

2 Corinthians 4:17 THE WEIGHT AND WORK OF AFFLICTION

INTRO/REVIEW:

READ: 16-18.

THE AMPLIFIED: 17. For our light, momentary affliction (this slight distress of the passing hour) is ever more and more abundantly preparing and producing and achieving for us an everlasting weight of glory [beyond all measure, excessively surpassing all comparisons and all calculations, a vast and transcendent glory and blessedness never to cease!],

- Let's first notice the verse begins with the word FOR:
- "For" explains the third reason why Paul does not lose heart. The first was the fact that he would be raised with Jesus. The second is; even through his body was deteriorating from age and adversity, his inner man was being daily transformed being conformed to the image of God's Son
- And the third reason, which we look at today is; his trials, afflictions, sufferings and labors are working for him something eternally glorious.
- 1) AFFLICTIONS ARE LIGHT.
- 2) AFFLICTIONS ARE TEMPORARY.
- 3) AFFLICTIONS ARE WORKING.
- 4) AFFLICTIONS PROCURE REWARDS OF THE FAITHFUL BELIEVER.

1) AFFLICTIONS ARE LIGHT.

- AFFLICTION: to crush, press together, squash, hem in, compress, squeeze, oppression, affliction, tribulation, distress, straits. Anything which burdens the spirit
- It is the Greek word; Thlipsis and it is a strong term which does not refer to minor inconveniences, but to real hardships. Same word that in other places is translated "tribulation."
- Afflictions of life are intended by God to make us better not bitter! They are for our good and His glory (and our glory!).
- LIGHT: light in weight, easy to bear, The only other usage in the N. T. is Mt. 11:30; come unto Me, My burden light
- 1. Affliction is light—in comparison to SIN.
- 2. Affliction is light—in comparison of HELL.
- 3. Affliction is light—in comparison of GLORY
- Look at Paul's list of afflictions. Which of them seem light to me?
 - **2 Cor. 1:8-10, 2 Cor. 11:23-28**
- Paul lumps all his many labors, afflictions, sufferings etc. under the one heading; "light affliction." Singular.
- Are any trials I am facing or have faced on Paul's list?

2) AFFLICTIONS ARE MOMENTARY/TEMPORARY.

- **MOMENTARY:** the meaning is not, however, simply that of brief duration, transient, soon passing away, but also that which is present with us now or immediate, at this very moment, in contrast to the future glory.
- Only used this time in the N.T.
- It is not based on or measured by clock time, or earth time, but in comparison to eternity.
- Life here is but a vapor, James 4:14; Amplified: Yet you do not know [the least thing] about what may happen tomorrow. What is the nature of your life? You are [really] but a wisp of vapor (a puff of smoke, a mist) that is visible for a little while and then disappears [into thin air].

3) AFFLICTIONS ARE WORKING FOR US.

- Our afflictions are working for us an eternal benefit.
- **WORKING:** It means to work out fully and thoroughly, to accomplish or achieve an end (implying thoroughness), to finish or carry something to its conclusion. To work so as to bring something to fulfillment or successful completion and implies doing something with thoroughness.
 - Rom. 5:3, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance;
 - Jam. 1:3; knowing that the testing of your faith produces ¹patience, perseverance.
- Our afflictions and sufferings for the call and cause of Christ will be a means of our heavenly eternal reward.
- WE do not lose heart because we know, we recon by faith, on the fact that in comparison to the weight of the eternal benefit, these afflictions are light.
- It means to do that from which something results. it always means to complete the effort and the work begun –
- Paul is saying God is not going to stop halfway in producing this glory but in fact is going to go beyond our human expectations, for "*He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.*"
- "We do not lose heart because we know, we recon on the fact that in comparison to the eternal benefit these afflictions will bring. They are light, minimal compared to the treasure, the overwhelming excessively greater glory that they are procuring for us and this glory is eternal.
 - **Mt. 19:28, 29.** for My name's sake,
 - 1 Cor. 15:58 be steadfast, unmovable...labor not in vain in the Lord.
 - 1 Peter 1:6, 7; ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,
 - **Rev. 3:14-22** Buy from me gold refined in fire.....

- **These sufferings, our sufferings are not meritorious. They are not self-inflicted pain or loss, (lent) they are the afflictions that come upon a Christian in their life, in the will of God and for the will of God. The cost of following Him as a true soldier.**
 - **Lk. 6:22** Blessed are you when persecuted.
- **John MacArthur makes an important distinction commenting that...the only suffering that produces the eternal weight of glory is suffering for the sake of Christ, or that honors Him. Whether suffering comes from believers' faithful, loyal, committed testimony about Jesus Christ, or the patient enduring of life's normal trials, such as disease, divorce, poverty, and loneliness, if endured with a humble, grateful, God-honoring attitude, it will add to the eternal weight of glory.**
- **In Paul's case they were incurred as he fulfilled his calling to the ministry of preaching the new covenant and reconciliation to a holy God by through the substitutionary death of Christ Jesus on the cross.**
- **Thomas Watson says; Affliction is a means to make us happy. It seems strange to flesh and blood—that affliction should make us happy. When Moses saw the bush burning and not consumed, he said, "I will turn aside and see this strange sight!" Exod 3:3. Likewise, here is a strange sight—a man afflicted, and yet happy. The world counts them happy—who can escape affliction; but truly happy is the man whom God corrects.**
- **How do afflictions contribute to our happiness?**
- **Afflictions make us happy—as they are a means of bringing us nearer to God. The achieving of prosperity does not draw us so near to God, as the cords of affliction.**
- **When the prodigal was pinched with need, he said, "I will arise—and go to my father!" Luke 15:18. As the deluge brought the dove to the ark—the floods of sorrow make us hasten to Christ, our ark!**
- **Afflictions make us happy—as they are safe guides to glory. The storm drives the ship into the harbor. Blessed storm—which drives the soul into the heavenly harbor!**
- **Is it not better—to go through momentary affliction to eternal glory—than to go through momentary pleasure to eternal misery? The wicked must drink a sea of wrath; but the godly have only a cup of affliction.**
- **Afflictions are often God's best blessings sent in disguise because affliction, like the iron-smith, shapes as it smites. Affliction is also God's shepherd dog to drive us back to the fold. PS. 119:67,71 Before I was afflicted I went astray, it is good for me that I have been afflicted that I may learn your statutes.**
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- **PS 84:5-7 Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, ⁶As they pass through the Valley of Baca, They make it a spring;**
- **Afflictions also work for us as they have a tendency to wean us from this world**
- **To purify the heart putting to death the old man, the self-life.**

- **Cause us to turn our mind and hearts heavenward and away from earth.**
- **They teach us the vanity of the things of this life.**
- **They teach us the fragility of life and it's shortness.**
- **They keep us watchful and reverent to God who holds us in the palm of His hand, He is unchanging, He is the sovereign Lord.**