**The Eternal Weight of Glory**

*2 Corinthians 4:16-18*

**Introduction**

1. Christianity is sometimes misunderstood by non-believers as an escape from reality. A place to remain blissfully ignorant.
   1. As if devotion to Christ was an attempt by the simple and weak to avoid confronting the dark realities of existence on earth.
   2. However, the darkest moments of history have actually shed light on the merit and validity of Christianity, and its sole efficacy to confront such evil.
2. The New Testament does not lead men to gloss over the dark realities of life under the sun; rather, it urges them to confront them with rational meditation, and corresponding actions.
3. Such is seen by example in the cheerful, hopeful endurance of men like Paul – **2 Corinthians 4:16-18**
   1. **(vv. 8-9)** – hard-pressed, perplexed, persecuted, struck down, carrying in the body the dying of the Lord.
   2. **(v. 18)** – confronted such with rational faith – **5:7** – how he could see what is not seen.
   3. **(vv. 16-17)** – Such tribulation didn’t destroy him and others because of the accurate perspective on life, and the proper valuation of physical and spiritual factors.
4. For those who walk by faith, the afflictions of life only further the anticipation, and confidence of what they know as ***“the eternal weight of glory.”***
5. The Contrast of Affliction and Glory
6. The eyes of faith understand that, no matter the severity and duration of the affliction, it pales in comparison to that of the object of hope – glory.
   1. Affliction – Glory
      1. People of faith have always been subject to the universal reality of affliction. In fact, many times they tend to bear the brunt of it.
         1. Job – **Job 1:1** – despite this description lost everything.
         2. David – **Psalm 3:1-2** (Fleeing from Absalom)
         3. Lazarus – **Luke 16:20-21**
         4. General people of faith – **Hebrews 11:35-38**
      2. Yet, these people of faith also offset such affliction with the hope of glory promised by the One they serve by faith.
         1. Job – **Job 1:20-21** – “Blessed be the name of the Lord” speaks to the lovingkindness of His character which Job trusted in – ultimately for the spiritual blessings.
         2. David – **Psalm 3:8**
         3. Lazarus – **Luke 16:22, 25**
         4. General people of faith – **Hebrews 11:6**
   2. The affliction being inescapable necessitates the prospective glory for there to be any positive outlook; the understanding of the contrast of these two being the energy which enables endurance.
   3. Light – Weight
      1. Light – easy to bear.
         1. **2 Corinthians 11:23-27** – Paul’s various sufferings in contrast to the boasting of false apostles.
         2. How was any of this easy to bear? These are not light things – **2 Corinthians 12:7-8** – plead with Lord to take it away.
         3. Key – not light in itself, but in its comparison to what is called “weight” 🡪
            1. EX: **Luke 21:3** – widow put in 2 mites, but more than all – ***“put in all the livelihood that she had”***
      2. Weight – heavy burden (in contrast to “light”); “a high point in a scale of evaluation” (BDAG) – “the thing being evaluated is viewed as an accumulated mass that promotes pleasure instead of discomfort” (BDAG – commenting on 2 Corinthians 4:17)
         1. **James 5:7-8, 10-11** – farmer, prophets, Job.
         2. **Romans 8:18** – not worthy to be compared with the glory.
   4. For a Moment – Eternal
      1. The contrast of light/weight is partially accredited to the nature of affliction/glory. Yet, even more so is the duration of momentary/eternal.
         1. We wouldn’t think a lifetime of affliction would be worth even 10 years of glory.
         2. However, eternity makes an infinite difference.
      2. For a moment – **Psalm 39:4-5** – vapor.
         1. This is hard for us to comprehend.
         2. We’re limited by time, and our minds are constrained to thoughts of time.
         3. REQUIRES MEDITATION ON THE ETERNAL MESSAGE OF GOD.
      3. Eternal – without end.
         1. It is impossible to truly comprehend eternity.
         2. Where the trust comes in – **2 Corinthians 4:18; 5:7** – look by faith, word of God.
         3. Explained in concepts of time – **2 Peter 3:8**
7. The contrast of the affliction and glory sets the stage for the paradox of that which is negative and temporal in the affliction working something positive and eternal in the glory.
8. The Affliction Working for Us
9. **2 Corinthians 4:16-17** – **verse 17** is given as an explanation of **verse 16**.
   1. How is the inward man being renewed daily while the outward man is perishing?
   2. The affliction is working for us the eternal glory.
10. The human tendency – under the influence of Satan – is inclined to think the affliction works opposite – affliction will cause one to lose hope and give up.
    1. The Bible says ***“do not lose heart” (2 Corinthians 4:16***).
11. How does the affliction work for us the eternal weight of glory?
    1. It can only do so through the eyes of faith – **2 Corinthians 4:18** – it is working such in those who look to the things not seen.
    2. Leads to disenchantment with the world:
       1. “It [affliction] is like a sharp knife that cuts one cord after another that holds us to this earth and to its earthly glory.” (Lenski)
       2. **2 Corinthians 5:1-5** – the affliction leads to groaning, and desire for that which is not subject to the corruptible world – glorious body.
       3. The state which leads to groaning is allowed by God to bring emphasis to the hope of something better:
          1. **Romans 8:18-25** – creation (Christians in the body) longs for the glorified body promised by God.
          2. **(v. 20)** – not willingly – i.e. it isn’t something we chose, but something appointed by God.
