”
- *hedista oun mallon kauchesomai en tais astheneiais mou hina episkenose ep'eme he dunamis tou christou.*

Hedista is a superlative denoting the idea of the greatest pleasure, or most gladly. This is quite a switch from the **despair** he talked about in chapter one and from the attitude that most men have today of trying to hide their weaknesses from other people. Everybody has their strengths and weaknesses, even though many will never admit to their areas of weakness, but when it comes to God, it's not that we have areas of weakness, but that **we are weak!**

This is the realization that Paul came to in his Christian life in that it's no longer that I have some areas I'm strong in and can handle life's problems out of my own personal areas of strength, while in those areas that I am weak in I'll turn to the Lord for help. He finally realized that he was weak through and through and therefore he had to lean on the Lord for help in everything!

He said, *“Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities,”*. We have the future middle indicative of *kauchaomai*, which meant to boast or to brag about something. Instead of being afraid of his weaknesses and trying to get rid of them, he now is boasting about them! Why? He tells us by the use of the words *oun* and *mallon*.

Mallon is translated as rather and *oun* is translated as therefore. Now the word *oun* took in the idea of discussing something, then drawing a conclusion from it with a view toward an application of a principle. What he was talking about was the **distress** he suffered as the result of this messenger of Satan that was assigned to him and how he implored the Lord three times to have him take it away. This, plus the statement that Christ gave to him that his grace was sufficient for him, was the basis for him glorying in the Lord.

The conclusion is that no matter what we have to go through in life Christ's grace is sufficient to handle it, for in his grace we now have access to his power. Therefore, Paul says, I will boast all the more in my weaknesses because Christ's power will be there to handle it. Paul's weakness and trials were distressing, but Christ's power transcended them all.

“That the power of Christ may rest upon me.” - *hina episkenose ep'eme he dunamis tou christou*. The word for **power** is *dunamis* and it denoted that unseen force, which is able to accomplish something. It is infused into believers through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The key to accessing this power is not through our own works, but in the end of our works when all we have left is faith and trust in the Lord.

Any merit that exists is in the **object** of one's faith, not in the one exercising faith. There is no power or strength in the believer, there is no power in faith. The power lies solely in God who in strengthens us as we cease from our own works and trust him. The power, the peace, the love, the joy lies solely in the Spirit of Christ.

When a believer is going through something he can't handle; some area that he cannot perform in, when he doesn't have the knowledge, the strength, the will, the power, or the answers for it in his life; it is then and there in his area of weakness that he has to come to the end of himself and turn to the Lord in faith and when he does, it is then that the Spirit of Christ comes upon him in such a way that he is able to do what was impossible for him to do, or to go through what he thought was impossible for him to go through.

That the power of Christ may rest upon me is *hina episkenose ep'eme he dunamis tou christou*. The word for **rest upon** is the orist active subjunctive of *episkenoo*. There are several word for **dwell** in the NT: *oikeo* – to dwell in a house; *kataiokeo* – to settle down in an house, or in an area; *enoikeo* – to indwell something, such as the Holy Spirit indwelling a believer; *perioikeo* – to dwell around something; *sunoiikeo* – to dwell with someone; *meno* – to remain, or abide; *skenoō* – to pitch a tent, or to live in a tent.

The Greek word *skene* referred to a tent, booth, tabernacle, hut, or dome-like structure. It referred to the tabernacle in the wilderness that God dwelt in with his people. Tents were the standard dwelling for millions of people for thousands of years all over the world. They were inexpensive, portable and well-suited to their climates. He used the tent as an analogy for the the soul as it lived in these mortal bodies. “*For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle (skenos) were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*” 2 Corinthians 5:1 Paul even worked as a tent maker on the side.

May rest upon is the orist active subjunctive of *episkenoo*. Because this is the only place this verb is used by Paul, and it is not derived from *skene* or *skenoō*, it makes it more difficult to derive its exact meaning; it appears to be a compound of *epi* – upon and *skenoō* to tabernacle. *Epi* can refer to being upon something, or to intensify the idea of the verb. One bird flies **over** the bridge, *huper*; the second bird flies **under** the bridge, *hupo*; while the third bird lands **upon** the bridge, *epi*.

Epi with the accusative, as we have here in *ep'eme*, tells us that there is actual rest upon the object, that it touches it. But there is also another idea found with *ep'eme*, **upon me**, is that it was used with someone being the recipient of various spiritual blessings or experiences. Some say that *epi* here should be used of horizontal motion, rather than vertical, so that it's to me rather than upon me.

Some have tried to translate it as, “that the power of Christ may take up residence in me”, but if that was the case, then why didn't the Word state it as, *enoikeo en eme*, instead of *episkenoo ep'eme*? Here we have the preposition *epi*, **upon**, being used twice. I think we need to look more at the tent analogy to understand what is going on here, because we do have the use of the word tent here.

We also have the use of a verb to denote this idea of Christ's power coming upon Paul in such a way it transcended the trials he was going through, but this action is put as tabernacling upon Paul. One of the keys here is the use of the word **me**, *eme*; the power of Christ would come upon Paul, me. But we need to remember who the **me** is here! When Paul said me he was referring to his **soul**. The **me** is Paul's soul as it existed in Paul's body. So this power of Christ would come upon Paul's soul, like a tent or dome, because his soul was in his body.

So what is a tent or dome-like structure? It was something that enveloped the individual encapsulating and protecting them from the outside world, where predators, snakes, scorpions, dust storms, the heat of the sun and the wind existed. And it would be normal for Paul to think like this for he not only lived in them as so many did in those days, but he also made them! Your spiritual “tent” provided by Christ's power was your soul's encapsulated environment protecting you from the outside world.

But so was the power of Christ that came to the Apostle Paul's soul enveloping him in such a way that his soul was protected from the trauma and stress that was going on outside him as he was forced to go through the stressful things that he went through in his life, as all of us have to go through in our lives. **The metaphor of a tent speaks of the soul's total protection from these things**.

An interesting point in that when the Bedouin was ready to move from one place to another he simply pulled out the main pole in the center, which would cause the tent to fall to the ground where it could be folded up and placed on one of their camels for transport. This is an analogy for the death of the believer for when God removes the soul from the body, the body collapses and the soul goes to be with the Lord. Some have even put the silver cord as the means for the removing of the soul much like the cord that was tied at the bottom of the tent pole; step outside the tent, pull on the cord, the pole comes down and the tent collapses.

Wuest translates this as, “that the power of Christ may take up its residence in me”. But again, why didn't the Holy Spirit put it as *enoikeo en eme*, instead of *episkenoō ep'eme*? **Arthur Way's** translation puts this passage as, “Most cheerfully, then, will I boast of my frailty, rather than murmur, so that over me, as a tent, may be spread the might of the Messiah.”

