

# **“The Process of Preparation”**

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

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**Key Words:** Eternity, Suffering, Problems

Tonight, we are going to look at how God uses difficulties in the life of the believer to prepare us for eternity.

*Key Text:*

**2 Corinthians 4:16-18** <sup>16</sup> “Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, <sup>18</sup> while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.”

- *But, what’s the “Therefore” there for?*

- **2 Corinthians 4:7-11** <sup>7</sup> “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. <sup>8</sup> We are hard-pressed (afflicted or oppressed) on every side, yet not crushed; *we are* perplexed (Serious anxiety), but not in despair; <sup>9</sup> persecuted (pursue, harass), but not forsaken; struck down (to cause physical pain and/or suffering), but not destroyed—<sup>10</sup> always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. <sup>11</sup> For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.”

- Notice that with each of the negative things that were happening, there was an understanding of the spiritual result.

## **Don’t give up!**

**2 Corinthians 4:16** “Therefore we do not lose heart.”

- To *“lose heart”* is to become discouraged and give up!
- *What are you going through?*
  - Don’t quit because God is doing something IN and THROUGH you!
    - To clarify though, we aren’t talking about self-inflicted wounds.

- **Galatians 6:7-8** <sup>7</sup> “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. <sup>8</sup> For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”
- **1 Peter 2:20** “For what credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently?”
- In the Process of Preparation, we can lose sight of what God is doing in our lives and why.
- Jesus didn’t promise us a pain-free, problem-free life!
  - **John 16:33** “In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”
  - **2 Timothy 3:12** “Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”

## The Process of Preparation

### Is an inside job

**2 Corinthians 4:16** “Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day.”

- *Outward* – Physical aspect of our humanity
  - The laws of science are enacted upon our physical bodies!
  - Entropy is taking place!
  - Physically we are dying!
    - We tend to focus too much on this aspect.
- *Inward* – Spiritual aspect of who we are.
  - *Spiritually, WE ARE ALIVE AND WILL NEVER DIE!!!*
    - We tend to focus too little on this aspect.
  - The question we need to ask ourselves is how is the inward man being renewed?
    - **Romans 12:2** “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the *renewing* of your mind,..”
    - **Ephesians 4:23** “...be *renewed* in the spirit of your mind...”
    - **Colossians 3:10** “...put on the new *man* who is *renewed* in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him...”

### Is preparing us for eternity

**2 Corinthians 4:17-18** <sup>17</sup> “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, <sup>18</sup> while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.”

- *Light affliction* – insignificant suffering
  - Which only lasts a moment.
    - A moment is a time comparison.
      - In this case time as we know it is contrasted to eternity.
  - We might say, “*Well Paul obviously didn’t know a thing about my life!*”

But let’s read Paul’s light affliction.

**2 Corinthians 11:22-28** <sup>22</sup> Are they Hebrews? So *am* I. Are they Israelites? So *am* I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So *am* I. <sup>23</sup> Are they ministers of Christ?— I speak as a fool—I *am* more: <sup>d</sup>in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. <sup>24</sup> From the Jews five times I received forty *stripes* minus one. <sup>25</sup> Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; <sup>26</sup> in journeys often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils of *my own* countrymen, *in* perils of the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; <sup>27</sup> in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—<sup>28</sup> besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.”

- *Eternal weight of glory* – Greek, “in excess and to excess.” The glory exceeds beyond all measure the affliction.” Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Vol. 2, p. 307). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.
- *The Seen*
  - We don’t look at or focus on because they are temporary.
- *The Unseen*
  - This is where our attention is focused because it’s eternal.
- **Romans 8:18-25** <sup>18</sup> For I consider that the sufferings of this present time (tip of Rope) are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us (The rest of the rope). <sup>19</sup> For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; <sup>21</sup> because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. <sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. <sup>23</sup> Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. <sup>24</sup> For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? <sup>25</sup> But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for *it* with perseverance.”
  - It’s not that the things we are suffering or insignificant, but what God is doing through those things!
  - What is he doing IN you and me?

- Have you ever had someone tell you “God won’t give you more than you can handle?”
  - I tried to find the verse that says, “God won’t give you more than you can handle.”
  - I looked high and low but was unable to find it!
    - **1 Corinthians 10:13** “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*.”
- The reality is, God is absolutely going to give you more than you can handle!
  - **2 Corinthians 1:8-10** <sup>8</sup> For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. <sup>9</sup> Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, <sup>10</sup> who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us.”
  - **2 Corinthians 7:5-6** <sup>5</sup> For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside *were* conflicts, inside *were* fears. <sup>6</sup> Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus...”

The comfort is knowing that He is incapable of giving you more than He can handle!

- **2 Corinthians 1:3-5** <sup>3</sup> Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, <sup>4</sup> who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. <sup>5</sup> For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.”

**Romans 8:28-30** <sup>28</sup> And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. <sup>29</sup> For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. <sup>30</sup> Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”

**1 Peter 1:3-9** <sup>3</sup> Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup> In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved

by various trials, <sup>7</sup> that the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup> whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, <sup>9</sup> receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls.”

### **Charles Thomas Studd;**

Two little lines I heard one day,  
Traveling along life's busy way;  
Bringing conviction to my heart,  
And from my mind would not depart;  
Only one life, twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, yes only one,  
Soon will its fleeting hours be done;  
Then, in 'that day' my Lord to meet,  
And stand before His Judgement seat;  
Only one life, twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, the still small voice,  
Gently pleads for a better choice  
Bidding me selfish aims to leave,  
And to God's holy will to cleave;  
Only one life, twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, a few brief years,  
Each with its burdens, hopes, and fears;  
Each with its clays I must fulfill,  
living for self or in His will;  
Only one life, twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.

When this bright world would tempt me sore,  
When Satan would a victory score;  
When self would seek to have its way,  
Then help me Lord with joy to say;  
Only one life, twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Give me Father, a purpose deep,  
In joy or sorrow Thy word to keep;  
Faithful and true what e'er the strife,  
Pleasing Thee in my daily life;  
Only one life, twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last

Oh, let my love with fervor burn,  
And from the world now let me turn;  
Living for Thee, and Thee alone,  
Bringing Thee pleasure on Thy throne;  
Only one life, twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, yes only one,  
Now let me say, "Thy will be done"  
And when at last I'll hear the call,  
I know I'll say "twas worth it all"  
Only one life, twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.  
And when I am dying, how happy I'll be,  
If the lamp of my life has been burned out for Thee