          3. As we endure the suffering we become further distanced from the appeal of this life and drawn to the next.
    3. Leads to perseverance and character:
       1. **Romans 5:1-5** – rejoice in hope – tribulation – perseverance – character – hope.
          1. Starts with hope – **(v. 2)** – having been justified, rejoice in hope.
          2. Responds to tribulation with joy – knowing it produces perseverance.
             1. Necessary to reach the object of hope.
          3. Perseverance to Character – proven character.
             1. The fact of our perseverance through tribulation proves something about our character.
             2. Namely, that we aren’t enamored with the carnal world, but wish to remain pleasing to God to be with Him in glory. (the object of our hope we began with – “hope of the glory of God”)
          4. Such results in strengthened hope.
          5. The tribulation is not taken away but allowed by God to strengthen our character that is concerned about the spiritual (which is eternal by nature).
       2. Tribulation refines – **1 Peter 1:6-7**
          1. Those who would not persevere have their character unproven – faith proven ingenuine.
          2. Those who persevere show they aren’t concerned with the physical but are desiring the spiritual.
    4. Therefore, the affliction itself is not effective in working for our glory, but the affliction approached with a godly attitude and faith.
       1. **2 Corinthians 4:13-14** – if Paul did not believe and speak he would have abdicated his duty, and forfeited his hope.
       2. **(v. 16)** – the inward man is only daily renewed when the affliction is responded to with faith coming from God’s word.
12. With such disenchantment with the earthly appeal, and produced perseverance and character, affliction is working for us a “***far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”***
13. The Eternal Weight of Glory
14. What is the “eternal weight of glory” which Paul is looking forward to?
    1. The evaluation of the glory is true but requires a spiritual mind to realize.
       1. Light/weight; momentary/eternal
       2. ***“a far more exceeding”*** – hyperbolē eis hyperbolē
          1. *hyperbolē* – lit., “a throwing beyond” (huper, “over,” ballo, “to throw”) (VINE)
             1. “state of exceeding to an extraordinary degree a point on a scale of extent” (BDAG)
          2. *eis* – to, into, unto
          3. “It is not merely eminent; but it is eminent unto eminence; excess unto excess; a hyperbole unto hyperbole - one hyperbole heaped upon another; and the expression means that it is “exceeding exceedingly” glorious; glorious in the highest possible degree” (Albert Barnes)
          4. ***“worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory” (ASV)***
       3. ***“producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison” (NASB)***
    2. **Glory – *doxa* – (1) the condition of being bright or shining; (3) honor as enhancement or recognition of status or performance. (BDAG)**
15. Honor from God as Being Well Pleasing to Him
    1. The “weight of glory far beyond all comparison” is in part the honor and recognition received from God based on our faithfulness:
       1. **2 Corinthians 5:9** – aim at being well pleasing to Him.
          1. Aim – *philotimeomai* – lit., “to be fond of honor” (phileo, “to love,” time, “honor”) and so, actuated by this motive, “to strive to bring something to pass” (VINE)
          2. "’We love it as a point of honor’ ever to be well-pleasing to the Lord, not only to do what he says, but to have him take pleasure in us and in all that we do.” (Lenski)
       2. Consider Jesus – **2 Peter 1:17** – the glory and honor bestowed was more than simply the transfiguration, but the recognition by the Father.
       3. Parable of the talents – “***Well done, good and faithful servant…Enter into the joy of your lord” (Matthew 25:21, 23)***.
       4. Opposite – **Matthew 7:21-23** – not pleased with what was done – ***“I never knew you”***
          1. Want to be known by God – **1 Corinthians 8:3**
       5. Shows our main goal and pleasure is to please our Creator by fulfilling His will for us.
          1. This is why only the eyes of faith will see this as an exceeding and eternal weight.
          2. For those unconcerned with pleasing God, they will not be attracted to this end.
16. An Incorruptible Body
    1. Such honor of recognition received from God with the things done in the body is further acknowledged with the reward of relief from our corruptible form which we endured faithfully by further clothing us in an incorruptible form.
       1. Groan, wanting to be clothed – **2 Corinthians 5:4**
          1. Mortal swallowed up in immortality – **1 Corinthians 15:42-45**
       2. Groan, waiting for the revealing of sons of God, redemption of body – **Romans 8:19, 22-23**
    2. This form is fitting, and a greater image for the faithful children of God – **1 John 3:1-3**
       1. **(vv. 1-2a)** – we are children of God now – shown by being well pleasing to Him (**1 John 2:29),** but not in any visible or bodily manifestation.
       2. **(vv. 2b-3)** – we will be like Him.
          1. Description – PURE.
          2. Implication – PURIFY SELF NOW – the body we will be given will be one worthy of our calling fulfilled by faithfulness and purity in the life on earth.
       3. Glorious body corresponds to the glory of recognition by God for being well-pleasing to Him.
    3. Such relief from the corruptible form is a weight that far exceeds the light affliction of the physical form.

**Conclusion**

1. The Christian is not instructed to be naïve about the afflictions of the earthly life but is equipped with hope and spiritual perspective to endure.
2. Our thought about the struggles we face should be consistent with the reality of the spiritual, and the promise of God to give us something which makes all this worthwhile.