The power of Christ is found in the Spirit of Christ, also referred to as the Holy Spirit. And it is the Holy Spirit, when he indwelt us at the moment of our salvation, took up residence in us at that time! So what we have here is a special provision of Christ's grace to get us through these very difficult trials we have to go through in this life. The power of the Messiah so envelops the believer in Christ in such a way that his soul is strengthened and protected from whatever it is that he or she is going through so that he will go through it with calm, peace and fortitude, whether it is their death, or the death of a loved one, persecution, wars, famine, accidents, trials, injury, etc.. Whatever it is Christ's power will come upon us in such a way to bring us safely through to the other side.

J. Crises for Christ's sake. v.10

“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.” - διο ευδοκω εν ασθενειαις εν υβρεσιν εν αναγκαις εν διωγμοις εν στενοχωριας υπερ χριστου οταν γαρ ασθενω τοτε δυνατος ειμι.

“Therefore I take pleasure” - *dio eudokeo*. We have here the present active indicative of *eudokeo*, which meant to be well pleased, to be content, or to take pleasure. This is certainly a turn around in Paul's thinking where before he was begging God for him to remove this messenger of Satan from him and now he is content with the situation. The reason for this is that he has had his eyes opened and now he sees that he is not left to cope with life, its problems and crises in his own strength, (which he didn't have), for now he can draw upon the strength of Christ to carry him through!

Eudokeo meant to be well pleased, to think it good, to take pleasure in, to delight in. Now this may seem strange for a man to take pleasure in crises, or stressful situations, when everyone else in life is doing everything he possible can to avoid them! And it would be strange, if not for another factor involved in them and that is the power of the Messiah at work in his life with Paul and us. Paul could be very content in these things because of the delightfulness, not of the trial, but of power of Christ which accompanied the trial!

1. Weakness – *en astheneia* - dative singular.

Literally in the sphere of weaknesses. It refers to the infirmities of the flesh nature: physical, mental, emotional, volitional, or personal capacity to deal with issues, and denotes that one has an inability to perform in a certain area. If a man is weak, or injured, it means that not only is his ability to lift things impaired or limited, but that he is unable to lift that which is needed in just normal situations.

Let's say that a man is going on a trip and he has 100 pounds of luggage, but he has been injured and cannot carry it as he could normally do, or is elderly and frail of frame. So what does he do? He hires a Red Cap or somebody else to do it for him. He may want to do it himself; he may have been able to do it before, but now he can't. He is now weak and unable to perform in that area.

Weakness of body plagues all of us: our eyesight, our hearing, our backs, knees, feet, hands; all of us have bodies that are plagued by weakness and if you don't, then just wait till you get older. Then there is the **weakness of our minds**, our memory, our intellect, our lack of education and training, our skills. None of us have the mental skills and training and capability to meet every trial in life we come up against! We have weaknesses, many of them, and we are weak!

People who have been crippled **physically** or unable to perform in many areas. But so also are people who have been crippled **emotionally** unable to perform in many areas. It's very hard for them to face certain kinds of trials that others can easily handle. It's hard for them to have inter-personal relationships with other people, even though they may want to!

But whatever our personal area of weakness may be, when that area of our life is touched, when we are called upon to produce out of that area for the sake of Christ, then the power of Christ will come upon us in such a way to give us the added grace and strength needed to perform in that area! Whether it be to perform in that area, or to endure a trial, or face a situation, Christ will give us his transcending and encapsulating strength, so that our souls will be protected and we can perform as we need to. So when the will of God and the plan of God for our lives takes us into an area, or areas of our weaknesses, areas where we personally lack the skill, strength, knowledge, capacity, or ability to handle them, then the power of God will be there for us in our sphere of weakness.

One must get away from the idea of physical strength versus physical weakness, when it talks about weakness, because it entails areas of our lives that we would never consider. A young man and woman get married and have children, now they are fathers and mothers. But let's say that they were not raised in homes where they learned how to be good parents! Maybe their homes were dysfunctional, even abusive and they were ill-prepared for being parents. But now they are parents and their precious children need them to be there for them regardless if they don't have the capacity to do so! So what do they do in their area of weakness? Turn to the power of Christ!

Or God calls some man to a position of leadership, whether in business, or the military, or the ministry, but he is woefully lacking in every capacity to do that. So what does he do? Turn to the power of Christ, who will enable him to perform in his calling just like he did with Moses. Who of us are sufficient for the plan and will of God in our own strength? None! Look at what the prophets had to go through all those years in the face of such hostility from the people of Israel, yet Christ was there for all of them! They were all weak, but he is strong.

When the Israelites had to face armies of men, who were often vastly superior in numbers and stronger than them; and certainly more savage. Yet it was Christ who gave them the strength to face these men and be victorious over them, even though they were weak for the task. Weakness simply means we lack the strength, or are infirm, or lack the abilities, or lack the capacity, etc.. It means we simply don't have what it takes to get the job done – but Christ does! *“O our God, wilt thou not judge them? **for we have no might** against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.”* 2 Chronicles 20:12

2. Insults - *en hubresin* – dative plural.

Literally in the sphere of insults; Christ's transcending power comes to us in the sphere of insults, or insolent treatment. The first one, **weakness**, referred to our personal condition of the flesh, while **insults** refer to being treated in a hostile way by other people. *Hubresin* comes from the word *hubris*, which we still use today, to denote pride and arrogance to the highest degree. It was originally used of the arrogance of men who wanted to be one of the gods.

Technically *hubresin* speaks of an act which invades the sphere of another human being to his hurt accompanied by an arrogant disposition. It's to have someone invade the sphere of your privacy and integrity to cause you harm, either in violence as being roughly handled, or by insulting speech. And he does this with a cocky, arrogant, mean, insolent attitude.

It's to despise someone, to treat them with contempt, to view them as of no account, to regard as nothing, to think little of, to look down upon, to cast aside, to use and cast aside, to despitefully use. It denotes a cold calculating, inconsiderate, uncaring, hurtful, damaging, unloving, hateful, spiteful treatment with the purpose of hurting you.

Arthur Way translated it as “injurious insults” for that is what it is, insults designed to injure us. **Insults** are designed to treat someone badly, either in words or deeds, or both coupled with the arrogance of the one doing it. It can run from snide remarks to outrageous words and speech directed at you, all the way to the in the manner they physically deal with you.

It can be a direct attack against us personally, or indirectly by attacking our clothes, our family, our church, our belief system, the company we work for, the product we sell, the products we use, etc.. The purpose of the attack, whether physical or verbal, is to hurt us personally, to hurt our souls, to damage our souls, to tear us down, to demean us, to destroy our self-esteem, to destroy our faith and positive mental attitude, our confidence, our hope, our forward momentum, even our walk with God!

This type of insolent treatment by others always is designed to hurt us and usually catches us “off guard” before we have a chance to defend ourselves. There is no defense for being “blind-sided”. This makes it easier for damage to our souls to be afflicted upon us because it often comes from those we have let get close to us, especially from other Christians or family members.

