

*"That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. " 2 Corinthians 12:10 NIV*

One of the fairly recent American traditions these days is the Super Bowl. One of the complaints about over the years has been the times when the winner of the game is obvious even before the game began, and a "blowout" by one side makes for very dull watching.

If you watched this year's game that was not the case. It seemed well matched, and kept you watching for the whole time. But the one thing that impressed me about these two teams was that adversity was part of both teams, more so the season of the Green Bay Packers. In fact visibly the Green Bay Quarterback had a special helmet because of a concussion, and the quarterback of the Pittsburgh Steelers had a special "boot shoe" on his right foot because of a serious injury.

Think about this. Two teams affected by adversity winding up in the Super Bowl. Obviously they kept their eye on that goal.

One of the things we forget about Christianity that it was not automatically successful in the world. In fact adversity especially in the form of persecution was the norm rather than the exception. Yet like Paul, they didn't look at themselves, they looked to Christ, and they looked to the power of the gospel. They were mindful of the goal, even if they couldn't pull it off in themselves. Yielding all to God, God found a way.

We in the church need to take that lesson to heart. These seem to be difficult times for both Christians and the Church. In stead of wringing our hands we need to always remember the goal, why were are Christians. It not because you and I can do it on our own, but rather through adversity, and absolute dependence on Jesus Christ, we can find strength, and most assuredly, God will find a way.

This is not an easy process, and along the way it may not feel good. If you read the verses before this one in 2 Corinthians 12, Paul had a terrible time. But it obviously did not stop Paul in proclaiming the Gospel.

Let's be honest here. Adversity, hardship, difficulties and the like are never pleasant when we go through them. But even in the midst of how we feel, can we keep our eyes on the goal? When we see overcoming these challenges on a secular level like in a football game we marvel. How much more for ourselves when we face adversity, difficulties, and hardships, let us be reminded that the church through Christ has always found a way, because of Jesus Christ who is the Resurrection and the Life.