

Prayer and the Pressure Cooker

Description

2 Corinthians 1:8-14.

At the start of this letter to the Corinthian church, Paul wanted to clear up some things. One can imagine that the stories of the trials he faced on his missionary journeys had become notorious. In verses 8-9 of our passage today, Paul describes an incident in Tarsus (Asia Minor), likely in Ephesus (Acts 19), where he faced such severe persecution that he "despaired even of life" and felt the "sentence of death." Even the indomitable Paul felt that his team was under a pressure "far beyond our ability to endure" (v. 8).

So, how did Paul make it through? How did he survive, and how was he now able to pen these words?

It was only through the prayers of the Corinthians. For all the faults that drove Paul crazy and that he was trying to lovingly correct, the church had gotten something right: They had mobilized many to intercede for Paul and his companions (v.11).

Does your job or a family situation make you feel like you are in the pressure cooker? Has a health or financial scare brought stress and anxiety? While we are tempted to rely on our own ingenuity or tenacity, maybe it is time to recognize with humility that we really need the prayers of the church to get us through.

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