Ridicule, scorning, mocking, scoffing, humiliation, contempt, contemptible speech, hatefulness, condescension, cutting words and anger will be directed against you for the sole purpose of tearing our souls down with a view toward destroying them. The approach may be subtle and sophisticated, or it may be blunt, but it's all the same. It's the arrogance, anger and attitude of negative people trying to hurt in some way those who are positive.

It's what the Lord went through as he was hanging there on the cross for us. “*But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.*” Psalms 22:6-8

It described how Paul and the others were treated at Philippi. “*But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.*” 1 Thessalonians 2:2

But once again we see the power of Christ in operation in this area, where we choose not to handle this insolent physical or verbal treatment by others in our own strength, but to let Christ's strength protect us, protect our precious souls, sustain us and carry us through to the other side. When treated insolently by others, whether directly or indirectly, our first impulse is to defend ourselves or to attack back! But we don't have to for this is **the flesh defending itself**.

We don't have to say anything; we don't have to do anything! The power of Christ enveloping us will protect our souls and will direct us on what to say, if anything, or what to do, if anything. And we don't answer to them; we don't have to give an account to them; and we don't have to react or defend ourselves. We are not to give insult back for insult. *“Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.”* 1 Peter 3:9 We are only responsible to God and he's the only one we have to answer to. *“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”* Romans 14:12 God is watching.

The reason why insolent insults hurt us so much, and especially from those who are closest to us, is because they attack us at the core of our existence; the I in Me; the Hidden Man of the heart; the inner man; the true self; the inner child. We open ourselves up to those who are close to us, but when they turn around and use it against us, it becomes very destructive to our souls. But Christ's power will envelop our souls to protect them. But remember, *hubresin* denotes **both physical and verbal treatment**.

3. Distresses – *en ananke* – dative plural.

Literally, in the sphere of distresses. This is the next area in which we see the power of Christ go into operation in the believer's life to protect him, sustain him and keep him moving forward in faith and in the plan and will of God for his life. **Distresses** in the plural tells us that there will be many of them denotes the pain in the body or soul that the believer experiences as the result of having to go through some trial or ordeal due to the plan and will of God for their life.

It has three ideas found in it: **necessity** – of being in a needful situation; **compulsion** – of being compelled to keep moving forward along a certain line, or in the path chosen for you by God; **restraint** – forces that exist that are there to hinder or prevent you from going forward. The two things that stand out in this are the ideas of **compulsion** and **restraint**. **Compulsion** is the act of driving a person along a certain line by physical or non-physical forces; and **restraint** denotes the obstacle or hindering forces trying to prevent that forward action.

Now there can be many things in life that are compelling forces behind our actions: love for one's country, love for another person, love for one's family, hunger, lust, glory, running from one's feelings or past; all sorts of things. With the Apostle Paul, love was the compelling force that drove him forward in the plan of God to preach the Gospel and teach the Word of God. *“For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.”* 2 Corinthians 5:14 NIV

The **compelling forces** in Paul's life would be the eternal purpose of God, the plan of God, the will of Christ, his love for Christ, his love for the Word of God, his desire to glorify Christ, his desire to see men saved and Christ's authority over him. The **restraining forces** in Paul's life would be the plan and strategies of Satan, the opposition of the fallen angels and demons, his nature of flesh, his own negative volition at times, the world system, ungodly and evil men, other people and just about everything that exists on a sin-cursed earth! It's when the **compelling forces meet the restraining forces** found in the world, flesh and devil, the result ends up being distress in the soul.

Ananke is to have to go through something you don't want to go through; and it can be anything on earth; something you're afraid of; something that would cause you pain; something that poses a threat to you, yet you still have to go through it. It's like an irresistible force meeting an immovable object. It has the ideas of a necessity imposed, whether by external circumstances, or internal pressure, or as we have here **for the sake of Christ**.

There are three basic ideas found in it. 1) the individual is in a position of **need**, that is, they are lacking what is necessary to handle the situation. 2) there is the factor of **compulsion**, that is, they are caused or compelled to do something or go along certain lines, go on a certain path, or have to go through something. 3) has the idea of **restraint**, that is, there are things, or forces out there that seek to prevent or hinder this forward progress.

The Apostle Paul used the word *ananke* to describe the **compulsion** he was under to go out and preach the Gospel of Christ. *“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for **necessity** (ananke) is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”* 1 Corinthians 9:16 But as *ananke* would refer to that **compulsion** that moved Paul forward to preach the Gospel, it also had the ideas in it of the tremendous **resistance** against that from the world system, the flesh nature and the devil! It also would bring in the idea that Paul was woefully **lacking** in himself to do that.

The **compelling forces** in Paul's life would be: the purpose of God, the eternal plan of God, the will of Christ, his love for Christ, his love for the Word of God and God's grace, his desire to glorify Christ, his desire to see men saved, Christ's authority over him, etc.. The **restraining forces** in Paul's life would be the plan and strategies of Satan, the opposition of the fallen angels, the world system, the people of the world, the religious systems of the world, his own negative volition times, ungodly men and everything else out there. His **needful condition** would be his own flesh nature that is in rebellion against God and that in the flesh he lacked everything needed to carry out a spiritual mission.

The Prophet Jeremiah experienced this compulsion also. Even if the ministry resulted in unpleasantness and hardship for him, it would have been even more so had he not. *“O LORD, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me.”* Jeremiah 20:7 *“Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.”* Jeremiah 20:9

The **compelling force** for Jeremiah was Yahweh's will to get the message of repentance out to the Israelites. The **restraining force** would be the overall negativity, carnality and demonic hold on the Israelites as they opposed Jeremiah's ministry. The **needful condition** would be the weakness of his flesh as he had to face all that negativity each day and getting worse as he got older.

Distress is a good word used to translate *ananke*, if we know what all is involved. It describes that extremely painful, traumatic condition that the soul experiences when the compelling force impacts with the restraining force, or when the irresistible force meets the immovable object. But something amazing and wonderful occurs when that occurs in the life of a Christian. It is then and there at that time of impact when the power of Christ comes on the believer in such a way that he transcends it.

Christians go through this all the time, even though they may not be aware of it happening. And like the karate expert uses something called **chi energy** to enable his fist – the **compelling force**, to break the board – the **restraining force** idea, so **the Christian must rely on the energy and power of Christ.**

The **compelling forces** in the lives of Christians would be: 1) to go on to maturity and be conformed to the image of Christ all that is entailed in the process. 2) to learn to love God, yourself and others. 3) to appropriate and enjoy the grace blessings God has for us, in spite of the devil's opposition to that. 4) to witness to others about Christ. 5) to serve God in our lives. 6) to have rapport relationships with those you love. 7) to have a soul and life characterized by peace and tranquility. 8) to have the virtues of: grace, mercy, peace, love, joy, hope, faith, compassion, kindness, gentleness, tenderness, humility, meekness, patience and wisdom to be an ever present part of our lives. 9) to have a life of doctrinal success, prosperity and fulfillment. 10) to live a life of no regret before the Lord. 11) to be genuinely relaxed, calm and joyful in life. 12) to have a spiritually stabilized soul with no scar tissue, nor ravages of the emotional complex. 12) the compelling force working in the believer's life is the desire and purpose for each of his children having been purposed and planned back in eternity past. 13) to find our lot in life, our purpose under the sun, the culmination and fulfillment of the divine destiny to which he or she was appointed to.

