

CHRIST AND CRISIS/Who Am I in Christ, and Who Am I in Crisis?

MAIN TEXTS

1 Corinthians 16:9; Philippians 4:4–8

NOTE: Conflict may surround me, but it must not control me. My identity is in Christ, my direction comes from the Holy Spirit, and my life must reflect the character of Jesus.

THE OPEN DOOR AND THE OPPOSITION

1 Corinthians 16:9 (KJV): “For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.”

Paul recognizes two realities at once: an effective opportunity is open, and opposition is present. He does not pretend the adversaries are absent, but he does not treat their presence as proof that the opportunity is meaningless.

NOTE: Everybody wants an open door, but not everybody is prepared for the opposition that can come with it. We celebrate when God opens a door, but what happens when conflict walks through the same door? Do we lose our peace? Compromise our character? React in the flesh? Or remain who we are in Christ?

QUOTE: “An open door does not promise an opposition-free road; it calls for discernment, endurance, and faithfulness.”

QUOTE: “I cannot always control what comes against me, but through Christ, I can learn to govern how I respond to it.”

NOTE: Paul does not identify every adversary in this verse. In the wider context of Acts 19, his ministry in Ephesus faced religious and economic resistance. Do not teach that every disagreement or setback is automatically demonic. The lesson is that opposition can exist alongside meaningful work.

POINT 1 — KNOW WHO YOU ARE IN CHRIST

Supporting Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:17 — “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature...”

Paul’s identity was not determined by his opposition, prison, or hardship. His life belonged to Christ. Being in Christ does not mean we never face crisis; it means crisis does not have to redefine our identity or dictate our obedience.

Notes:

My circumstances describe what I am facing; they do not have the final word on who I am in Christ.

Being a new creature is not permission to live any way I want. New life calls me to walk in holiness and righteousness.

I do not use grace as an excuse to remain in what the Spirit is correcting.

QUOTE: “My crisis may describe my season, but it does not get to define my identity.”

QUOTE: “Grace does not give me permission to stay the same; grace teaches me to live differently.”

POINT 2 — CONFLICT CAN BE OUTSIDE WITHOUT TAKING OVER INSIDE

Main text: Philippians 4:4–5

Paul tells believers to rejoice in the Lord and let their gentleness be known. He does not tell them to pretend that trouble is not real. He teaches them to remain anchored in the Lord and to keep Christlike character visible while under pressure.

Notes:

People may bring conflict to my door, but I do not have to invite their conflict into my character.

A difficult person does not give me permission to become an ungodly person.

The Spirit's fruit must be visible not only when life is calm, but also when I am challenged.

QUOTE: "Do not let somebody else's behavior become the excuse for your disobedience."

QUOTE: "The conflict may be around me, but it does not have to become the condition within me."

QUOTE: "A crisis does not give me permission to abandon the character of Christ."

POINT 3 — PROTECT YOUR PEACE THROUGH PRAYER AND RIGHT THINKING

Main text: Philippians 4:6–8

Paul directs believers away from being governed by anxiety and toward prayer, supplication, thanksgiving, and disciplined thought. God's peace does not always remove the external problem immediately; it guards the heart and mind in Christ.

Notes:

Verse 6 — Bring the concern to God. Prayer is not denial; it is choosing where to take the pressure. Be honest with God and make your requests known with thanksgiving.

Verse 7 — God's peace guards the heart and mind. The peace of God is not pretending everything is fine; it is trusting God while facing what is real.

Verse 8 — Direct your thoughts toward what is true, just, pure, lovely, and worthy of praise. Do not feed every fearful thought as if it were a prophecy.

QUOTE: "Prayer does not require me to deny the pressure; prayer teaches me where to take the pressure."

QUOTE: "If I keep feeding my mind fear, I should not be surprised when fear starts directing my steps."

QUOTE: "Peace is not the absence of every battle; it is the guarded heart that stays submitted to Christ in the battle."

Note: Anxiety is not proof that someone has no faith. Encourage people to pray, seek trusted support, and take wise practical steps when needed.

POINT 4 — YOU CANNOT ASK FOR THE SPIRIT'S DIRECTION WHILE REFUSING HIS CORRECTION

Main references: Romans 8:12–14; Galatians 5:16, 25

The Holy Spirit comforts, leads, convicts, and forms Christlike character in believers. We must not ask God to bless a direction that Scripture has already shown us is wrong. Sometimes a crisis comes from outside our control; sometimes our own choices add to it. We need humility to discern the difference.

Notes:

If I am walking in disobedience, repentance may be part of the next step.

If anger is steering me, I need to slow down and respond in the Spirit.

If I reject correction and wise counsel, I may be resisting the very help I prayed for.

Following the Spirit may mean standing firm, changing direction, setting a boundary, apologizing, or seeking wise counsel.

QUOTE: "You cannot continually resist God's correction and expect to enjoy the benefit of God's direction."

QUOTE: "Sometimes the next breakthrough begins with the wrong turn I am willing to correct."

NOTE: Do not imply every crisis is caused by personal sin. Paul faced opposition while faithfully serving God. The call is to discern the source of the situation and remain obedient in it.

POINT 5 — OVERCOME WITHOUT COMPROMISING HOLINESS

Main references: Titus 2:11–12; 1 Peter 1:14–16; 1 Corinthians 15:58

The goal is not merely to survive a crisis. The goal is to come through it remaining faithful to Christ. We do not overcome by becoming bitter, dishonest, vengeful, or careless with holiness. We overcome by walking in truth, love, self-control, and obedience.

Notes:

Pray before reacting.

Measure your thoughts against Scripture.

Refuse revenge and bitterness; pursue forgiveness and appropriate boundaries.

Correct what God shows you needs correcting.

Remain steadfast where God has called you to continue, and seek His wisdom when the direction is unclear.

QUOTE: “Do not win the argument and lose your witness.”

QUOTE: “The goal is not simply to get out of the crisis; it is to remain faithful to Christ while you walk through it.”