

# **Affliction and Glory**

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2 Corinthians 4:8 We are **troubled** on every side, yet not distressed; we are **perplexed**, but not in despair; 9: **Persecuted**, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; 10: 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. 11: For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. 12: So then death worketh in us, but life in you. 13: 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; 14: Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. 15: For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. 16: For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. **17: For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;** 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.

## **Introduction**

We all know that this world is full of trouble and life is full of sorrow. In a world full of trouble and a life full of sorrow and suffering we have questions and we need some answers. We need a solid and substantial answer to the question about suffering. We need a more sure word of comfort than “Everything's going to be ok” or "Que sera sera" "Whatever will be, will be." or "Hakuna matata" or "Don't worry be happy." These may be cute sayings but they do not bring comfort.

But I am glad that God gave us the Bible and He gave us answers regarding our pressing questions about sufferings and afflictions. This morning, consider with me, three basic things about our present afflictions.

## **I - The Certainty of Affliction**

Benjamin Franklin said, *“There are only two things certain in life: death and taxes.”*

I would like to add the third certainty - Afflictions. Even our Lord declares this ...

[John 16:33](#) 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.

Here on earth we will have trouble, we will have many trials and sorrows.

[1 Corinthians 10:13](#) There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a

way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

Despite all that we can do - all our learning, knowledge and wealth, advanced technology, gadgets and toys, life is still a weary pilgrimage, and is filled with burdens.

Job understood this.

**Job 5:7 Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.**

Affliction is natural to man. It is as naturally as the sparks of fire fly upward. It is like a burning coal that naturally raise themselves to fly.

**Job 14:1 Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.**

Affliction is part of being born of a woman. It is transmitted to us mankind from our first parents. Suffering is our constant inheritance; God having allotted this portion to mankind for their sins.

So we should not then be surprised at our afflictions.

**1 Peter 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:**

## **II - The Universality of Affliction**

**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.**

Not only is suffering is certain, it is also universal. Everyone suffers in some way or the other. Affliction touches every one of us. Some are troubled more than the others, yet no one is exempted from trouble.

You may be a godly person or a wicked person, it matters not.

Psalm 32:10 **Many sorrows shall be to the wicked:** but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.

Psalm 34:19 **Many are the afflictions of the righteous:** but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.

Affliction is the common experience of the children of men, even of the children of God. Being a child of God does not exempt us from afflictions. Goodness, godliness, holiness, and faithfulness will not shield you and me from afflictions.

Even our Lord was not exempted from trouble.

Isaiah 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4: Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5: But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6: All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7: He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. 8: He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. 9: And he

made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. 10: Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. 11: He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. 12: Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

It is true that God promises in ...

Job 5:19 He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.

He promises to sustain us but He does not promise that either six or seven trials shall be kept off from you.

Even if you and I cry to God to help us, He will help us through the trouble, but He will probably not remove it from us. He will deliver us from evil, but He may still lead us into trial.

### **III - The Realities about Afflictions**

Three things in this text that I pray would sustain us as we face afflictions in our lives.

#### **1. Afflictions are Minuscule**

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.

If you don't know anything about the Apostle Paul, you may say he is out of touch, that he is downplaying afflictions, specially if you are going through a Job-like affliction.

Paul was not downplaying afflictions. He was not looking the Christian life in a plastic or artificial way. He was also familiar with suffering. In fact, I believe aside from Christ and Job, Paul is one who suffered much in this life.

2 Corinthians 11:23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, **in stripes** (beatings) above measure, **in prisons** more frequent, **in deaths** oft. 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.

Many of our afflictions are not light. They are grievous and serious. To lose a love one, father, mother, husband, wife, son, daughter, brother or sister, is not light, to lose a job is serious, to have terminal disease (cancer, heart disease ...) these are serious and heavy afflictions.

So what did Paul mean by these words?

Again, understand that Paul is not minimizing our afflictions, what he is saying is that our afflictions in this present life are light comparatively!

### **1. They are light when compared with the sufferings of the Lord Jesus**

Whatever affliction we face in life, whether losing a loved one, having a cancer, losing a job, they are light compared with Christ's sufferings. What are our sufferings compared to the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ? The sinless Son of God suffered much when He was on earth. A Man of Sorrow and acquainted with grief. He is known as the Suffering Servant. He endured the pain and mocking that He did not deserve. Our sufferings are nothing compared to what Christ endured when He was on earth.

### **2. They are light compared to what we really deserve**

What we all deserve as sinners is eternal torment in Hell. Yet, if you by the grace of a God are saved today you won't have to experience extreme pain and agony that awaits those who die in their sins. It is light compared to the torments of the lost in hell.

### **3. They are light compared with the weight of glory that is awaiting us in Heaven**

It is light compared to the joys of heaven.

[Romans 8:18 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.](#)

Suffering here but glory there in Heaven. Glory: perfect body, we will be like Christ, we will be translated into a perfect place, and we will live with God forever, perfect spirit, no more sin.

I wish I have time to talk about the glory that awaits those who have been redeemed by blood of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10: But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

## **2. Afflictions are Momentary**

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.

Even if we suffer all our lives and get to live as old as Methuselah who live for 969 years, still they are short compared to the eternal glory that awaits us. Our present life afflictions are like smoke that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Life is short and so is our afflictions compared to the eternal glory that awaits us.

Job 14:1 Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. This is God's mercy! Life is full of trouble but thank God life is short! This implies afflictions are momentary.

Revelation 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first

heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. 2: And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3: And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4: And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. 5: And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

### **3. Afflictions are Means (Instrument, Vehicle)**

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.

Our afflictions work for us. They are for our benefit and good. God is preparing us for glory. Many times we see afflictions as inconvenience that makes us sour, rebellious and discontent. But we need to remember that afflictions are sent by God to conform us into the image of His Son.

James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3: Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4: But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

*“God sends afflictions not to make us bitter but to make us better.”*

Affliction helps us to have a looser grip on the things of this world and helps draw closer to the Lord and long for Him and for His coming.

*“The winter prepares the earth for the spring, so do afflictions sanctified, prepare the soul for glory.”*

They are always for our good, spiritual and eternal.

May God enable us to examine our trials in their true perspective.

#### **IV - Conclusion**

##### **To the Unbelievers**

These comforting words are for the children of God. If you are not a child of God this morning, these glorious truths do not apply to you, but it can be. How? You must be born again. You must be born into God's family.

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

Isaiah 55:6 Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: 7: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Go to the One who was smitten of God and afflicted. He suffered and died for you. He was wounded, bruised, chastised, oppressed and afflicted.

Hebrews 12:2 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.

### **To the Christians**

Christians I have declared to you things about afflictions that I hope would comfort and sustain you in this troubled world.

One second of glory will outweigh a lifetime of suffering. One second of the glory will wipe away the remembrance of our lifetime suffering on earth. The glory will compensate for all the tears and groans of earth.

1 Peter 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 13: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

The Bible says in God's presence is the fullness of joy, at His right hand there are pleasures forevermore. But until then let us be faithful and trust our Father who is too wise to be mistaken and too good to be unkind.

AMEN!