

Light and Momentary Suffering

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:13-18

I. Your present suffering is light and momentary because of your resurrection hope.

- A. The apostle Paul is not saying that your present suffering isn't real and that it isn't hard. In vs. 13 he quotes a portion of Psalm 116:8-10. The psalmist prayed in faith that God would deliver him from death. And God did. Paul then is going to use the promises of Psalm 116 to strengthen his own faith in a time of suffering. It is the resurrection that gives Paul hope in his suffering (vs. 14). Christians have a resurrection hope. Your life will not end in suffering. Your life will go on forever with great joy in the presence of Jesus.

II. Your present suffering is light and momentary because you have a worthy purpose.

- A. Paul speaks to our purpose as Christians in vs. 15: "For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God." When Paul spoke to people about Jesus, the grace of God was extending to more and more people. More people were being saved from God's judgment. As a result, those new Christians were thanking God for their salvation, and they were giving glory to God for saving them. Paul's whole life was about bringing glory and praise to God. That was his purpose.

III. Your present suffering is light and momentary because of your daily renewal.

- A. Paul writes about this renewal in vs. 16: "So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day." Our outer self, our bodies, are wasting away. But there is at the very same time an unseen reality taking place within me. Paul says that I am being renewed day by day. What kind of renewal? Paul writes about this renewal in Colossians 3:10: **"(You) have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator."** Jesus is making Christians new spiritually every day.

IV. Your present suffering is light and momentary because of your coming glory.

- A. In verse 17, Paul writes, "For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison." The future glory is so much greater and heavier than the present suffering. And the present suffering comes with an expiration date. Suffering ends when God brings His people home to heaven. But how long will the glory last that God shares with us? Forever and ever. The present suffering, as hard it is, is light and momentary compared to the eternal glory.

Application:

Fix your eyes of faith on the unseen spiritual realities to get your suffering in perspective.

Sources:

The Bible

Commentaries by Trent Casto, David Garland, and Gary Millar.

Sermon Discussion Questions

- 1) What helps you keep your suffering in perspective? What role did the hope of the resurrection play in helping Paul see his suffering as light and momentary?
- 2) Your suffering is not pointless. What is your purpose even when you go through a season of suffering? What is God doing in you when you suffer?
- 3) Which carries more weight for Paul: his present suffering or his coming glory? How long will the glory that God shares with us last?