

The Kingdom Paradigm: Experiencing the Fullness of Glory (2 Cor. 4)

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. 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. 13 And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak, 14 knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you... 16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Cor. 4:7-18)

I. THE CENTERPIECE OF GOD'S PLAN

Having made known to us the mystery (hidden plan) of His will...10 that...He might gather together in one ALL things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth. (Eph. 1:9-10)

- A. The centerpiece of God's eternal purpose is for Jesus to come back to fully establish His Kingdom rule over all the earth as He joins the heavenly and earthly realms together. Both heavenly and earthly dimensions must come together to express God's personality and purposes.
- B. The spirit realm and the material realm come together as the New Jerusalem descends to just above the Millennial Jerusalem. The two Jerusalems will be connected by a "Corridor of Glory." Stage one of the descent of the New Jerusalem is partial yet substantial at the Second Coming. Stage two of the descent of the New Jerusalem is total and ultimate after the Millennium.
- C. What kind of body will the saints have? A solid material body with supernatural abilities (Lk. 24:15, 30-31; Jn. 20:14-15, 26; 21:4-5). Jesus spoke with His disciples for forty days in His resurrected body (Acts 1:3). Sometimes spirit beings (demons and angels) appear in the natural realm to interact with people in natural bodies.

II. KINGDOM PARADIGM: ETERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES INSTEAD OF TEMPORAL ONES

- A. In Stephen Coveys best selling book, 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, he said good leaders **begin with the end in mind**. Jesus and Paul both lived with their end goals in view.
- B. ***Premise:*** life on earth in this age can be likened to a 70 year internship (Ps. 90:10) which prepares us for our life on earth in the age to come. Our next stage of life in the age to come starts in the Millennial Kingdom which is the time when our first main ministry calling begins. This primary ministry assignment lasts for 1,000-years (Rev. 20:4-6; 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10; 22:5).

- C. In our 70 year internship we have two issues that we help determine in the grace of God. The first is if we want to ***be in God's family*** as voluntarily lovers. The second is if we want to ***function in His government*** for the first 1,000-years of the age to come.
- D. The measure that we develop in love, meekness and revelation (living understand of His Word) determines our place and function in His government (Mt. 7:14; 19:30; 20:16, 26-27; 22:14; Lk. 13:24). Our ministry in the age to come has nothing to do with how much we accomplished outwardly in this age, but rather how much we developed inwardly.
- E. In other words, the choices we make in our 70 year internship determine where and how we will function in our 1,000-year ministry assignment. ***Few believers will be in government*** (Lk. 19:17; 16:10-12; Mt. 25:21, 23; 19:30; 20:16, 26-27). Most will be in support roles.
- Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord. (Mt. 25:21)***
- Well done...because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over 10 cities. (Lk. 19:17)***
- But many who are first will be last, and the last first. (Mt. 19:30)***
- The last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen. (Mt. 20:16)***
- Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. (Mt. 20:26)***
- F. Paul viewed the inevitability of his outward man perishing in process of his inward man being renewed day by day. He saw this as a necessary momentary light affliction that worked for the benefit of his main calling (which begins in the Millennial Kingdom) a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Cor. 4:16-18)
- G. ***Premise***: our calling in the age to come is far more important than our circumstances now. Our calling is determined by the growth of our heart now. This is the Kingdom Paradigm.
- We do not look at the things which are seen, but at things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Cor. 4:18)***
- H. The Kingdom paradigm prioritizes the development of our heart in love, meekness and revelation over the growth of our blessed circumstances and ministry. Our circumstances and ministry will have their ultimate blessing in the age to come.
- I. Our assignment in this temporal life (our internship) is to be focused on the development of our inner man so that during our primary assignment (age to come) our circumstances and ministry impact can be far greater.

