

## Preached on 10/22/23 at GBC - Ruston

### "Our LIGHT Affliction, Pt.3"

### II Cor.4:13-18

Paul told those at Galatia – “***I am crucified with Christ: NEVERTHELESS I LIVE; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.***”(Gal.2:20) After Christ met Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, He sent Ananias to tell him what the Lord had purposed for his life – “*But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake.*”(Acts 9:15,16) Paul had come to experience in his life exactly what our Lord had promised – “[We are] *troubled on every side, yet not distressed; [we are] perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you.*”(II Cor.4:8-12) **Here’s the thing we must learn from this:** What Paul experienced “*for His name’s sake*” is exactly what is promised to **ALL GOD’S REDEEMED** in every generation – “*These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*”(Jn.16:33); “*Confirming the souls of the disciples, [and] exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*”(Acts 14:22) Persecution and tribulation “*for His name’s sake*” isn’t something reserved only for OT saints, or the Apostles, or only those saints around the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. In order to make this truth clear, the Holy Spirit moved Paul to quote King David’s words from Ps.44:22 to those at Rome – “*As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*”(Rom.8:22) His goal by declaring these words in these chapters we’re looking at was to confirm the souls of God’s elect in what they actually possess due to their oneness with Christ as their Surety, Substitute, Savior and Redeemer, as well as to encourage them to see these tribulations for righteousness sake, not as a curse, but a confirmation of them being “*in Christ.*” This is the role of all God’s servants in every generation – “*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD’S hand double for all her sins.*”(Isa.40:1,2)

Let’s pick up this morning with Vss.13,14 – “***We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present [us] with you.***” By these words, “*we having the same spirit of faith*”, Paul wasn’t merely speaking of the doctrines set forth in the Scripture, but was speaking specifically of the **GRACE OF FAITH**, meaning a God-given belief in the doctrines set forth in the Gospel concerning the **PERSON** and **WORK** of Christ, as well as an exercise of that gift of grace concerning the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ – “*Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*”(Rom.4:25) Keep in mind what Paul had told these same Corinthian believers in his previous epistle concerning the significance of the resurrection – **Turn over to I Cor.15:12-18**. In these verses we just read, as well as the words in our text, **particularly vs.14**, Paul tells us this

“*same spirit of faith*” regards a looking by true faith with full assurance that all God’s redeemed will be resurrected from the dead because of **WHO** promised and guaranteed it – “*Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present [us] with you.*” **This is so important:** Paul stated of himself and all God’s redeemed - “***WE HAVING the same spirit of faith***”. The original word translated “*we having*” means ‘to have, i.e. to hold, or to POSSESS’. Here’s the same word: “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me **hath** everlasting life.*”(Jn.6:47); “*He that believeth on the Son of God **hath** the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.*”(I Jn.5:10); “***He that hath*** the Son ***hath*** life; [and] ***he that hath*** not the Son of God ***hath*** not life. *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye **have** eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*”(I Jn.5:12,13) **ALL GOD’S REDEEMED** aren’t hoping to have or striving to gain “*the same spirit of faith*” – **THEY POSSESS IT**, even in these “*vessels of clay*”. To confirm this Paul references King David’s words in **Ps.116:10** – “*according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken.*” I would encourage you to go and read **Psalm 116**. King David was in great distress and affliction when he cried these words, **YET HE BELIEVED GOD**. Paul declares the same of himself and all who believe God’s promise – “*we also believe, and therefore speak*’. This brings to my mind those words so many can quote – “*For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: **for I know WHOM I HAVE BELIEVED**, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.*”(II Tim.1:12) Because of **WHOM** Paul believed, he had confidence and assurance in the face of any trial or tribulation God sent his way, and he was encouraging us to do the same. We can only tell people about the God we know, and the promises of which we have assurance. Christ told Nicodemus – “*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.*”(Jn.3:11)

Listen to Paul’s next statement – “*For **all things** [are] for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.*” Paul couldn’t have made a more broad and comprehensive declaration! The scope of this “*all things*” reaches to all the things of Christ, as well as everything that occurs in the lives of His ministers. It is the same “*all things*” Paul so confidently and dogmatically declared to those believers in Rome – “*And we know that **all things** work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose.*”(Rom.8:28) Concerning this “*all things*”, John Gill in his commentary wrote: “The incarnation, obedience, death, and resurrection of Christ, are all for the sake of God’s elect; and so the ministry of his apostles and servants, their gifts, graces, comforts, and experiences; and so likewise all their reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions. These were endured for their sakes, and tended to their establishment in the faith; were for the furtherance of the Gospel, and of the faith and joy of saints; and this gave no small pleasure and relief to them under their sufferings, that they were of such use to others. Moreover, all their deliverances, when in any imminent danger; were for the sake of the churches.” Consider Paul and Silas when they were imprisoned in Phillipi, having been beaten and their stocks tightened fast – “*And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.*”(Acts 16:25) **Humanly speaking**, you couldn’t say this was **GOOD**, yet this suffering for righteousness sake did indeed “*redound to the glory of God*” – “*And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out*

his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”(Acts 16:26-31) Paul told Timothy – “Therefore I endure **all things** for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”(II Tim.2:10) This was God’s promise to Paul, that he would be God’s witness, enduring much suffering for Christ’s sake, yet the salvation of God’s elect meant everything to Paul, and it should mean everything to you and me as well.