The **restraining forces** at work in opposition to the lives of Christians would be: 1) personal pride that would reject God's plan and help for us. 2) abandoning the principle of living by faith for one's own works. 3) wanting to do your own thing and not God's will. 4) selfishness. 5) fear; fear of going ahead, fear of failure, fear of having close relationship with others. 6) anxiety and worry about the future. 7) the old sin nature. 8) guilt; the destructive desire to inflict self-punishment for whatever the reason, instead of appropriating all the grace blessings God has for us. 9) lack of spiritual self esteem. 10) the things of the world system. 11) the continuing opposition of Satan and his fallen angels, who in their hatred of God and all his people, do everything they can to stop us from going forward in life. 12) other people, who by their jealousy, hostility, or various other reasons will try to hold us back. 13) our misplaced loyalties, associations and relationships with negative people that are detrimental to our walk with God. 14) negative thoughts and feelings: fear, anger, guilt, grief, jealousy human love relationships, the search for fun and happiness, depression, failure indexes, guilt complexes, pride, arrogance, rebelliousness, lust, etc., are all barriers to our forward progression in the Word. 15) subconscious conflicts at work in the soul: guilt, hostility, grief, fear, lack of self esteem, fear of rejection, fear of losing a loved one, disappointments, etc., can also stop our forward momentum. 16) failure to utilize one's faith and appropriate the promises of grace in the Holy Spirit and the Word, and allowing spiritual gifts to minister to you. 16) the negative factors of life, and there are many, can arise at any time to act as a barrier to our forward progression in God's gracious and wonderful plan for our own personal fulfillment.

It is the power of Christ that enables us to move on through these restraining forces, but to experience it we must lean in faith on the Lord trusting in his promises. For it is there, in the sphere of our personal weakness, and in the sphere of faith in the Word that we find the power of Christ coming on us in such a way that it strengthens us, protects us and provides everything we need to move on through the ordeal no matter how long it is and how severe it is.

Because this process of moving into the trial and through the trial is often painful and a little scary, we have a tendency to run away from it, or avoid it all together, especially as we start to feel the pressure of the trial. But this compelling force keeps moving us forward into it, and because we lack everything we need to handle it, and because it presents such a formidable opposition, and because we're so afraid that we will be crushed or destroyed by it, or we don't know what will happen to us; we often become stressed out and afraid. But yet we have to keep moving forward into it. It is there, at this time, when we will find the power of Christ coming upon us in such a way that it transcends our situation and we keep moving forward through it and will eventually come out the other side in victory!

Now we have been emphasizing the distress of soul, which denotes the pain in the body or soul that the believer experiences as the result of having to go through some trial or ordeal due to the plan and will of God for their life, and we tend to think of these things as being external, which they are. But these distresses we experience can also come about as the result of internal dynamics as well!

Dealing with **scar tissue garbage of the soul** is one area that causes us great distress in the soul, but there is another area and that is **Christ being formed in us**. *“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until **Christ be formed in you**,” Galatians 4:19* This dynamic is equivalent to the pain and suffering women go through as a child is being formed in them and giving birth to it.

This matter of Christ being formed in us is also a **compelling force** for all true believers, for God has mandated in eternity past that all believers in Christ will be conformed to the image of Christ. *“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be **conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Romans 8:29*

But there are **restraining forces** at work every step of the way to prevent this. These forces are: the flesh nature in general because it is in opposition to anything the Spirit is trying to do, the sin nature in the flesh, the emotions, the lusts, the world system and the devil. These are all powerful restraining forces at work fighting against the compelling force of **God forming Christ in us**.

Add to all that the individual is in a position of **need**, that is, we are lacking what is necessary to handle the situation, we now have the recipe for **distress** in the soul. So what we have to count on and look to is the enveloping power of Christ to transcend this phenomenon of distress in the soul and carry us through to the other side of victory!

Distress of soul also comes about when believers experience **undeserved suffering**, as the result of sharing in Christ's sufferings for doing the Father's will in their lives. *“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” 1 Peter 4:12,13*

We also will experience distress of souls, as the result of trying to live **godly lives**. *“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” 2 Timothy 3:12* **Persecution** is one of the five crises that believers will go through in life on this earth, but here we see it's over trying to live our own spiritual life. It is the inevitable result of negative volition clashing with positive volition, whether it's the negative volition of the devil and his army, or the negative volition of the people of the world and their institutions, or the negative volition of our own flesh natures.

Virtually everything out there serves as a restraining force to prevent the believer's momentum in going forward in the Father's plan for their lives, to prevent them from going on to maturity, to prevent them from living in the spiritual life dynamic, to prevent any operation of the Holy Spirit, yet the power of Christ will take us through all of them and protect our souls at the same time.

The Holy Spirit may take us **out of** a serious trial we are in – *ek*; he may lead us so as to **avoid it** – *apo*; then he may take us **through it** – *dia*. Either way, the power of Christ is sufficient for all of them for we definitely do not have what it takes in ourselves to handle these things in life. *“To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And **who is sufficient for these things?**” 2 Corinthians 2:16*

4. Persecutions – *en diogmois* – dative plural.

Literally, in the sphere of persecutions, and we notice it is in the plural again. This is the next area in which we see the power of Christ go into operation in the believer's life to protect him, sustain him and keep him moving forward in faith and in the plan and will of God for his life. It meant to be put to flight, to drive away.

Some believe that persecutions only come about as the result of the believer witnessing about Christ, or for just being a believer in Christ, but in truth they come about as the result of anything and everything associated with Christ: for witnessing to others, for handing out tracts, for handing out Bibles, for having a Bible, for teaching the Word of God, for having churches, for worshipping, for telling the truth, for applying the Word of God, for obeying the Lord, etc..

Presently Christians are being persecuted in every country, (including America), for anything and everything associated with Christ and his Word. Israel has a law that outlaws all Christian activity: evangelism, handing out tracts, literature or Bibles is punishable by imprisonment. One can be sent to prison for up to five years by having school children come by your house and tell them about Jesus.

The legalism or tyranny of negative people can be so difficult to bear that the believer is left with no other choice than to leave his job, his home, his town, even his nation. **Persecution** can entail being socially ostracized, kept out of the labor market where no one will hire you, or people won't shop at your store, to public ridicule and humiliation, all the way to threats of physical violence!