III. OUR PARADIGM OF ETERNITY

- A. As Gentile believers, we most naturally think of worshipping Jesus as God in the supernatural conditions of heaven. We emphasize Jesus' deity as the Son of God. Whereas the Jewish paradigm thinks of reigning with the Messianic King as a man in the natural conditions of the earth. They emphasize the Messiah's humanity as the Son of David. ***The reason many Gentiles cannot relate to living for heaven is that they see it as world without physical reality.***
- B. The Millennium is a term that speaks of a literal 1,000 year period in which Jesus rules the earth (*millennium* is from the Latin “*mille*” or ‘a thousand’ and “*annus*” ‘a year’). The Millennial Kingdom is one of the major revelations of Scripture.
- C. Jesus will be King of all other Millennial kings (Rev. 19:16; 17:14; 15:3), and will personally govern a worldwide Kingdom from Jerusalem in partnership with resurrected and non-resurrected believers who rule with Him (Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4-6; 22:5; Mt. 19:28; 20:21-23; 25:23; Lk. 19:17-19; 22:29-30; 1 Cor. 6:2-3; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rom 8:17). Together they will establish a worldwide biblically based, social order in every nation that affects every sphere of life (political, social, agricultural, economic, spiritual, etc.)
- D. ***This period of worldwide blessing is initiated by Jesus' Second Coming*** (Rev. 20:1-6; 19:11-21; Isa. 2:1-4; 9:6-9; 11:1-16; 51:1-8; 60-62; 65:17-25; Ps. 2:6-12; 110:1-7; Deut. 8; 28; Mt. 5:5; 6:10; 17:11; 19:28; 28:19; Acts 1:6; 3:21). The result will be a 1000-year period of peace, righteousness, prosperity, and blessing for the whole earth as Jesus restores life to conditions seen in the ***Garden of Eden***.
- E. The Millennial reign of Jesus is the first time in which ***all Israel will be saved*** (Rom. 11:26) and ***all the kings of the earth will be saved*** (Ps. 72:11; 102:15; 138:4; 148:11; Isa. 62:2; Rev. 21:24).
- F. Jesus will be the King over all other kings in the Millennium. Jesus as King of kings (Rev. 19:16; 17:14; 15:3) will personally govern a worldwide Kingdom from Jerusalem in partnership with resurrected and non-resurrected believers who rule with Him in establishing a biblically based, social order in every nation (Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4-6; 22:5; Mt. 19:28; 20:21-23; 25:23; Lk. 19:17-19; 22:29-30; 1 Cor. 6:2-3; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rom 8:17).
- G. John saw Jesus as the ruler over two sets of kings (Rev. 1:5-6). First, the Millennial kings with natural bodies (Ps. 72:11; 102:15; 138:4; 148:11; Isa. 60:10-11, 62:2; Rev. 12:5; 15:4; 21:24). Second, the Rapture saints as kings with resurrected bodies (Rev. 1:6; 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10; Mt. 19:28; Lk. 22:29-30). The two prominent roles emphasized in Scripture for the saints who received rewards is to function as kings and priests (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6; 22:5; Isa. 61:6).

- H. As kings the saints will reign (rule) with judicial responsibility and authority. This role involves authority to evaluate the past (judging) and to determine action plans for the future for the people and areas that they are entrusted with. The ruling saints will appoint people into positions in the infrastructure that are within their sphere of Kingdom responsibility. This will include training and managing the people who are appointed. The saints will judge angels (1 Cor. 6:2).
- I. The saints will rule (Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4-6; 22:5; Mt. 19:28; 20:21-23; 25:23; Lk. 19:17-19; 22:29-30; 1 Cor. 6:2-3; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rom 8:17-18; Dan. 7:22, 25-27)
- J. **Summary:** the secular paradigm of authority and reward is one that seeks self glory in ruling over people and is established on pride. The Bridal paradigm of authority and reward is to cherish and enjoy working closely with the One we love in the details of discipling the nations to bring people we love to the fullness of blessing under the Father's authority. This paradigm is established on love. **Premise:** Personal rewards in the Millennial Kingdom are a foundational dimension in our lives in fulfilling our prophetic destiny.
- K. Several prominent OT men had significant personal prophecies recorded in Scripture concerning their role in the Millennial Kingdom. Thus, they had more prophecies in Scripture about their Millennial function than they had about their ministry during their life time.
- L. **Premise:** the complete fulfillment of some prophetic words concerning the saints now may be in the Millennium as was true in the example of several OT saints. Some personal prophecies have their greatest fulfillment in the Millennium. Jesus gave "personal prophecies" to the apostles related to their governmental roles in the Millennium to motivate them to walk worthy during their earthly life.
- M. Jesus spoke to the apostles of having thrones (Millennial positions of authority) related to their earthly obedience, sacrifice and servanthood (Mt. 19:27-29; 25:14-46; Lk. 22:24-30; 19:11-27).
Peter said, "We have left all and followed You. What shall we have?" 28 Jesus said, "Assuredly...in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the Throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will sit on 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel. (Mt. 19:26-28)
You are those who have continued with Me in My trials. 29 I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, 30 that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Lk. 22:28-30)
- N. Jesus had far more prophecies about His role in the Millennial reign after His Second Coming than His role at His first coming! The nation of Israel has more prophecies about their role in the Millennium than before it. King David had more personal prophecies in Scripture about his 1,000-year role in the Millennial Kingdom in Jerusalem than his 40-year kingship in Jerusalem during his life. On three occasions David was promised to rule Israel during his earthly life (1 Sam. 13:14; 15:28; 16:1-13) yet on five other prophetic occasions David's rule over Israel in the Millennial Kingdom was referenced (Ezek. 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Isa. 55:3-4; Jer. 30:9; Hos. 3:4-5; then a double fulfillment in 1 Sam. 13:14).

