

2 Corinthians: Encouragement in Troubling Times  
"Seeing the Unseen" # 11  
2 Cor. 4:16-18  
7-3-16 Sun AM

The question of human suffering is a complex issue. Those who are able to cope with life's difficulties are those who learn to endure and not give up.

All Christians can learn from Paul's example how to endure these difficulties. Because we have this ministry (4:1) and we have this treasure in earthen vessels (4:7) and knowing we have the hope of resurrection (4:13-14), we don't lose heart and give up.

**TT-** Note three keys to endurance...

**I. The Spiritual is of More Value Than the Physical (4:16).**

The **outward man** is like earthen vessels (4:7) and the mortal flesh (4:11) which is a reference to the physical body, the perishable part of man that is constantly decaying.

Read 4:8-12

In contrast, the inner man is the heart and soul that lives forever. The inner man is constantly being renewed by the grace of God.

**Eph. 3:16-19**, "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; (17) That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, (18) May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; (19) And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

The difficulties and troubles of life build the inner man because they drive the believer to humility, prayer, and dependence on God.

The decaying outer man will perish, but we will one day receive a new imperishable body which we will look at next time.

So we value the inner man over the outer man

**I. The Spiritual is of More Value Than the Physical.**

**II. The Future is of More Value Than the Present (4:17).**

Paul's physical suffering for Christ made him spiritually strong and it also enriched his eternal reward.

Paul and all persecuted believers through the years have been able to view earth through heaven's eyes.

He calls suffering a **light affliction which is for a moment**. In other-words, easy to bear and insignificant in light of eternity.

**1 Peter 1:6-7**, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: (7) That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

These trials and troubles produce for us **an eternal weight of glory**- The capacity to praise and glorify God. The eternal weight of glory is so much greater than the suffering of this life (far more exceeding).

Our faithfulness, loyalty and commitment to Christ and our response to the trials of life will add to the eternal weight of glory.

So we don't lose sight of our future glory.

**I. The Spiritual is of More Value Than the Physical.**

**II. The Future is of More Value Than the Present (4:17).**

**III. The Eternal is of More Value Than the Temporal (4:18).**

Paul kept his eyes on eternity and had a heavenly perspective (4:13-14).

How can we have this same focus? We must look in the right direction "*while we look.*"

1. We look not at the things that are seen (temporal), but at the things that are unseen (eternal).

2. The seen will not last and will perish one day, they are the things of **time**. The things not seen are eternal and will last for all eternity.

The allurements of this passing world system- money, possessions, and fame are measurements of success by the world.

What is eternal here in this context? The triune God, holy angels, the believer's home, and the souls of men.

Paul's passion for souls can be seen in two passages.

**Rom. 9:1-4**, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, (2) That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

(3) For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: (4) Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;

**2 Tim. 2:10**, "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

What is the secret of endurance? Focus on the inner man, the future that awaits you, and set your heart on the eternal.

As you go through life and **take that look** [v. 18] ask yourself three questions.

1. Does this strengthen my inner man?
2. Is this an eternal weight of glory?
3. Is this seen or unseen?