

WE WERE SO UTTERLY BURDENED BEYOND OUR STRENGTH THAT WE DESPAIRED OF LIFE ITSELF.

(2 Corinthians 1:8 ESV)

The Lord Jesus said "I am the true Vine," and it was prophesied of Him that He would tread the winepress alone. The Cross was His winepress. How He was pressed in the Cross! He was crushed and broken, but out of that breaking has come the Life which you and I have, and which so many in all the nations have received. That is true, in a measure, of His Church. It was out of the breaking and crushing of the Church that the Life came to the world. And that is true of every member, every branch of the vine. If we are to fulfill this true, living ministry, it will only be through suffering, through the winepress, through pressure and through breaking. Paul said: "We were pressed out of measure, above strength" (2 Corinthians 1:8 – A.V.) – but what Life has come out of that man's pressure!

It is like that. We are not talking about preaching and Bible teaching, but about this great ministry of Christ giving His Life through us. It may be passed on to others through preaching, or through teaching, or through living, but if it is His Life it will come out of experiences of suffering. A preacher or a teacher who has never suffered will never minister Life.

Well, this may not seem a very pleasant outlook, but it is true. The best doctors and nurses are those who know something about suffering themselves. Some are just professional, treating you as a case – you are just case number blank. But, ah! there are others who treat you as a person, a human being, who care for you. If you ask why, you may find that they have a background of suffering themselves. They know just a little of what you are going through. We have read in the Letter to the Hebrews: "We have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are... He is able to succor them that are tempted" (Hebrews 4:15, 2:18). He has been the way of the winepress and we have received the benefit.

By T. Austin-Sparks from: [*The On-High Calling - Chapter 6*](#)