IV. KINGDOM PARADIGM: ETERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES INSTEAD OF TEMPORAL ONES

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2 Cor. 4:16-18)

- A. We must begin with the end in mind as our primary life focus.
- B. The Kingdom paradigm prioritizes the development of our heart in love, meekness and revelation over the growth of our blessed circumstances and ministry. So that our circumstances and ministry will have their ultimate blessing in the age to come.
- C. Premise: our calling in the age to come is far more important than our circumstances now. Our calling is determined by our the growth of our heart now.
We do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but things which are not seen are eternal (2 Cor. 4:18)
- D. Our assignment in this temporal life (our internship) is to be focused on the development of our inner man so that during our primary assignment (age to come) our circumstances and ministry impact can have be greater.
- E. The size our heart (inner man) is more important than the size of our circumstantial blessing and ministry impact (outer man).
Our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. (2 Cor. 4:16)
- F. Premise: pressure in our life works for our ultimate life purpose not against it.
For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (2 Cor. 4:17)
- G. Premise: with a Kingdom paradigm we do not lose heart
Therefore we do not lose heart (2 Cor. 4:16a)
Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' (Mt. 25:21)
But many who are first will be last, and the last first. (Mt. 19:30)
The last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen. (Mt. 20:16)
Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. (Mt. 20:26)

V. KINGDOM PARADIGM: THE DYING OF JESUS BRINGS LIFE

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. (2 Cor. 4:10-12)

- A. What is Jesus' paradigm of life and ministry?

So then death is working in us, but life in you. (2 Cor. 4:12)

Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. (Jn. 12:24)

From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. 22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" 23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." 24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works." (Mt. 16:21-27)

VI. JESUS' PARADIGM: EMBRACING DEATH TO TEMPORAL VALUES AND PLEASURES

- A. In this age, Jesus suffered in His humanity.

For it was fitting for Him (Father)...to make the captain of their salvation (Jesus) perfect through sufferings...17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest...18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. (Heb. 2:10, 17-18)

Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. (Heb. 5:8)

- B. Isaiah gives us prophetic insight into Jesus' paradigm of His life and ministry in this age. Jesus is not complaining, but revealing His confidence that even though men concluded that He spent His strength in vain (because He did not achieve anything notable) yet God saw His life as glorious.

I said, 'I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain; Yet surely my just reward is with the LORD, and my work with my God.'" 5 "Now the LORD says, Who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel is gathered to Him (For I shall be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and My God shall be My strength), 6 He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should...raise up Jacob and restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'" (Isa. 49:5-6)