Look at **Vs.16**. If you’ll recall, Paul started off this chapter concerning the suffering he and all God’s elect endured with similar words – “Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, **we faint not**.” Oh, to have such a love and desire for the salvation of God’s elect that like Paul “**we faint not**”, but are willing to endure all things for the elect’s sake. Paul spoke with first hand knowledge – “**but though our outward man perish, yet the inward [man] is renewed day by day.**” Turn over to **II Cor.11:23-28**. In spite of Paul’s outward circumstances of life being so awful, by faith he says – “**yet the inward [man] is renewed day by day.**” The original word translated “**the inward**” means ‘the soul’. The original word translated “**is renewed**” means ‘new strength and vigour is given to one’. This word was used only one other time in the NT – “**And have put on the new [man], which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.**”(Col.3:10) How was Paul given new strength and vigor? – “**in the knowledge after the image of Him that created him.**” I love what Gill wrote concerning these words: “The internal hidden man of the heart, the new man is in a prosperous condition; our souls are in good health; the work of God is comfortably carried on in us; we have sweet and repeated experiences of the love of God; we are growing in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ; and, **like the palm tree, the more weight is hung upon it, the more it thrives; and, like the children of Israel in Egypt, the more they were afflicted the more they grew.**”

I’ve been trying to get to Paul’s next words for the past 6 sermons – **Vs.17** - “**For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding [and] eternal weight of glory.**” Think about what Paul had endured for Christ’s name sake! The word translated “**light**” means ‘light in weight or **QUICK**’, and the word translated “**affliction**” means ‘tribulation, or pressing, or pressure’. Somebody says something about us over something we have or have not said, or say something about some post we make about the Gospel on social media, or some family member questions us about our unwillingness to compromise the Gospel of God’s free grace, and we almost melt, yet Paul endured all for the elect’s sake, and he said all the tribulation were light in weight and quick, actually declaring all of it “**but for a moment.**” Look at what Paul says “**our light afflictions, which is, but for a moment**” actually accomplishes in the life and walk of the children of God – “**worketh for us a far more exceeding [and] eternal weight of glory.**” **HOW CAN THIS BE?** Paul tells us that afflictions and suffering sent into the life of God’s children work eternal glory for them, not by way of **MERIT**, because none of our suffering and affliction are worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed – “**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.**”(Rom.8:18) Afflictions, trials, and suffering “**for His name’s sake**” work as a **MEANS** of enjoying what God has so freely and richly bestowed on us by His grace through Christ’s obedience unto death. Just like God’s Word, and His ordinances, “**suffering**” is a **MEANS** of our

growth in grace and knowledge of the truth – “*For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.*”(Phil.1:29) By this “*light affliction*”, the Lord tries, exercises, and improves the grace of faith He has freely bestowed, weaning our hearts from this world, and drawing out hope and desire for that glory which will be revealed at our death or His second coming. **Think about Moses** – “*By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.*”(Heb.11:24-26) It’s a hard lesson to learn, and our remaining sinfulness makes us prone to resist, but the reality is for the child of God, **THIS EARTH IS NOT OUR HOME.**

And finally, **Vs.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.*” **Listen to me closely:** As children of the living God, **WE SHOULD NOT LOOK** at the things which are seen. That word translated “*look*” means ‘to fix one’s eyes upon, or direct one’s attention to’. The original words translated by the phrase “*the things which are seen*” mean ‘that which can be seen or discerned by the physical eyes’. **WHY** don’t we look on the things of time and sense? Because everything that can be discerned by our physical eyes are “**TEMPORAL**”, which means ‘for a season or enduring for only a short time’. The Apostle John spoke in similar fashion – “*Love not the world, neither the things [that are] in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that [is] in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof.*”(I Jn.2:14-17ab) What does those born of God “*look*” or ‘fix their eyes and attention on’ – “*the things which are not seen*”. **Listen to the writer of Hebrews** – “*Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset [us], and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of [our] faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*”(Heb.12:1,2) By God-given faith, our heart, mind, and understanding look away from what is temporal and passing away, and are fixated on Christ **ALONE**, His blood and imputed righteousness, Him in whom “*all the promises of God are yeah, and in Him amen*”, because He alone is **LIFE ETERNAL**, and our life is hid with God in Him. King David’s words express the mindset and desire of every child of God – “*Whom have I in heaven [but thee]? and [there is] none upon earth [that] I desire beside thee.*”(Ps.73:25) This knowledge, given by God to His children, enables us to look at every trial and tribulation and see behind it the smiling face of our Heavenly Father and our merciful Savior as He directs all things for His glory, our good, and the advancement of His kingdom in this present world.

We’ll stop there, and Lord willing, we’ll pick up with II Cor.5 next time.