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**A1337 – September 15, 2013 – 2 Corinthians 4:13-18**  
**Present Light Affliction Incomparable To Eternal Weight Of**  
**Glory**

If you'd turn with me to 2 Cor 4 we will continue our exposition of this very powerful section on the ministry. I am personally very saddened by the fact that this Scripture is so neglected rather than preached with great fervor in our day as it is so very powerful and so very penetrating and so very needed to enliven the preaching of the gospel in our day. Paul in chapter 4 is expounding the work of the ministry that he received on the basis of mercy. Mercy is necessary because we don't deserve anything but death. But instead we receive life. This life is the proclamation of the new covenant gospel, that we have life on the basis of the new covenant blood shed by Christ. We proclaim this gospel merely by speaking the word, not adulterating it with modern methods of manipulation, just speaking the word; namely, that Christ has died for our sins according to the Scriptures and that He has been raised from the dead according to the Scriptures. As that simple message is preached the light of the gospel pierces hearts such that men believe and the Holy Spirit regenerates imparting a new nature and comes to indwell enabling them to live new lives. Recipients of this powerful gospel become bearers of it. We are like common pottery lamps but within us we bear the gospel treasure that shines forth *as we proclaim it*. Our weakness is contrasted to the gospel's greatness so that the life-changing power is seen to be of God and not us as He saves those who believe the message we proclaim. The gospel's adequacy and power does not therefore depend upon our adequacy but God's. In verse 8, proclaiming the gospel is dangerous business. We are pressed from all directions but we are not crushed; we are confused but not utterly confused; we are pursued but not abandoned; and we are knocked down but not to the point of perishing. This constant living under the threat of death is designed to make manifest Christ's life through our weakness. It's our weakness that bears testimony with the gospel that

demonstrates its power. So death works in us, Paul says, but life in you. The gospel minister seems to get nothing but death, frustration and dismay out of preaching but the strength to carry on invigorates others and so the story of the gospel goes. As Christ died to bring us life so as we die we bring life to others. It's a constant dying to self and living to God that is such a powerful life testimony to others and especially believers.

Verse 13 continues this theme of death-working sufferings associated with ministering the gospel. **But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I BELIEVED, THEREFORE I SPOKE," we also believe, therefore we also speak, 14 knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you.** His point is that even though it's dangerous to speak the gospel he has to speak what he believes; and since he believes the gospel he has to speak the gospel because he knows that in the end, no matter what happens to him, Christ has been raised and therefore he will be raised. In verse 13 he says, **having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written.** He means by **the same Spirit of faith** the Holy Spirit who engenders faith **according to what is written** in the word of God. It's the Holy Spirit working in accordance with the Scripture that results in our having faith in the Scriptures. So even though **spirit** is not capitalized in the NASB it should be because it's the Holy Spirit who engenders faith **according to what is written.** As we hear what is written the Holy Spirit is at work to stimulate faith in what is written. He did this at the first instant of faith when we were unbelievers and we heard the gospel and believed, at which moment we were justified in heaven; the Spirit continues to do this repeatedly for believers as we hear the Scriptures and are sanctified on earth. It's a work that the Spirit does in conjunction with what is written for faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. He prompts us to believe.

Then in verse 13 Paul quotes from the OT. Where does his quote come from? It's a short quote but it's a precise quote from the Greek version of the OT known as the LXX, a word-for-word quote. **"I BELIEVED, THEREFORE I SPOKE."** Where does it come from? Ps 116:10.<sup>i</sup> What's the subject of Ps 116? Deliverance; deliverance from our enemies. The author was encompassed by his enemies, the terrors of the grave surrounded him and yet he did not remain silent because he believed and therefore he spoke. He could have doubted and remained silent but he believed and therefore he spoke. Paul is

picking up this Psalm because of the similar dangers he faced in preaching the gospel. He too was encompassed by his enemies but he was compelled to speak the gospel nonetheless because he believed it, it was true. What he believed and what he spoke was the gospel. The gospel has foes; it is offensive to those who are the enemies of God so should we then be silenced because of fear? No, if we believe it we are compelled to speak it even in the midst of its enemies. In congress, in the public school system, in the courts. Why? Because it is this very offensive gospel that the Holy Spirit uses to turn the enemies of God into the friends of God, the very truth Paul is aiming for at 5:20.