- C. Jesus had confidence that God saw His life as glorious (Isa. 49:5c). Before Jesus preached one sermon or healed one person, the Father was well pleased with His 30 years of meekness. During this time Jesus had not achieved anything notable before men. His strength was spent on nothing outward that men would celebrate but on developing His heart (love, meekness, understanding).
...from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Mt. 3:17)
Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men. (Lk. 2:52)
- D. What is the dying of Jesus that is to be embraced by us?
Carrying about in the body (our humanity) the dying of the Lord Jesus (2 Cor. 4:10a).
For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake (2 Cor. 4:11a)
- E. What is the life of Jesus the is to be manifest in us?
That the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body (our humanity) (2 Cor. 4:10b)
That the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh (our humanity) (2 Cor. 4:11b)
- F. The rule of this life: to always embrace the dying of Jesus in our body (lifestyle in this age).
To always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus...we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake (2 Cor. 4:10-11)
- G. Our journey in this life will always require embracing the dying of Jesus. Therefore, we must set our heart to walk with endurance as if we were walking up a mountain in mud on a hot day. Imagine walking 12 hours up the mountain carrying all our supplies (food, water) to only gain 10 feet. Then the mud slide carrying us all back to the bottom of the mountain as we lose all the ground we gained. God's primary goal for us is not to get the top of the mountain (achievement in circumstances) in this life but to renew our inner man (grow in our hearts). God knows that the optimum setting in this life to develop a bright spirit of righteousness (love and meekness) is to "walk up the mountain in mud."
- H. We all experience the "groan" throughout our life in this age. Our satisfaction is imperfect in this age in our intimacy with God, and people as well as in our ministries and achievements, etc. This groan drives us to greater pursuit of Jesus with increased dependence and meekness in the process.
Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. (Rom. 8:23)
For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know (feel satisfied) in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. (1 Cor. 13:12)

VII. THE TREASURE: THE EXCELLENCY OF THE POWER OF GOD (3 FOLD)

We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. (2 Cor. 4:7)

A. What is the treasure? It is 3 things that are automatically ours at the new birth.

The grace (power) of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love (affection) of God, and the communion (fellowship) of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen. (2 Cor. 13:14)

1. The Father's acceptance and blessing: we receive the Father's affection and empowering.

The Father...accepted us...according to the riches of His grace (Eph. 1:6-7)

2. Authority to use the name of Jesus: we use the name of Jesus to release a breakthrough of God's power in our life, circumstances and nation.

If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. (Jn. 14:14)

3. Power of the Spirit: we receive the Spirit who empowers our hearts in holiness (love, meekness, revelation) and our ministries (anointed speaking and releasing healing to others).

The Father...will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you...17 the Spirit of truth...will be in you. 26 The Holy Spirit...will teach you all things. (Jn. 14:16, 17, 26)

B. God has much pleasure in releasing Kingdom power and blessings to us including both internal and external ones, in this age and in the age to come.

It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom (blessing, power). (Lk. 12:32)

C. The earthen vessel speaks of our humanity. In other words, our body with its great limitations (weariness, sickness, etc.) and our mind and heart that are subject to wrong ideas and desires.

D. The dilemma: when God manifests His power and blessing through us, then because of our pride (earthen vessel) we are prone to wrongly interpret why God is blessing us or using us so powerfully.

This treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

E. The very breakthrough of God's power in our circumstances and ministry awakens pride in us. We are prone to get distracted by the very power, prosperity and blessing that God meant for our good.

Lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted... (2 Cor. 12:7)

F. Christianity is God's plan to release the excellency of His power (treasure) in context to our sinful humanity (depravity). God protects His people who experience His power with problems.

- G. When we receive Kingdom power and blessings in our ministries and circumstances in this age, then pride and lust (weakness of our earthen vessels) often get stirred up to such a degree that the blessing distracts us and then sets up back in the growth of our hearts (internal Kingdom blessings). This in turn minimizes God's full blessing in our ministries and circumstances in the age to come. The Father does not want us to lose long term blessing (in the age to come) because we mishandle short term blessing (in this age). Therefore, now, God gives limited blessing in context to being hard pressed, perplexed, persecuted and struck down.
- H. *We should contend for the fullness of the external Kingdom power and blessings* in our ministries and circumstances in this age. *We trust God to administrate the measure and timing of their release* along with the measure of difficulty (being hard pressed, perplexed, persecuted and struck down), that we must battle through.

VIII. THREE SOURCES OF PRESSURE IN OUR LIVES

- A. The Father's discipline is meant to train us to partner with Jesus in righteousness. The Father will resist that which hinders the growth of our inner man and the development of our primary assignment in the age to come. The caterpillar must struggle in the cocoon to become a butterfly in their next session of life.

