

# Affliction Preparing Us for an Eternal Weight of Glory

2 Corinthians 4:16-18; Revelation 21

**J.C. Ryle:** “Trials are intended to make us think, to wean us from the world, to send us to the Bible, to drive us to our knees.”

## 1. Opening: How has your Savior and loving Lord used trials, pain, brokenness, and affliction in your life?

a. The Lord has chosen not to tell everything about why He allows pain, heartache, and frustration in our lives, but He does reveal this much about His divine purpose for affliction:

- To bring us to salvation in the first place.
- To build in us a hatred for sin,
- To test our faith to show if our faith is persevering faith, thus strengthening our faith,
- To be humbly willing to receive compassion from the Father of all mercy and God of all comfort,
- To teach us that Christ is our greatest treasure, to call us to look for heavenly help, to teach us to earnestly pray and depend on God for daily needs,
- To reveal to us what we love more than the Lord,
- To lead us to greater obedience to His Word, to lead us away from our idolatrous perspectives,
- To get us to quiet down and to listen to His word,
- To be able to help other people who suffer, to make us effective in our service,
- To rely on nothing but God’s power to get us through the trial,
- To reveal our many demands for Jesus to do, according to our desires,
- To show us our absolute need for Christ and His grace.
- To create in us a joyful longing for that perfect time in eternity with Jesus.

b. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 – <sup>16</sup> So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, <sup>18</sup> as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

c. 2 Corinthians 5:7 – For we walk by faith, not by sight.

d. 1 Corinthians 2:9-10 – But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him” – <sup>10</sup> these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God.

## 2. Be encouraged, believer, our destination is being lovingly prepared by Jesus: The New Heavens and Earth (21:1-2).

<sup>1</sup> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

## 3. Be encouraged, believer, because the supreme joy of the New Heavens and New Earth is that we are dwelling eternally in Christ’s presence (21:3-8).

<sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” <sup>5</sup> And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.”

Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” <sup>6</sup> And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. <sup>7</sup> The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. <sup>8</sup> But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

#### 4. Be encouraged, believer, your eternal home with Jesus is altogether lovely, reflecting God's great glory (21:9-27).

<sup>9</sup> Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." <sup>10</sup> And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, <sup>11</sup> having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. <sup>12</sup> It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed— <sup>13</sup> on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. <sup>14</sup> And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. <sup>15</sup> And the one who spoke with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. <sup>16</sup> The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width. And he measured the city with his rod, 12,000 stadia. Its length and width and height are equal. <sup>17</sup> He also measured its wall, 144 cubits by human measurement, which is also an angel's measurement.

<sup>18</sup> The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass. <sup>19</sup> The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, <sup>20</sup> the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. <sup>21</sup> And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. <sup>22</sup> And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. <sup>23</sup> And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. <sup>24</sup> By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, <sup>25</sup> and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup> They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. <sup>27</sup> But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

**Jonathan Edwards in "Heaven is a World of Love:"** "There this glorious God is manifested, and shines forth, in full glory, in beams of love. And there this glorious fountain forever flows forth in streams, yea, in rivers of love and delight, and these rivers swell, as it were, to an ocean of love, in which the souls of the ransomed may bathe with the sweetest enjoyment, and their hearts, as it were, be deluged with love!"

#### 5. Concluding Thoughts.

a. Revelation 22:20-21 – He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! <sup>21</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

b. 2 Peter 2:9 – The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment.

c. Isaiah 65:17 – For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.

d. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: "God knows what is best for us. There are times when we need sunshine, there are times when we benefit by the storm."

e. 1 Peter 4:7-11 – The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. <sup>8</sup> Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup> Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. <sup>10</sup> As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: <sup>11</sup> whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.