If there are persecutions one can safely conclude that somewhere behind it all is legalism for **legalism always persecutes grace**. “*But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.*” Galatians 4:23 “*But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.*” Galatians 4:29 The flesh persecutes the spirit; the son of the bondwoman persecutes the son of the freewoman; the slave persecutes the free man; legalism persecutes grace; and negative volition persecutes positive volition. **The insanity of this is that they can be free themselves, but they don't want to. They just don't want you to be free!**

Their persecution against positive grace people begins with the mental attitude of jealousy and hatred, from there it goes into the verbal arena, then socially by trying to turn other people against you. And if all that fails to accomplish their wicked agenda, then they get control of the political power of a nation, which would be in America the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government, so they can pass laws against the expression and activity of Biblical freedom.

Persecutions have forced Christians to leave Israel, to leave Rome, to leave Asia, to leave France, to leave Spain, to leave Germany, to leave Great Britain, to leave Russia, to leave China, to leave Africa, to leave the Mediterranean area, to leave the Arabic countries, and now it's forcing Christians to leave America! The land of the birth, the land whose constitution and government was set up to protect their God given rights to practice their faith.

But if God has a will, then he has a way. If we are persecuted for our faith in Christ, if we are persecuted for the application of God's Word to our lives, if we are forced to flee because of negative people, then the plan of God will have a perfect provision for us, and the power of God will protect and preserve our souls and take us through it to the other side of it with victory over the situation. It is this power of Christ that will go into operation while we are in the sphere of persecution.

In looking at the aspect of persecution, it begins with people's **attitudes** toward us followed by their **insulting** treatment of us. This was bore out with Ishmael's persecution of Isaac when he was mocking him. *“And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, **mocking.**”* Genesis 21:9 The word **mock** was *tsachaq* and it meant to laugh at him, to make fun of him. It implies that Ishmael was making fun of, or laughing at Isaac because of his skin color, or because of his name. Anyway you look at it this type of ridicule would have caused scar tissue and insecurity issues to form in Isaac, which would have had repercussions that he would have had to deal with his entire life.

Isaac was the child of the promise; the child of the covenant; the elect child; the child supernaturally brought about by the power of God; the child pertaining to faith; the child pertaining to grace; the child of the free woman. But **Ishmael** resented him; he was jealous of him and hated him; and his speech manifested all that by his hateful verbal attacks on Isaac making fun of a child much younger than him. This left Sarah no other choice than to have her husband send the child and his mother away. She loved her son and her son's soul and she knew that Ishmael's taunting of Isaac would damage his soul and undermine his faith, not to mention, it could have led to something worse!

But sometimes believers can't make their persecutors go away, or leave them alone, so the only choice they are left with is to leave and go some place else. But they can rely on the fact that Christ's power will protect their souls from insults, and it will be there for us if we have to flee from our persecutors.

Now **persecution** can come in the verbal form of making fun of us, the milder form, all the way to hateful, vindictive statements. It can be found in social ostracism; and it can be in physical violence. It can take place in the economic area; and it can be found in the political, legal arena, where the laws are against Christians, or there are so many laws that Christians can't function in their faith, or the laws become so evil that a Christian can't function in good conscience before God.

To understand why persecution exists against grace believers, one has to understand the dynamics of an **evil soul**; the soul of the legalist. It is the dynamic of a soul that hates truth, or that hates Christ, or that hates grace, or that hates freedom. It is the soul that is lifted up in pride, works, self righteousness, self reliance and self glorying. It is the soul that doesn't want to be free and resents those who are free! It is the soul of the slave who hates freedom and hates those who are free; and seeks to take the free man's freedom away from him! It doesn't want to be free; it just wants those who are free to become slaves.

This is a look at the evil soul of a legalist, but they are never passive about this – but **aggressive**! They won't leave it alone; they won't leave us alone, but aggressively go about seeking ways that they can bring us out of our freedom into their bondage. One of the ways they do this is by getting “the king's ear”, if they are under a monarchy. Or if they are under a Democracy or a Republic, then they will gain control of the legislature where they can enact laws that take our freedoms away, as we see going on presently in America.

You will find them in churches gaining control of the board and the voting franchise to rob believers of their grace freedom and bring them under bondage. *“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.”* Acts 20:29 And David had to contend with the prospect of these legalists gaining control of his monarchy in ancient Israel, if he lost his throne. *“To the chief Musician upon Sheminith, A Psalm of David. Help, LORD; for the **godly** man, (*chasiyd* – the grace believer), **ceaseth**, (*gamar* – comes to an end, will disappear off the scene); for the **faithful**, (*aman* – the believer that lives by faith), **fail**, (*pasas* – disperse), from among the children of men.”* Psalms 12:1 David's concern was for the doctrinal, grace believer in his kingdom.

5. Difficulties – *en stenochoriais* – dative plural.

This is the next area where we see the grace and power of Christ at work in Christian's lives. The word *stenochoria* had the idea of being crowded into a narrow space, to be put into a restrictive, confining situation where one's freedom of mobility is limited, or non existent, or where the options for one's course of actions are taken away.

It's to be placed in a situation where one is under pressure on all sides and he is not able to resort to the normal means used by individuals to deal with it. It's to be under pressure and trapped on all sides, to be hemmed in, to be in a “no way out” situation. It can be where one is literally trapped, or is trapped by certain circumstances, or where one feels trapped in a situation where you can't get out of it, or where you feel like you can't get out of it.

When people are put into threatening situations, or circumstances where you are under extreme pressure, the normal response is to run away, or fight back; the old “fight or flight” idea. But what happens if you can't run away and you are not able to fight back? This is what the idea of *stenochoria* is all about; the idea of being confined, restricted, trapped and no way out of it!

In merry old England one of the ways they would deal with dissidents, when they tortured them, would be to put a heavy weight on their chest, which would slowly crush the life out of them, that would be the idea of *thlipsis*, or pressure. Another way would be where they put them in an iron cage called the “Iron Maiden”, that would so completely enclose them they couldn't move. That would be *stenochoria*.

Stenochoria is to be crowded into a narrow space; to be put into a confining situation; to have a restricting, confining situation develop around you; to be trapped with no way out; to be locked in a closet where you can't move; to have the walls coming in on you; to be crowded, cramped, confined, restricted with fear and pain often accompanying it; to be in a place where one's freedom of mobility is limited; to be in a situation where one has little or no options of getting out of it; to find yourself in a situation that has developed, either slowly or rapidly and you now are under pressure on all sides and you are not able to do anything about it; where one is threatened, or feels threatened and under pressure and there is no way out of it; it can be a literal physical confinement, or it can be a situation.

Stenochoria is upon all Christians today in America, even if they don't recognize it. The laws and regulations of this government, plus the new world order are hemming us in on all sides. Even leaving the country is becoming something only those with large amounts of money can do. The reason why they don't recognize this is because instead of looking up to see what's going on; they have their eyes looking down at the ground preoccupied with their day to day living, or their cell phones. But there are other Christians who see what's going on because they know the truth and are looking off into the distance. Just like enemy troops surrounding a company of soldiers; the soldiers are looking down at the ground around them, instead of looking off into the surrounding hills.

