

Pioneering is hard work, but it is rewarding work. We are going to continue our series Pioneer Persistence, in this series Paul *highlights* his setbacks in ministry, but how he remains persistent by staying focused even in the face various adversities.

2 Corinthians 6:4–7 (NKJV) But in all *things* we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in **distresses**, ⁵ in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; ⁶ by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, ⁷ by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left-

I FEELING SQUEEZED

A- Ministry will have its share of distress!

1. The word distress means: CONSTRICTED ... A NARROWNESS OF SPACE...

a. Its this idea of being pressed or squeezed... *Anyone deal with Claustrophobia?* We don't like that feeling!

B- We will feel this distress from a range of sources;

1. People Distress: sin decisions (moral failure morning of big outreach), rebellion, slander...

a. People's crisis, trauma, loss... *What do I do!? How can I help? How do I change?*

2. Money Distress: Money to do the will of God. Money for needs. Money for pioneers. Money for outreaches.

3. Fruitfulness Distress: *When you can't pay someone to pray!* You feel like you have a plague, no one wants to be around you!

4. Building Distresses: Building leases, CAM fees (NM \$13K), Lease Renewals, Insurance, Maintenance...

5. These can really bring the pressure on us!

II DISTRESS RESPONSE

A- Q: How do you respond to distress? The constricting feeling!

1. Some POP: They explode in emotion at their church, disciples, wife, kids... B/c I'm distressed.

2. Some Question: Where's Jesus? Where's the help? WHY? How could they? Men mentally wander with questions!

3. Some SHOOT at God: blame God, get angry with God, threaten God,

4. Some are Crushed: The pressure does them in, they shatter in the distress... I quit: ministry, marriage, morals...

5. Some turn to God! Which is the right response-

a. Jesus was in great distress when facing the cross... he knows what you are feeling... **Luke 22:44** And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground...

i. Yet he stayed the course even through the distress... He can supply you with that!

III WORKING THROUGH THE PRESSURE

A- Important to remember: There's always a way through the distress! *Even when it doesn't feel like it!*

1. Bible holds a record of distressed people that God made a way through the narrow, constricting space-

a. Hebrews faced the Red Sea: The sea, The army, The wilderness... and God made a way through!

b. When God's people were surrounded by the enemy, and Elisha's servant asked Alas my master what shall we do?!

i. God made a way through their enemies!

2. God is the same and God can make a way through for us-

a. Text speaks of 9 divine enablements; **2 Corinthians 6:6–7** by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, ⁷ by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness

b. Jesus can handle our Distress; **1 Chronicles 16:11** Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually!

i. We have to turn to him and make him the source of our strength!

B- God can give you the strength to handle and shoulder the distress-

1. **Philippians 4:13** I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

a. **All things!** You can handle more pressure with God! You can handle heavier loads as God increases your strength!