

## Crushed

*“we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing”*

**2 Corinthians 4:8**

**Crushed**—In some English Bible translations, this word is rendered “distressed” instead of “crushed.” In Greek the word is *stenochoroumenoi*. It is a compound word that comes from *stenos* (narrow) and *chara* (space, territory or field). Literally, it means “to squeeze into a small space” or “to be confined.”

What similarities exist between “crushed” and “distressed” that would allow this Greek word to be translated into both English words? What do we feel when we are distressed? Don’t we often feel as though our freedom is being removed and our options limited, as though we are being confined into a small space? Distress is the result of emotional squeezing. Sometimes we say, “I feel like the world is closing in around me.” Do you notice in this verse that Paul acknowledges the presence of affliction? He doesn’t say we will escape trouble. He doesn’t say that being a Christian makes life easy. In fact, he implies just the opposite. Troubles will beset us. But, he says, we are not squeezed into confining spaces. We can’t avoid sorrows and heartaches. But these things do not force us into a life without options. Why is life in Christ a life that is not squeezed? Paul answers the question a few verses later. He says that we have a promise (we will be raised up just like Jesus was raised up). This means we have a hope (God will not fail us) and a deliverance (Christ will be with you).

There are days when we are energized. Life flows. Things fall into place and we see our purposes being fulfilled. There are days when life seems to bog down. The routine tasks of living force us into small spaces, dealing with trivial annoyances. Then there are times when troubles try to overwhelm us. Every direction we turn, we see “No Exit” signs. There are the times when we realize that we are designed to be channels of God’s power. God is never hemmed in. He is never without a plan. Our weakness is His strength.

I need to stop trying so hard to keep it all going. It is a lie to believe that God only helps those who help themselves. God will never interfere with our self-sufficiency. He waits until we reach the “No Exit” signs. When we can’t find the way out, He is more than able to point us in the right direction.