There is the **objective** side of *stenochoria* where one is actually hemmed in on all sides, where one is actually trapped. And there is the **subjective** side of *stenochoria* where one feels like he is hemmed in or trapped. And this is where the pain of soul and fear come in, along with hopelessness, because the believer feels trapped and knows he can't do anything about it. Even mild pressure situations that aren't life threatening at all can cause an individual to feel like they're trapped with the accompanying reactor factors of fear, hopelessness and panic. Believers can and often do panic under these situations along the lines of anxiety disorders.

One can feel the sense of being trapped, *stenochoria*, if one is in a jail cell. There the walls are just a few feet away from him. One can feel the sense of *stenochoria*, if he is locked in a small dark closet. One can also feel it if he feels threatened by something and the threat can be near or far away. The invading army is at the door of your house, or the invading army is a thousand miles away. Men have gone overseas to fight wars, or fight the war at the borders of the nation so they don't have to fight them in the streets in front of their homes. *Stenochoria* is where one is subject to a threat of some kind that poses injury or hurt to their body or souls and they can't get away from it; they are hemmed in. One can be hemmed in by circumstances or the will of the Father.

How believers handle this in their flesh nature depends on whether they have a “**fight or flight**” personality. The “**flight**” type of believer, when perceiving a threat to his home, family, livelihood, or country, would go around checking out all sides of the threat to see if there is a “way out”. After determining there is no “way out”, he probably will sit there riddled with fear and anxiety worrying about it. He will be left with no other recourse than to possibly have to fight back at it at the bitter end of it all realizing also that fighting back in self-preservation will only end up in death or capture. While the “**fighting back**” personality will go out and probe all sides looking for the weakest link and mount attack against it. If he did not succeed, he would retreat only to fight another day.

Both are in a *stenochoria* situation and both feel the anguish of soul from being trapped or hemmed in; one has the fight reflex, the other the flight response over feeling trapped in a threatening situation; it's just that both respond to the threat differently. Even in the animal kingdom, if an animal senses threat its first response is to run away, except for guard dogs that have been trained, reprogrammed to attack in a threat situation by their trainers. But when animals are threatened their first instinct is to remove themselves from the threat; only if they have no way out at all, then they will fight back.

Stenochoria is where we are hemmed in by a threatening situation; we can't fight back and we can't runaway! And that's why it creates such a desperate situation in the soul: fear, pain, anxiety, worry, anxiety, hopelessness, despair, anger, etc.; all these negative emotions flood the soul because the believer is unable to do anything about the situation that threatens him!. He feels trapped; he is trapped; he feels desperate; he's hemmed in on all sides; he has no way out and he can't do anything about it! That is there is nothing that can be done about it in the flesh.

There are two aspects of *stenochoria*, one subjective and the other objective. **Objectively** speaking *stenochoria* would refer to being in a real trapped, or hemmed in situation. While **subjectively** speaking we feel like we are. The idea of being in a confined, narrow, restricted place in our lives, whether literally or figuratively, is what *stenochoria* is all about. There was a greater degree of safety in being in a large open space, rather than being in a narrow confining place. “*And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a **large room**, (merchab – a large open space).” Psalms 31:8 “Yea, though I walk through the **valley**, (gayee – a ravine, or gorge), of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” Psalms 23:4*

Now we know that of utmost importance to all people is the protection of our bodies from physical harm, or death. But of the most importance is the protection of our egos, the I in me; the true person that lies at the very core of our existence. This is what we are so afraid of that will be harmed. So in all these five categories of crises the thing that needs to be protected is the soul. And this is what Christ's power does for us when we go through these things; his transcending power protects our souls. And if we feel like we're trapped in our lives, or if we're in a “no way out” situation, Christ's transcending power will be there for us.

6. For Christ's Sake – *huper Christou* - υπερ χριστου.

This is found before the five categories of crises we suffer, but I wanted to get into them first, then get into why Christians have to go through the things we go through in life, and they are all for the sake of Christ. Philippians 1:29 tells us that God has **granted in his grace** for us to not only believe on Jesus Christ as our Savior, but also to suffer for his sake, *huper Christou*. “*For unto you it is **given** in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to **suffer** for his sake;*” But we notice that the Lord rescued Paul out of all his sufferings. “*Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.*” 2 Tim 3:11

Now we want to notice that it is the power of Christ that comes upon the believer in Christ, which will transcend the situation and protect his soul from damage, comes to us when we are suffering for the sake of Christ, *huper Christou*! Now if we suffer due to our own bad decisions in pursuing the flesh nature and our own agenda, then our suffering is the consequences of our own bad decisions. But if our suffering is connected to Christ in some way, then his power will be there for us in the suffering.

Now we are familiar with the word *huper*, which is translated as **for**, or **for the sake of**, but we have always studied it in the context of **God** doing things **for**, *huper*, us! But here we have Christians doing things, or going through things for the sake of Christ! So we need to go back into the word and see if we can determine exactly what is going on here. Paul said, “*Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is **behind** of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:*” Colossians 1:24 “*Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still **lacking** in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.*” NIV

Briefly another word for **for** is *gar*, and it's a conjunction used to express the cause of something, inference, continuation of something, or to explain something. But what we have here is **for the sake of** using the word *huper*. Now there are four ideas found in *huper*: **protection, causal, representation** and **substitution**, with the three proceeding from the original idea of protection. First came the idea of protecting of someone, then causal, representation and substitution.

All four of these ideas, although separate in activity, (and we will have to eliminate **protection** because the weaker, inferior party cannot protect the stronger superior party), are connected together, because there is another idea found in *huper* and that is a **close relationship exists** between the two parties, or that there is **love** on the part of the one toward the other. There is always a **person** involved. It never is involved for inanimate objects, business matters, or principles. It always has a very personal dynamic going on between two people, here it's the believer and Jesus Christ.

Causal

Huper also has the idea of causal in it, where one person's actions, (our sufferings), are being caused for another person's sake. Where an individual is caused to do something, or go through something for the sake of someone else, and we end up saying that he did this **because** of, then names the person. You could ask the individual **why** he was doing an action and he would say, “I'm doing it **because** of: my wife, my family, my country, etc..” Or, I'm suffering for the sake of Christ. **For the sake of Christ** is that something is done concerning the interest of Christ, or concerning his purpose. It tells us that Christ has a personal interest in our suffering and that it is also centered around his and the Father's eternal purpose. Our union with Christ is the **causative** element.

Representation

For example, when the **causal side** of *huper* is being brought out, one would be saying they are doing something “because of” some person, or “for their sake”, that it benefits another person. “*I’m here because of my wife*”. Or, “*I’m doing this for their sake not yours*”. They are telling us **why** they are doing something, that they’re doing it for somebody else's sake, and that the other person will be benefited by their actions.

