

Series: 2 Corinthians

Title: Working For Us to Work Us For

Text: 2 Corinthians 4: 16-5: 8

Date: June 25, 2017

Place: SGBC, New Jersey

2 Corinthians 4: 17: For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;...

2 Corinthians 5: 5: Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God,...

Scripture says man is “*born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.*” But in the believer’s affliction, God is working trouble *for us* in order to *work us for glory.*

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Proposition: God works affliction for his people in order to work his people for eternal glory.

A couple weeks ago, Art lead us in this hymn:

“Swift to its close
Ebbs out life’s little day
Its joys grow dim
Its glories fade away.

Change and decay
In all around I see
O Thou that changest not
Abide with me.”

By afflictions, God makes the glories of this world fade. And God turns us from things below to Christ our *eternal Life* at God’s right hand.

WORKING FOR US

2 Corinthians 4: 17: For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory;

Believer, always try to remember that God is working our afflictions for us.

In case anyone thinks the apostle Paul is being insensitive to your affliction by calling them light, notice, he includes himself. And Paul knew affliction.

2 Corinthians 11: 24: Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one. 25: Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26: *In* journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own* countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; 27: In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. 28: Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

But our affliction is light *compared to what we deserve.* A great deal of sorrow in our affliction comes from feeling like we deserve better.

Psalm 103: 10: He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

Our affliction is light *compared to others.* When we are afflicted, God tells us to behold the great cloud of witnesses in our fathers and mothers.

Hebrews 11: 35...others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; 36: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; 38: (Of whom the world was not worthy:)

Our affliction is light *compared to what our Substitute suffered on our behalf.*

Isaiah 52: 14:...his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

Lamentations 1: 12:...behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted *me* in the day of his fierce anger.

Hebrews 12: 13: For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 14: 4: Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

The affliction Christ endured on the cross was not light and it was not for a moment. But by his affliction, he worked for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory because “*with his stripes we are healed!*”

ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY

2 Corinthians 4: 17: For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

The chief point of our text is that our affliction is light when compared with what these afflictions are working for us. They are working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. For instance, the affliction God worked for us in conversion, when he made us see we are nothing but sin, was light and for a moment. But by it, he worked for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Romans 8: 1: *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2: For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Now, by the grace of God, Christ is seeing to it *that in this world* his name is glorified in us so that *in the next world* we shall be glorified in him.

Rom 8: 16: The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19: For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

In this life, Christ glorifies his name in us by revealing himself in his lost sheep through the gospel we preach. And also by sustaining us in all our affliction. And there is coming a day when Christ shall glorify his people with his own glory as he makes manifest that we are true children of God.

2 Thessalonians 1: 3: We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; 4: So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure: 5: Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer: 6: Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; 7: And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8: In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; 10: When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. 11: Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: 12: That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We do not suffer nearly as much as the early church. Still, *God counts us worthy of his calling* by making us suffer for the sake of Christ. It is God “*fulfilling all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:*” By our light affliction God is doing these two things the Psalmist rejoiced in,

Psalm 73:24: Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.

JC Philpot said, “He means to conform you to the image of His Son in *glory*—therefore He now conforms you to the image of His Son in *suffering.*”

TURNED

2 Corinthians 4: 18: 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. 5: 1: For

we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

The afflictions work for us because by them God turns us from the temporary to the eternal.

How do we see these eternal things which are not seen? By the Treasure we have in these earthen vessels.

2 Cor 5: 7: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

Hebrews 11:1: Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

By faith—we have the substance, the evidence of things not seen—by faith *we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*—Job knew this by faith.

Job 19: 25: For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: 26: And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God: 27: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me.

Likewise, by faith, we know

1 John 3:2: Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

So brethren the way we *endure affliction* is by looking at Christ with the eye of faith.

Hebrews 11:27: By faith [Moses] forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

WORKING US FOR GLORY

2 Cor 5: 2: For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: 3: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. 4: For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life...6: Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:...8: We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Lastly, believer, remember the more God works this *for us* the more *he works us for* eternal glory.

By these afflictions, God makes us behold more and more that Christ is our Life so that we desire to be with Christ more and more. It is not that we groan because we merely desire to be free from the burden of sin and suffering, though we do. But in the fiery trial of faith—we groan, we struggle, we sorrow and sigh; we believe against unbelief, we hope against hope, we look to the Lord, though everything in nature would steal our expectations of beholding Christ!

One old preacher said, “A sanctified person, is like a silver bell, the harder he is smitten, the better he sounds.”

Thomas Brooks, “God’s house of correction is His school of instruction.”

Samuel Rutherford, “When I am in the cellar of affliction, I look for the Lord’s choicest wines.”

The choicest wine is to desire more and more “*to be present with the Lord.*” As young believers we do not desire to be with the Lord nearly like we will. I asked my believing grandmother what it is like being close to 90 years old. She said, “*I don’t make any long range plans because I expect the Lord to take me home anytime.*” At 47 years old, with a beautiful wife and two young children, and a church to minister to, I can’t say that like she does. But the more God works me for glory the more I will.

God is working these afflictions *for us* to *work us for*—to prepare us for—eternal glory—2 Corinthians 4: 17: our light affliction, which is but for a moment, *worketh for us* a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;...2 Corinthians 5: 5: Now he that hath *wrought us for* the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

The Lord said, “*Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.*” To behold Christ’s glory is the “*far more exceeding eternal weight of glory*” that the Apostle speaks of. It is not merely freedom from sin and sorrow but beholding and enjoying that unutterable glory which the Father gave to Christ. It is beholding all the glory of Godhead

revealed and shining through Christ's glorified human nature. This glory is reserved for the saints of God to enjoy when we shall see him as he is, and know even also as we are known.

God has given us the guarantee that he shall bring us into that eternal glory by giving us—*the earnest of the Spirit*.

Years ago, I bought a tank of gas and realized I did not have any cash. They did not take debit cards and I did not own a credit card. So while I went across the street to get money out of an ATM, I left my driver's license *as earnest to guarantee I would return*. An *earnest* is something you leave behind to guarantee someone you shall return. God has given us the earnest of the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 1: 22: [God] hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

Ephesians 1: 14: Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

By the Spirit of God we are given little glimpses of Christ's glory even now—to assure us of that glory to come! Now we behold Christ glory in his perfect obedience made ours. We behold glimpses of his glory in his righteousness imputed to us through faith. The Spirit makes us behold glimpses of Christ's glory in his holiness by which his indwelling Spirit makes our new inward man pure and believing. We behold the glory of his Resurrection in ruling all things for our good—even my present trial! So the Spirit gives us the earnest making us know that soon we shall behold him as he is!

Now, brethren, that gives meaning to everything we suffer as children of God. **Sinner, believe on Christ and forsake this Egypt! Endure with us by seeing him who is invisible and eternal!** Believer, as the Spirit of Christ uses these afflictions to make our "*outward man perish, our inward man be renewed day by day*" the more believers say from the heart, "*Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*" (Psalm 73:25-26).

Colossians 3: 1: If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2: Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3: For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

1 Peter 5: 10: the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle *you*.

How so?

Colossians 3: 4: When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Amen!