

Slide 1

Heaven Will Surely Be Worth It All

2 CORINTHIANS 4:13-18

Introduction

1. What is it about the Christian life which makes it worth living?
2. Why do Christians, the world over, choose to suffer for their faith at the hands of those who intend them harm?
3. Why do Christians make sacrifices for the sake of others day in and day out?
4. Why do we as Christians continue to do good to our fellow man, even when it may not seem to be appreciated?
5. If these are questions you have asked yourself in your walk with Christ, please know that you are not alone.
6. Others, down through the ages, have asked the same questions.
7. Some like a fellow worker of the apostle Paul, known as Demas, may choose the world over their faith (2 Timothy 4:10).
8. Others, however, fix their eyes on Jesus and continue to press forward running with endurance the race which God has set before them.
9. In so doing, they do not become weary of doing good (Galatians 6:9).
10. Today, I hope to encourage each of you to . . .
 - a. Keep living the life which God has called you to live.
 - b. Keep pressing on “toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14).
11. The apostle Paul serves as our example.
12. Twice in 2 Corinthians 4, first in verse one and again in verse sixteen he speaks of not losing heart, not giving up, not quitting.
13. Last month we examined verses 5-10 of this chapter and especially Paul’s

description of the suffering which he and the other apostles experienced for their proclamation of the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:8-10).

“we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.” (2 Corinthians 4:8–10, NASB95)

14. What is it that kept Paul from losing heart, from giving up?
15. I believe the answers are found in the verses which serve as our text for this morning.
 - a. First, it was something which Paul believed.
 - b. Second, was the hope of what lay ahead.
16. Let’s look more closely at the text before us in order to learn more about . . .
 - a. What we believe.
 - b. What gives us hope.

Slide 2

I. What We Believe

A. WHAT THE PSALMIST BELIEVED

“I believed, therefore I spoke” (2 Corinthians 4:13; Psalm 116:10)

1. When Paul penned these words, he was quoting the psalmist in Psalm 116:10.
2. Paul saw a connection between his own suffering for the cause of the gospel and the suffering of the psalmist.

Slide 3

3. In verse 3 of the psalm the psalmist wrote of his own despair,
“The cords of death encompassed me
And the terrors of Sheol came upon me;
I found distress and sorrow.”

4. He called out to the Lord to save his life (v. 4), and the Lord responded.

3a

5. In verses 8-9 he was able to declare,

“For You have rescued my soul from death,

My eyes from tears,

My feet from stumbling.

I shall walk before the Lord

In the land of the living.”

6. Here in verse 13 of our text Paul said that he had “the same spirit of faith” as the psalmist and thus spoke about what he believed.

Slide 4

B. LIKE PAUL, WE BELIEVE . . .

1. The same God who raised His Son from the dead will also raise us on the last day.

“knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you” (2 Corinthians 4:14).

- a. In 1 Thessalonians 4:14, Paul wrote that “God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus” (i.e., died as Christians).
- b. Jude, at the end of his letter, said that God “is able to keep you [and I] from stumbling, and to make [us] stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy” (Jude 24, NASB95).

Slide 5

2. All that we do for others as God’s servants will result in the giving of thanks to the glory of God.

“For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God” (2 Corinthians 4:15).

- a. Earlier, in verse 11, Paul had indicated that His suffering was for Jesus’

sake.

- b. Here, he said it was for the sake of the Christians in Corinth.
 - c. All that you and I do for the sake of Christ is so that God's grace — His unmerited goodness and kindness — may spread to more and more people and result in the giving of thanks, to the glory of God.
 - d. I have shared this point with you before, but I would like to emphasize it again.
 - e. Jesus said that you and I are to "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).
3. Do you believe that . . .
 - a. God will raise you on the last day so that you may be presented before Him as a part of Christ's church?
 - b. All that you are doing now for Christ's sake will cause God's grace to spread to more and more people and ultimately bring glory to God?

Slide 6

II. What Gives Us Hope For The Future?

A. OUR INWARD PREPARATION FOR SOMETHING GREAT TO COME

"Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16, NASB95).

1. When Paul speaks of our "outer man," he is speaking of our physical body and mind which, as he says, is "decaying" (NASB), "wasting away" (ESV, NIV84).
2. Many of you can speak to this fact.
3. This past week, one of our members asked me when "Arthur was born" — he was referring to his arthritis and the fact that the cold made his body ache!
4. As we age, we find that . . .

- a. The printed words on many pages seems smaller than it used to be.
 - b. People around us don't speak as loudly or clearly as they once did.
 - c. Many things are made heavier now than years ago.
5. The truth is our bodies are deteriorating — we are growing weak and feeble.
 6. What gives us hope is the fact that our soul and spirit, that which is the real person, “is being renewed day by day.”
 7. Earlier, in 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul said that we are “being transformed into the same image” as our glorious Lord (cf. 1 John 3:2).
 8. It is this daily transformation which gives us hope, increases our faith and causes us to be optimistic about what awaits us.

Slide 7**B. THE ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY THAT AWAITS US**

“For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison” (2 Corinthians 4:17).

1. Notice that Paul makes a connection between the affliction we experience here and the glory that is to come.
2. Our afflictions prepare us for the glory that awaits us.
3. Paul addresses this same theme in his letter to the Christians in Rome (Romans 8:16-17).

“The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.” (Romans 8:16–17, NASB95)

- a. He said the Holy Spirit testifies to three things — we are “children of God . . . heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.”
- b. He then inserts a condition — “if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.”

- c. Before we can be glorified, we must suffer with Him.
4. In verse 18, Paul adds this statement, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Romans 8:18).
5. There are two things which Paul is telling us in Romans 8:18 and here in 2 Corinthians 4:17:
 - a. First, compared to what is coming, the affliction and trouble and hardship which we experience as Christians is relatively slight.
 - b. Second, any trial, pain, isolation, heartache or whatever else we may experience as we carry our cross cannot begin to compare to the glory that awaits us.
 - 1) As Paul said, it is “an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.”
 - 2) It is indescribable.

Slide 8**C. OUR FOCUS ON THE UNSEEN**

“While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:18).

1. Seven verses after this verse, in 2 Corinthians 5:7, Paul wrote, “for we walk by faith, not by sight.”
2. In Hebrews 11:1, the writer tells us that “faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”
3. What is here, what we see around us is temporary, it will one day be gone.
 - a. It will be replaced by “a glory” which the apostle Peter says in 1 Peter 5:4, “will never fade away.”
 - b. It is “an eternal glory” which he adds six verses later is found “in Christ.”
4. As Christians, you and I “keep seeking the things above, where Christ is

seated at the right hand of God.” (Colossians 3:1).

5. We “set [our minds] on the things above, not on the things that are on earth,” because, as Paul wrote in Colossians 3:3, we “have died and [our] life is hidden with Christ in God.”
6. Where is your focus? Is it on Christ and the things which are above?

Conclusion

Slide 9

1. Near the end of Paul’s second letter to Timothy, the letter which he wrote just before his death, he penned these words, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7).
2. It is evident from these words that Paul did not “lose heart,” he did not give up and quit — he remained true to the end.
3. Will you do the same?
4. If so there is “an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison” which awaits you.
5. In addition to that there is “the crown of righteousness” which, according to Paul, “the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to [you] on that day” (2 Timothy 4:8).
6. I promise you that Heaven will surely be worth all the affliction and hardship you experience here while serving our Lord.
7. If you haven’t submitted your life to Him in obedient faith, why not do so today?