But if they say, “*I’m here **on behalf of** this person*”, then they are telling us that they are the **personal representative** of another person or organization. Let's say that a king, a president, or even a head of a corporation needs to go, or wants to go to another place to conduct business or the affairs of state, but for some reason, he is unable to go, or unwilling to go “*in person*”. He can *instead, in his stead, or in his place*, **not as his substitute**, but as his **representative** send another person to represent him. That person now becomes his representative; he acts “*in the person of*” the one who sent him. Now the king is not there “*in person*”; if he wanted to be there “*in person*”, he would have to personally show up!

This is the present ministry of Jesus Christ in heaven for all believers in Christ. He is our **representative** and is acting “*on our behalf*” in the two areas of law and religion, if you will. In the **religious area** he acts as our High Priest representing us in our priesthood before the Father. In the **legal area** he acts as our defense attorney before the bar of God's justice. “*My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:*” 1 John 2:1 The word for **advocate** is *parakletos*. Christ is our representative in heaven, but we represent him on earth!

Substitution

Another aspect of *huper* is **substitution** where one person is substituted for another. This is where **one does not merely act in another's place, but takes his place!** An attorney will *act in your place* as your representative, but he will *not take your place*, that is, he will not do your punishment.

When we translate the different aspects of *huper* out into the English, depending upon the context, we have three different ideas being brought out. If the idea is **causal**, then we would say that Christ died for the sake of the elect. If it was **representative**, we would say that Christ acts on behalf of the elect. If it was **substitutionary**, then we would say that Christ took the place of the elect.

Now Christ took our place on the cross, but **we are taking his place on earth**. How so? And in what way? We do so in this area of suffering and it all goes back to our union with Christ. The Church is the body of Christ and seeing that the Church is still here on earth, then Christ, who is fully present in his body, is still on earth in his people! So any attacks by the people of the world or Satan against the body of Christ, that is, against any believer in Christ, is an attack on Jesus Christ!

We are in Christ and Christ is in us, therefore the world hates us; we make up the body of Christ on earth. “*Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.*” 1 John 3:13 “*If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*” John 15:18,19 “*If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.*” John 15:24

“For the sake of Christ” tells us that these five categories of crises that Christians have to go through will be centered around the person of Jesus Christ, that is, it has to do with Jesus Christ in some way. Now it may be because of 1) our faith in him, or 2) our stand for the doctrines of his Word, or 3) because we're trying to live by the teachings of the Word of God, or 4) it can be because of the Father's will for our lives, or 5) because of our spiritual growth in the Word in being brought into conformity to the image of Christ. But they all have to do with Christ in some way.

Many believers in Christ have had to suffer insults or insulting treatment because of their faith in Christ, or they have suffered persecution, or be put in no way out situations, or had to go through impossible no-way-out situations; all of which because they were Christians. Others have suffered greatly because of their stand on Bible Doctrine. Others suffer because they try to apply Bible Doctrine to their lives, homes and businesses. *“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”* 2 Timothy 3:12

It was the will of the Father that his Son go to the cross to die for our sins. In this we see his personal weakness as a man; the insults and insulting treatment he suffered from those around him; having to go through something – ananke; his persecution; and being put in a constraining situation where there was no way out. But there was something else involved on that day, when he was on the cross bearing our sins, and that was him being perfected and the cross was the vehicle by which that was accomplished.

*“Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And **being made perfect**, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;”* Hebrews 5:7-10

In his deity Christ was perfect, complete, but what is in view now is his **humanity**. If God was going to bring man into a relationship and proximity to him, if man was going to be able to live forever, then man was going to have to be made **perfect**! And to do this there had to be a man from the earth to perfect these people, and to do this he himself had to be perfected! That is why Christ is the **perfector** of this body of people. *“Looking unto Jesus the author and **finisher** (perfector) of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”* Hebrews 12:2

Now we notice that after Christ's perfection in his faith, he went to heaven so he could perform his role as our High Priest. *“And **being made perfect**, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; Called of God an **high priest** after the order of Melchisedec.”* Hebrews 5:9,10 This tells us that after our perfection, whether it is accomplished here on earth, or after we pass on to eternity, that we will enter into our heavenly eternal roles as priests. *“To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to **the spirits of just men made perfect**,”* Hebrews 12:23

Just men is righteous men, *dikaious*, righteous through faith in Jesus Christ. We have become righteous the moment we believed on Jesus Christ as our Savior, but we have not reached that state of perfection, completion, or maturity. The number of believers who have become complete in this life is a small number compared to those who have become righteous through faith in Christ. The Bible speaks of some of them, but the number is still small. But one thing for sure and that is all believers will become perfected either here on earth, or after we exit this body and go to heaven. The perfect passive participle of **completion** tells us that **this will be a permanent condition for us** – thank God!

The Christian is not left alone in life, neither is he left to cope with life without the strength of Christ. God not only promised that he would **never leave us, nor forsake us**, but he also promised to **provide all our needs**. *“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”* Hebrews 13:5 *“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”* Philippians 4:19

But God has also provided something beyond what is needed in just normal living; he has provided the special empowering of Jesus Christ when we have to go through things that are connected to his Son in some way causing us to suffer for the sake of Christ, that is, it has to do with Jesus Christ in some way. Now it may be because of 1) our faith in him, or 2) our stand for the doctrines of his Word, or 3) because we're trying to live by the the teachings of the Word of God, or 4) it can be because of the Father's will for our lives, or 5) because of our spiritual growth in the Word in being brought into conformity to the image of Christ. But they all have to do with Christ in some way.

So if the plan and will of God brings us into the area of our **personal weaknesses** where one lacks the ability to perform in that area, then the power of Christ will come upon us in such a way that it not only gives us the ability to do what the Father has called us to do, but protect the soul from any damage.

If the plan and will of God results in us being subjected to **insults** or **despicable treatment** from others; treatment which causes hurt accompanied by an arrogant disposition. It's to have someone invade the sphere of your privacy and integrity to cause you harm, either in violence as being roughly handled, or by insulting speech; and they do this with a cocky, arrogant, mean, insolent attitude. Then the power of Christ will come upon us in such a way so as to protect our souls.

If the plan and will of God **compels** us to go through something we don't want to go through; something that seems impossible to go through; something that we're afraid of; something that causes us great distress of soul, then the power of Christ will come upon us in such a way that we will not only be able to go through it, but come out the other side in victory!

If our faith in Christ and the stand for God's Word causes us **persecution** as the result of witnessing about Christ, or for just being a believer in Christ, or as the result of anything and everything associated with Christ: for handing out tracts, for handing out Bibles, for having a Bible, for teaching the Word of God, for having churches, for worshipping, for telling the truth, for applying the Word of God, for obeying the Lord; and we suffer persecution whether in the loss of business, or not getting work, or social rejection, or being forced to leave an area, then the power of Christ will come upon us all during this persecution protecting our souls and transcending the situation; and we will come out the other side of it in victory.

