Knocked Down, But Not Knocked Out!
II Corinthians 4:8-12 (NKJV)

Please turn with me in your Bibles to our scripture text in II Corinthians the fourth chapter. And let’s read verses 8-12.

2 Corinthians 4:8-12 (NKJV)

8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—

10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

12 So then death is working in us, but life in you.

PRAYER

INTRODUCTION

The story is told about a boxer who was being badly beaten in a match. When the bell rang to end the first round he came staggering to his corner all battered and bruised.

He said to his trainer, “He’s killing me out there.” The trainer said, “Son, he hasn’t laid a glove on you, now get back out there.” At the end of the second round, the boxer’s right eye was completely swollen and he barely had enough strength to get back to his corner. He said to his trainer, “Throw in the towel! This guy is killing me.”

The trainer said, “Son, you’re doing great! he still hasn’t laid a glove on you. Now get back out there and keep fighting.” The boxer said, “Well keep an eye on that referee because somebody out there is beating the daylights out of me.”
Sometimes life can be like that boxing match. We can get punched and beat up and we're ready to throw in the towel and call it quits. But God's message to all of us today is this: “You May Be Knocked Down, But You're Never Knocked Out!”

When I read this passage of scripture in II Corinthians chapter four, I think Paul probably felt as though his life was one continuous boxing match.

First of all, Paul says……

I. We Are HARD-PRESSED, But Not CRUSHED (v.8a)

1. What does Paul mean by “hard-pressed?” The Greek word for “hard-pressed” means, “to be squeezed in,” or “to be pressed in.”

2. To put it in today's vernacular we would say, to be “hard-pressed” means “to be caught between a rock and a hard place.”

3. Paul tells us about all those times he was caught “between a rock and a hard place” in II CORINTHIANS 11:

From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?
4. Despite all these troubles and hardships, Paul would say, “I was knocked down, but I was never knocked out.” “I was hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed.”

5. And that is the message to you and me today. None of us has ever, or likely will ever experience the degree of troubles and hardships the apostle Paul experienced. But our troubles seem every bit as serious and real to us don’t they?

6. Perhaps right now you are going through a tough situation where it feels as though the walls are closing in around you and there is no way out. But think about it! The fact that you are still here today is a testimony to the truth that GOD has always brought you through tough situations before and there is no reason to believe He will fail you now.

7. You may be “hard-pressed on every side, but you are not crushed.” You may be “knocked down, but you're not knocked out!”

Secondly Paul says…….

II. We Are **PERPLEXED, But Not In DESPAIR** (v.8b)

1. When Paul says, “we are perplexed” what he is saying is, “I can't figure it out,” “I am confused,” “I don't understand why all these things are happening to me.”
2. Boy I can relate to that, can't you? Sometimes we go through trials and troubles that are so perplexing we don't know which way to turn or what to do.

3. But do you realize GOD always has a divine purpose in all of our trials and troubles?

(A) Sometimes GOD uses our troubles to **DIRECT** us.

PROVERBS 20:30 (NKJV) “Blows and hurt cleanse away evil, as do stripes the inner depths of the heart.”

You see, sometimes GOD has to “light a fire” under us to get us moving forward spiritually. We become stagnant and complacent. And nothing will get us moving towards GOD like a time of trouble.

Chances are you pray more in a time of trouble. Chances are you read your BIBLE more in a time of trouble. Chances are you are more faithful in your Church attendance in a time of trouble.

Sometimes GOD uses our troubles to **DIRECT** US.

(B) Sometimes GOD uses our troubles to **INSPECT** us.

JAMES 1:2,3 (NKJV) “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.”
It has been said, “People are like tea bags. If you want to know what is inside them, just drop them in some hot water.” You see, any of us can claim to have a strong faith when we aren’t dealing with any trials or troubles. But the true depth of your faith will be seen in how you respond to troubles and hardships in life.

GOD uses troubles to DIRECT US. GOD uses troubles to INSPECT US.

(C) Sometimes GOD uses troubles to **CORRECT** us.

**PSALM 119:71 (NKJV)** “It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes.”

Sometimes the only way you and I can learn some of the valuable life lessons GOD wants to teach us is to go through times of trouble and hardship. Sometimes the only way we can learn the value of good health is to experience some health problems. Sometimes the only way we can learn the value of our marriage relationship is to go through some trials and troubles. Sometimes the only way we can learn the value of seeking GOD’S WISDOM in our decisions is for GOD to allow us to suffer the consequences of our own foolish choices.

GOD USES TROUBLES TO DIRECT US......TO INSPECT US......TO CORRECT US......

(D) Sometimes GOD uses troubles to **PROTECT** us.

Do you remember the horrible thing Joseph’s brothers did to him? They sold him as a slave to the Midianites and they told their father Joseph had been killed by wild animals. WHAT A HORRIBLE THING THEY DID!
But listen to what JOSEPH said to his brothers many years later, “You meant evil against me, but GOD meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.”