The gospel by its very nature is offensive because it says that the only one who ever pleased God is Jesus Christ and that by trusting in Him you can please God because of your faith association with Him. This is why the ministries that are soft peddling and downplaying the gospel for fear that they might offend someone are doing far more harm than good. There are actually ministries, for example, that are almost solely dedicated to criticizing young earth creationist organizations because they claim that if we maintain this position we are turning people away from God. Their reasoning is that a young earth position is not palatable to modern people and therefore we are turning them away from God on an issue that is not relevant to the gospel. So we ought to just accommodate to evolution and long ages since people will more readily identify with us and then be more open to accepting our message about Jesus. The problem, of course, is what Jesus are you talking about? The Jesus who created by evolution?<sup>ii</sup> The Jesus who brought about millions of years of death before the Fall of man such that death is not the result of sin? In which case Jesus' death can't be for sin. Now all we have is a weak Jesus dying a martyr's death on a cross. And that is not the gospel. That is not the Jesus of the Bible. The Jesus of the Bible is the Jesus who created the cosmos entirely good and who created Adam in His own image but by rebellion brought the entire human race under the bondage of sin and death so that Jesus came into the world free from sin through the virgin Mary and died for the sin of the whole world so that we may be set free from sin and death. That gospel is offensive to the natural man. He will have none of it, so if we downplay the offensive elements of the gospel to try and get gospel hearing we don't get to preach the gospel at all; we preach humanism, that man is essentially good and you can choose Jesus if you like, He might do you some good, it won't hurt so just add Jesus to all your other beliefs.

Absolutely this will not do. Paul says the Holy Spirit engenders faith according to what is written, not men's distorted versions of it, and what Paul believed he was compelled to speak no matter who might be offended. Why? I once preached a memorial here to probably 250+ people, more than half of which were Roman Catholic. And I looked at the issue of authority and whether authority was vested in the Scripture, in which case I follow the Scripture, or in the Church, in which case I follow the official Church interpretation. That is a very big difference. Am I following the word of God or the men who followed the men who followed the men who go back in a big long chain of so-called apostolic succession? And then I addressed the issue of the substitutionary blood atonement and whether Christ did all that was necessary and therefore I am justified by faith alone in Him or whether Christ did most of what was necessary and through keeping the sacraments I am gradually justified. These are very different gospels and only one saves. Some people really didn't like that message and I knew they wouldn't. But why did I preach that offensive message? Because it's the gospel that is the power of God unto salvation and whom shall I fear? If God is with me, who can be against me? What's the worst that can happen? They beat me to death in the alley. Big whoopidooda.

That doesn't bother me one bit. Why? Because verse 14, I know something along with Paul, **knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you.** In other words, I have knowledge. Paul operated off of knowledge and I operate off of knowledge. Knowledge of an event that happened in space and time that changed the world forever; the resurrection. Jesus has been raised. And therefore because I'm going to be raised too. I'm acting on knowledge, faith is not blind, faith is not the absence of knowledge, faith is acting on knowledge. And because I know that Christ has been raised then I believe and I speak the gospel in a hostile environment. What's the worst thing that can happen? They kill our body and our spirit goes immediately into the presence of the Lord until the day of the pre-trib rapture when we will be raised. It's no problem. We know this is coming because Christ has been raised, so speak the gospel without fear.

Then at the end of verse 14 there is an interesting expression, after he says God will raise us also with Jesus he says **He will present us with you.** What is this presentation? The word **present** is a legal word that means to

“bring before (a judge).” He has in mind the fact that we will be brought to the judgment seat of Christ, another subject he is leading to in 5:10. Christ is the judge. John 5:22, “For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son.” Believers only will be brought to this judgment, it’s Paul and the believers at Corinth; so it’s not a judgment to see whether people are saved or not; it’s a judgment of believers to see whether they receive rewards or not.

So then, *after* we are resurrected, and the *after* is very important because it conveys a sequence, *after* we are resurrected then we will be brought before our judge Jesus Christ for rewards. This sequence at the end of verse 14 is an important aside to the main argument Paul is making, it’s one way of solving the question of whether the believer’s sin will be an issue at the judgment seat of Christ. Believers down through church history have wondered what if I die without confessing my sin? How is that going to affect me at the judgment? Am I going to have to face judgment for my sin? That’s why Emperor Constantine in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD wasn’t water baptized until just before he died. He believed that water baptism washed away sins so if that’s your belief when do you want to get water baptized? Right before you die. That way you can sin all you want before you die and have it all washed away right at the end. It’s the same reason Roman Catholicism has a sacrament called unction, it’s when the priest is administering your last rights, confessing your sins for you on your death bed. They don’t want to die with any unconfessed sin that you’ll have to burn off in purgatory (which doesn’t even exist anyway). But these are examples of people trying to deal with this problem of what about the believer’s sin when he dies? I’m going to give you three arguments why no sin will be brought up at the judgment seat of Christ (which does exist). The first one is we will be raised before we go to the judgment seat of Christ and there is no sin in the resurrection. Since no sin is in the resurrection then no sin can possibly be brought up at the judgment seat of Christ. That’s the argument of this verse, it’s based on the sequence of events, resurrection first, then judgment seat of Christ second. The second argument is that we have been positionally forgiven of all sins and in the resurrection our experience conforms to our position. So God will only be looking at us positionally. Since positionally we are as righteous as Christ then there can be no sin without attributing sin to Christ. Therefore the second argument is that no sin will be brought up because we will be as righteous as Christ. The third argument is that all judgment is based on