And if the plan and will of God for our lives puts us in a **no way out situation** where we are trapped and unable to figure a way out, where we're crowded into a narrow space; into a confining situation; a restricting, confining situation develops around you; to be trapped with no way out; to be locked in a closet where you can't move; to have the walls coming in on you; to be crowded, cramped, confined, restricted with fear and pain often accompanying it; to be in a place where one's freedom of mobility is limited; to be in a situation where one has little or no options of getting out of it; to find yourself in a situation that has developed, either slowly or rapidly and you now are under pressure on all sides and you are not able to do anything about it; where one is threatened, or feels threatened and under pressure and there is no way out of it; it can be a literal physical confinement, or it can be a situation. **Then the power of Christ will come upon us and deliver us from it.**

“For when I am weak, then am I strong.” - οταν γαρ ασθενω τοτε δυνατος εμι. - present active subjunctive of *astheneo*.

This clause begins with the temporal particle *hotan*, which indicates an action that is conditional or possible and in many cases repeated. It brings out the idea of: at the time that, or whenever, or when something takes place. When placed at the beginning of a subordinate clause and found in the present subjunctive, it tells us that its action takes place at the same time as the action of the main clause.

It is used with *tote* in the next clause, which is an adverb of time, *hotan* and *tote*, so when we combine the two ideas together it tells us that whenever something is taking place, then at **that time** something else will be taking place! So what we have now is **whenever I am weak, then at that moment in time I am now strong!**

This takes us back to the place where we started in the study and that is in the sphere of our weaknesses – *en astheneia* - dative singular. Personal strength versus personal weakness; personal strength refers to man's inherent quality to be able to handle a situation we are confronted with. But, as we have seen, we lack the ability to perform in the areas we are left to face due to the sake of Christ. But **when** this happens, **then** we are now strong because of the power of Christ coming upon us.

And from this place of weakness we are now able to withstand the injurious treatment we receive from others or **insults** - *en hubresin* – dative plural. It's to despise someone, to treat them with contempt, to view them as of no account, to regard as nothing, to think little of, to look down upon, to cast aside, to use and cast aside, to despitefully use. It denotes a cold calculating, inconsiderate, uncaring, hurtful, damaging, unloving, hateful, spiteful treatment with the purpose of hurting you. Who can handle this kind of treatment in their own strength without reacting in some way? To be ridiculed, scorned, mocked, scoffed at, humiliated, to be treated with contempt, contemptible speech, hatefulness, condescension, cutting words and anger will be directed against you for the sole purpose of tearing our souls down with a view toward destroying them. The approach may be subtle and sophisticated, or it may be blunt, but it's all the same. It's the arrogance, anger and attitude of negative people trying to hurt in some way those who are positive.

Then there is those distressing situations we have to go through in life, **distresses** – *en ananke* – dative plural. *Ananke* is to have to go through something you don't want to go through; and it can be anything on earth; something you're afraid of; something that would cause you pain; something that poses a threat to you, yet you still have to go through it. It's like an irresistible force meeting an immovable object. It has the ideas of a necessity imposed, whether by external circumstances, or internal pressure, or as we have here **for the sake of Christ**. There are four basic ideas found in it. 1) the individual is in a position of **need**, that is, they are lacking what is necessary to handle the situation. 2) there is the factor of **compulsion**, that is, they are caused or compelled to do something or go along certain lines, go on a certain path, or have to go through something. 3) has the idea of **restraint**, that is, there are things, or forces out there that seek to prevent or hinder this forward progress. 4) the distress of soul it causes, or can cause.

Then there is the area of **persecutions** for our faith in Christ and stand for faith and the Word of God – *en diogmois* – dative plural. Who can endure these things in their own strength? None of us! But we are unable to handle them, for it is at that time the power of Christ will come upon us in our area of weakness and then we will be strong.

The last category that we will see the power of Christ coming upon us in the area of feeling trapped, or hemmed in, or **difficulties** as we have here – *en stenochorialis* – dative plural. This is certainly one area that most Christians are experiencing due to the increasing pressure all around us. It's sort of like a net being drawn around the fish and they are frantically trying to find a way out.

Stenochoria had the idea of being crowded into a narrow space, to be put into a restrictive, confining situation where one's freedom of mobility is limited, or non existent, or where the options for one's course of actions are taken away. It's to be placed in a situation where one is under pressure on all sides and he is not able to resort to the normal means used by individuals to deal with it. It's to be under pressure and trapped on all sides, to be hemmed in, to be in a “no way out” situation. It can be where one is literally trapped, or is trapped by certain circumstances, or where one feels trapped in a situation where you can't get out of it, or where you feel like you can't get out of it.

Stenochoria is upon all Christians today in America, even if they don't recognize it and even if they are not bold in their witness for Christ. The laws and regulations of this government, plus the new world order are hemming us in on all sides. Even leaving the country is becoming something only those with large amounts of money can do. The reason why they don't recognize this is because instead of looking up to see what's going on; they have their eyes looking down at the ground preoccupied with their day to day living, or their cell phones. But there are other Christians who see what's going on because they know the truth and are looking off into the distance. Just like enemy troops surrounding a company of soldiers; the soldiers are looking down at the ground around them, instead of looking off into the surrounding hills.

There is the **objective** side of *stenochoria* where one is actually hemmed in on all sides, where one is actually trapped. And there is the **subjective** side of *stenochoria* where one feels like he is hemmed in or trapped. And this is where the pain of soul and fear come in, along with hopelessness, because the believer feels trapped and knows he can't do anything about it. Even mild pressure situations that aren't life threatening at all can cause an individual to feel like they're trapped with the accompanying reactor factors of fear, hopelessness and panic. Believers can and often do panic under these situations along the lines of anxiety disorders. And remember also, that one can be trapped or feel trapped by a variety of circumstance.

How believers handle this in the strength of their flesh nature depends on whether they have a “**fight or flight**” personality. The “**flight**” type of believer, when perceiving a threat to his home, family, livelihood, or country, would go around checking out all sides of the threat to see if there is a “way out”. After determining there is no “way out”, he probably will sit there riddled with fear and anxiety worrying about it. He will be left with no other recourse than to possibly have to fight back at it at the bitter end of it all realizing also that fighting back in self-preservation will only end up in death or capture. While the “**fighting back**” personality will go out and probe all sides looking for the weakest link and mount attack against it. If he did not succeed, he would retreat only to fight another day.

Both are in a *stenochoria* situation and both feel the anguish of soul from being trapped or hemmed in; one has the fight reflex, the other the flight response over feeling trapped in a threatening situation; it's just that both respond to the threat differently. Even in the animal kingdom, if an animal senses threat its first response is to run away, except for guard dogs that have been trained, reprogrammed to attack in a threat situation by their trainers. But when animals are threatened their first instinct is to remove themselves from the threat; only if they have no way out at all, then they will fight back. But Christ's power will come upon us even if and when we are trapped with no way out.

Pastor Mike