You and I may not see it at the time, but sometimes our troubles are actually blessings in disguise. Sometimes GOD allows us to experience troubles in the present to PROTECT US from greater heartache and trouble later.

Sometimes GOD uses troubles to DIRECT US.... sometimes to INSPECT US.....sometimes to CORRRECT US.......sometimes to PROTECT US........

(E) And fifth, GOD ALWAYS USES TROUBLES TO PERFECT us.

ROMANS 5:3,4 (NKJV) “……we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.”

Do you know when you and I respond to our troubles with FAITH and TRUST in GOD, God will always bring us through our troubles a better person than when we went in?

4. Right now you may be perplexed as to the purpose and meaning of your troubles. Right now you may not have a clue how everything is going to turn out. But do not despair! GOD has a purpose in your troubles and if you will patiently wait on HIM, He will eventually reveal that purpose to you. You may be knocked down, but you're not knocked out!
WE ARE HARD-PRESSED, BUT NOT CRUSHED.
WE ARE PERPLEXED, BUT NOT IN DESPAIR.

Thirdly, Paul says…..

III. **We Are PERSECUTED, But Not FORSAKEN** (v.9a)

1. Earlier I mentioned all the hardships Paul had experienced, how he was beaten and stoned and imprisoned, among many other things. Perhaps some of the greatest suffering Paul had to endure was at the hands of his own fellow countrymen.

   In II Timothy 4, Paul talks about being abandoned by Demas one of his co-laborers in the preaching of the gospel.

2. When we think of being persecuted we think of people being burned at the stake or tortured or imprisoned. By the grace of GOD none of us has ever experienced that degree of persecution.

3. But there are many other forms of persecution:

   Perhaps you have been teased or mocked or ridiculed because of your Christian beliefs. Perhaps you have been overlooked for a promotion at work because you are a Christian.

   Perhaps you have had friends or even members of your own family forsake you and abandon you because of your faith and commitment to GOD.
4. Do you know persecution in some form or another is to be expected in the Christian life?

Paul writes in........

II TIMOTHY 3:12 (NKJV) “......all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”

5. God never promises us we won’t be forsaken by people ..........friends, fellow Christians, even members of our family. But He has promised “He would never leave us us forsake us.”

WE ARE HARD-PRESSED, BUT NOT CRUSHED.
WE ARE PERPLEXED, BUT NOT IN DESPAIR.
WE ARE PERSECUTED, BUT NOT FORSAKEN.

And finally, Paul says......

IV. We Are STRUCK DOWN, But Not DESTROYED (v. 9b)

1. What Paul is saying is “We may be KNOCKED DOWN, but we are not KNOCKED OUT!”

2. Satan is going to get in “his licks!” Life is going to throw its punches..........but GOD’S GRACE is sufficient to sustain us through all of life’s troubles.
3. William Barclay says it this way in his commentary on the Bible:

“The supreme characteristic of the Christian is NOT that he doesn’t fall, but that every time he falls he rises again. It is NOT that he is never beaten, but that he is never ultimately defeated. The Christian may lose a battle, but he knows that in the end he can never lose the war.”

4. When I was a young boy my dad bought me one of those BOZO, THE CLOWN “boppin' bags.” Perhaps some of you older ones can remember them.

No matter how hard we punched “ol BOZO or how hard we slapped him or kicked him ........he would POP right back up for more every single time.

WE COULD KNOCK HIM DOWN, BUT WE COULDN’T KNOCK HIM OUT!

What was BOZO’S secret? His secret was HIS ANCHOR. You see, down in the bottom of that “boppin bag” was SAND. That sand kept BOZO balanced so no matter what happened to him he always came back to an upright position.

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul*

*Steadfast and sure while the billows roll,*

*Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,*

*Grounded firm and deep in the Savior’s love.*

**YES, WE MAY BE STRUCK DOWN, BUT WE ARE NEVER DESTROYED.**
CONCLUSION

In 1924, two climbers were part of an expedition that set out to conquer Mount Everest. As far as is known, they never reached the summit, and they never returned.

Somewhere on that gigantic mountain the two climbers were over-powered by the elements and died. After the failed expedition, the rest of the climbing party returned home. Addressing a group of adventurers in London, one of those who returned described the ill-fated adventure. He then turned to a huge photograph of Mount Everest mounted on the wall behind him, and said, “EVEREST, WE TRIED TO CONQUER YOU ONCE, BUT YOU OVER-POWERED US. WE TRIED TO CONQUER YOU A SECOND TIME, BUT AGAIN YOU WERE TOO MUCH FOR US. BUT EVEREST, I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT WE ARE GOING TO CONQUER YOU, FOR YOU CAN’T GROW ANY BIGGER, BUT WE CAN.”

WE ARE HARD-PRESSED, BUT NOT CRUSHED!
WE ARE PERPLEXED, BUT NOT IN DESPAIR!
WE ARE PERSECUTED, BUT NOT FORSAKEN!
WE ARE STRUCK DOWN, BUT NOT DESTROYED!

My friend, right now you may feel “knocked down,” but with God, you are never “KNOCKED OUT!”