works and not sin. No judgments in the Bible are based on sin; they are all based on works. No one, believer or unbeliever, will be judged for their sins. Why? Because Christ was already judged for the sins of the whole world. Therefore the only thing left to judge is our works. So for at least three reasons when we are presented before Christ at the judgment seat no sin will be brought up; first we are resurrected, second our position, third judgment is based on works.

Now returning to Paul's argument, his point in vv 13-14 is that the Holy Spirit prompted me to believe and that which I believe I must speak, even in a hostile environment because I know the gospel is offensive but that is what the Spirit uses to break through hard hearts and God has raised Christ and will raise me and present me with all other believers at the judgment seat of Christ so I just preach the word!

Pressing on to verse 15. **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.** These are the results of preaching the gospel while enduring sufferings. All his sufferings because of the gospel are for others. He's selfless, not selfish. Preaching the gospel no matter if people stone you, beat you, whip you, hate you. Why? **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.** The glory of God is the end. There's a chain here to get to the glory of God but the glory of God is the aim of history. The first link in the chain is that as Paul suffered for preaching the gospel **more and more people** believed the gospel. The second link in the chain is that as more and more people believed the gospel this formed a larger group of people to give **thanks** to God. The third link in the chain is that with more thanks being offered to God it brings more glory to God. Therefore, if we are selfless, if we really realize what God has done for us in the gospel, it only makes sense that we would be willing to suffer for the gospel because it causes grace to reach more people so that they can be added to Christ's church and give more thanks that echoes into eternity to the glory of God.

Verse 16, **Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.** We don't **lose heart** in our duty of preaching the gospel because it returns to the glory

of God. At the same time a benefit is returning to us as well. He says, **though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.** The **outer man** refers to the material body, the organs, the muscles, the flesh, everything that composes your material body. And he says it's **decaying**, it's falling apart. Most of us can identify. There's a decay factor over time, we're dying. Paul, however is talking about dying because of opposition due to the gospel; because of the beatings, the hunger, the sleepless nights, all the persecutions. Yet, he says, **our inner man is being renewed day by day.** By the **inner man** he refers to the immaterial spirit, the regenerate nature. And he says it **is being renewed day by day**, that is, the regenerate human spirit is still developing.<sup>iii</sup> Your body can be damaged and killed by the enemies of the gospel but one thing the gospel enemies cannot touch is the **inner man**, the regenerate human spirit. Now this expression **inner man** is used by Paul in two other passages. First, in Romans 7 Paul uses the expression **inner man** to refer to the regenerate human spirit that we receive at the moment of faith alone in Christ alone. He says this regenerate spirit delights in the law of God and that through it he is able to serve the law of God with his mind as he sets his mind on the things of the Spirit. Second, in Ephesians 3:16 he prays that the believer's **inner man** would be strengthened. Again he is referring to the regenerate human spirit and he credits the strengthening of the regenerate spirit to the indwelling Spirit of God. As our regenerate spirit is strengthened we have a greater capability to respond by faith in the growth process.

John doesn't use the expression **inner man** in his writings but he does refer to the regenerate nature. His expression is the born of God self. He teaches that the born of God self is a unique aspect of the believer that absolutely cannot sin because it is Christ's seed in the believer and in Christ there is no sin. So the regenerate nature has an impeccable quality to it. It cannot sin. We can still sin through our sin nature but we cannot sin through our regenerate nature because it is Christ's seed in us and in Christ there is no sin.

Now from Paul's prayer that our inner man would be strengthened and from John's command for us to live according to our born of God self I think what Paul means here by the **inner man being renewed day by day** is that the regenerate nature is growing in knowledge. Even though the regenerate nature cannot sin it can gain more and more knowledge by which to live by

day by day and I think that's what Paul is referring to. I think he's saying, my body is being beaten to a pulp more and more but my spirit is advancing in knowledge more and more through my sufferings for Christ's gospel.