Do not despise the chastening of the LORD...6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives...9 Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For (He) chastens us...for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. 11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those...trained by it. (Heb. 12:5-12)

- B. Satan's attack is meant to devour us. He has no "cease fire" in his war against us.

The devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. (1 Pet. 5:8)

Take up the armor of God...you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. (Eph. 6:13, 16)

- C. Our human weakness (wrong ideas and sinful desires) brings us many pressures.

For the flesh lusts (wars) against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh... (Gal. 5:17)

IX. THREE NECESSARY GODLY RESPONSES

- A. We submit to the Father's discipline with endurance and gratitude. We refuse to quit.

- B. We resist Satan's attacks by the Word of God. We don't passively accept them.

- C. We repent of our wrong ideas and desires as we humble ourselves before God and people.

X. THE COMMON STRUGGLE: FOUR PARADOXES

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-- (2 Cor. 4:8-9)

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted (tested) beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape (deliverance), that you may be able to bear it. (1 Cor. 10:13)

- A. Paul's premise: in this age, we will always face difficulties because God continues to train us, as the devil continues to attack us as we continue to hold wrong ideas and desires. Our assignment in this life (internship) prepares us for our primary assignment (age to come) by allowing us to be pressed hard, perplexed, persecuted and struck down as our heart grows (love, meekness, revelation). We can be renewed in our inner man (2 Cor. 4:17) with a Kingdom paradigm or we can be crushed, despairing, feel forsaken, and destroyed by maintaining the temporal paradigm (2 Cor. 4:18)
- B. The temporal paradigm with its false ideals (romanticism) about the Kingdom of God will result in disillusionment and offense towards God. Our media culture promotes this lying image of life in advertisement and movies, etc. We want all the areas of our natural circumstances to be blessed.
- C. First paradox: we are hard pressed on every side yet not crushed.
1. We all experience circumstances that can create pressures in our emotions. Circumstances that press (pressure) us come from all sides (every direction in our life) including finances, broken relationships, sickness, accidents, failures in sin, attacks from Satan, etc.
 2. Many feel crushed or decide to quit when they are hard pressed. In other words, they give up their resolve to continue in passionate pursuit of Jesus and His kingdom. They confess that they are burnt out and worn out and can no longer continue to press into God.
 3. When we are hard pressed, we can continue to run the race with endurance. The devil crushes us with lies in telling us that we are too tired and must quit. We must not agree with Satan by confessing that we can't go on any longer and that it is too hard.
- D. Second paradox: We are perplexed, but we are not in despair.
1. We all experience circumstances that can create pressures in our understanding.

2. Many people fall into despair when they are perplexed. In other words, they lose confidence in God's goodness in the process. They become aimless in despair without the ability to connect their struggle with what the good that it is producing for them.
3. Paul wrote 13 books in the NT, but continued to struggle with perplexity as he often asked the question, "Why, God?"
4. God uses perplexity to train us in righteousness. The Father purposely hides many details of life including how He will bring deliverance to our problems.
5. Why does God do this? He wants us to have security by virtue of intimacy with Him, rather than in having all the information about the details of our future.

E. **Third paradox:** We are persecuted, but not forsaken.

1. We all experience circumstances that can create **pressures from people**. Instead of being blessed or appreciated by others, for standing for righteousness or for serving.
2. Many people fall into the feeling that God has forsaken or overlooked them when they are mistreated after they sacrificially served others. In other words, they sense that God has taken His favor and His watchful care from them. They become aimless in despair without the ability to connect their struggle with what the good it is producing for them.
3. We will all be resisted and persecuted and sometimes even from the Church.
All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. (2 Tim. 3:12)

F. **Fourth paradox:** We are struck down, but not destroyed.

1. We all experience circumstances that can be **pressures that destroy our life purpose**.
2. Many people feel that their primary life purpose is over when they experience life altering crisis that strike them down with significant set backs. In other words, they lose sight that their life has significance and purpose in it without the ability to connect their struggle with what the good that it is producing for them.
3. These are life threatening or life altering circumstances that strike down our natural strength. They seem like they can destroy our life purpose.
4. God's people are stuck down in various ways without their primary life purpose being in jeopardy. God's people may be stuck down in various ways including a broken body (violence in persecution, terminal illness, life altering accidents), broken relationship (marriage, family), broken finances, etc.