bent but not broken

*We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 (NIV.)*

On January 25, 2025, my church family was hit with the heart-wrenching news that our Senior Pastor, Paul E. Sheppard of the Destiny Christian Fellowship Church in Fremont, California, had suddenly passed away on that very day. To say that we were stunned beyond comprehension barely captures the bewilderment, shock, and utter disbelief our local congregation experienced at the news. We grappled with and endeavored to resist the looming temptation to question our omniscient Creator and entrusted our whys to Him as much as humanly possible. We knew, and still know, that our loving heavenly Father knows best what He is doing in all things, even the most unimaginable, unthinkable, or devastating circumstances.

Nearly two months after Pastor Paul’s sudden passing, one of my dear sisters would share a striking image of a tree bent over that she had come across during one of her nature walks. She sent the image as encouragement and a reminder of God’s promise to us all that He is with us through the struggles of life. Immediately, I quickened in my spirit as I heard, “Bent But Not Broken” echo in my heart.

I was then reminded of Paul’s second letter to the church body at Corinth, where he described the challenging times he and his companions were experiencing fulfilling their ministry assignment. In 2 Corinthians 4:8-9, the Apostle shares that “[w]e are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.” He was encouraging these New Testament believers (which incidentally also includes us!) that no matter how hard life may get, God will preserve them on every side. Because God’s word is eternal, this timeless truth applies to our lives today.

We live in some real dark and troubling times. It is no secret that God’s people are facing spiritual warfare and being attacked in a myriad of ways. However, this devotional was birthed for such a time as this! A time when we need to be reminded of the infinite power and treasure housed inside of each of us as Christ’s ambassadors. Before listing the hardships that he and his companions were facing, the Apostle Paul shares in the preceding verse,“But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.”

Although we may be going through all kinds of heinous and maybe even hellish situations during this hour and season, beloved, be encouraged. The Greater One lives on the inside of us. We can proclaim the words of 1 John 4:4b, “. . . greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” (KJV.) Yes, we may be bent, but we are not broken.

*Minister Ta-Tanisha Henry, affectionately known as “Sis. Ta,” was born and raised in San Francisco, California. She is a member of Destiny Christian Fellowship in Fremont, California. She is intricately involved in her church’s ministry, which consists of the Ministerial Alliance Team, Praise & Worship Team, Voices of Destiny Choir, and Women of Destiny, to name a few. Minister Ta has an intense, red-hot love for God and His people. Her ultimate and sole desire is to share God’s word and His love with all people and see lives transformed and healed by the power of the Holy Spirit.*