So we as Christians have a unique thing that can take place that no non-Christian has; our bodies decay just like a non-Christian, but our regenerate human spirit can continue to advance day by day until the end of life, becoming more knowledgeable and stronger, a non-Christian doesn't have that, they decay both in body and in spirit. There's just one direction a non-Christian can go, and that's toward decay. The first law of thermodynamics says, "everything tends toward chaos and disorder unless there is an organizing system." The last part is important, "unless there is an organizing system." The point of this law is to say that unless there is an organizing system then everything is going to decay. Thank God that we have in the Holy Spirit an organizing system who works on our human spirit to make it stronger and more knowledgeable day by day by day. One of the applications of this, of course, is to focus on your human spirit and not your human body; the fixation of the culture is on the human body but the focus of the Christian should be on his human spirit because it will be reflected in our eternal body. That's where all this is going, the resurrection. There will be different degrees of glory in the resurrection body or we would say different qualities or abilities in the resurrection body. We will all have a resurrection body but they will not all be identical. They will all be wonderful but as star differs from star in glory so resurrection body will differ from resurrection body in glory. So an obvious application is that we focus on developing our human spirit because it will be reflected in our eternal resurrection body. And verse 17 is taking us to this very point.

**For momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison.** Now if you're a Christian and you are in this world, are you preaching the gospel or are you just living the nice, good, content life that results from keeping your politically incorrect big mouth shut? Paul's point here is that preaching the gospel is offensive, it brings opposition, it results in suffering but it's worth it because our regenerate spirits are strengthened through it and we're going to be raised. **So momentary light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison.** In other words, in the present, whatever affliction we face for preaching the gospel is incomparable to the **eternal**



**weight of glory** that we will enjoy in the resurrection. There's just no **comparison**. We have a hard time thinking from the eternal perspective, we have a hard time living in light of eternity, but that is what we are called to. Suffering now results in glory later. It was that way for Christ who suffered only later to return in glory and it is that way for those of us who follow Christ in His sufferings since it will return to us in glory. There's an economic aspect of our living. This life is an investment, how are you investing? The return is enjoyed in the next life. We don't all invest our lives wisely, those who invest them in the gospel despite opposition will enjoy great return in the next life.

So trouble now. Paul had great trouble. In chapter 1 he said that he faced extreme affliction even to the point of death, but here he classifies troubles in this life in a two-fold fashion. First, they are **momentary**; momentary meaning they are in the present world only. Since the present world is temporary then these afflictions are temporary. They may feel like they are going on forever since you have been afflicted for two years or ten or twenty but in reality they are temporary. Second, they are **light**; light meaning they are not heavy. They may feel heavy now, they may seem to be bearing you down but in reality they are light. I say this but to measure anything there must be a standard by which we are measuring. Paul is not measuring according to earthly things. His measuring tool is not a humanly devised standard. It is coming from above. It is coming from eternity. He is comparing now to eternity. In that light our afflictions are momentary because what is coming is **eternal**. Once we receive our resurrection body and exist in an eternal realm we will forever remain in that realm. Compared to eternity whatever you are afflicted with in his life is minimized extraordinarily because it is only momentary, temporary, fleeting, a moment. Second, compared with eternity our afflictions now are light since they will be overwhelmed by a resurrection body that is far weightier in glory in every respect to the body of any human being who has ever walked on the face of the earth. Your abilities then and your appearance then will be so superior to anything this world has ever seen that everyone who ever lived in this world will appear retarded and ugly. That is why you should live now, every moment for the glory of God by preaching the gospel; because the affliction you face now will be reflected in the glory of your eternal resurrection body. And there is no comparison at all between time and eternity. None, you won't even remember most of this world; you won't remember if some boy liked

your body or thought you were cute or if you won the 100 yd dash or had big muscles or had a big brain and won a UIL contest. It's not to say all those things are totally nothing, but in comparison to eternity and the resurrection body, they are nothing.

What are you looking at? Verse 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.**

What are you here for? What are you living for? What are you trying to accomplish? What are your priorities? If you are looking at this world you are looking at the wrong thing. This is not your home; this is your temporary residence. You are to look to eternity, live for eternity. There are a million applications of this to your life. What are you living for? Time or eternity? This house is but an earthly tent. The heavenly tent will dwell forever. I don't know what to tell you other than spend this life wisely because the days are evil. Invest your life for the cause of the gospel for the time is short. This world is passing way but a new age is dawning that will never pass away. Therefore look with the eyes of the inner man beyond the present world to eternity, and live in light of it. You've only got one life, how are you going to live it? You can't go back and change anything. What you can do is change today. Who are you living for? Christ or self. What are you doing here? Who gives your life meaning and purpose? Who saved you and gave you His own life? Are you taking that for granted?

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<sup>i</sup> LXX Ps 115:10.

<sup>ii</sup> This position of "creation by evolution" is held by *Biologos*.

<sup>iii</sup> Constable, T. (2003). *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (2 Co 4:16). Galaxie Software.

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