

The Church Scattered for the Gospel through Suffering

2 Corinthians 4:7-18

INTRODUCTION:

I. The Purpose of Suffering (vv.7,15,17)

A. To Display God's Power (v.7)

1. This is why the treasure of the gospel of Jesus Christ has been entrusted to men (jars of clay ready to crack)
2. The power of salvation resides (belongs to) God Himself...not man. Why?
3. Ephesians 2:8-9, "

B. To Produce Gratitude (v.15)

1. Through the experience of grace
2. In others
3. Yielding glory to God

C. To Glorify God (v.17)

1. And this is the ultimate purpose
2. Eternal weight
3. Present suffering is preparation
4. All suffering is light and momentary in comparison to eternal weight (purifying, sanctifying, evangelizing effects)

II. The Power of Suffering (vv.8-12)

A. Varied afflictions

1. Multiple angles to God's glory
2. Afflicted

3. Perplexed
4. Persecuted
5. Struck down (**Acts 14:19-23**)

B. Singular (two-fold) burden (vv.10-12)

1. Transporting the death of Christ
2. Make apparent the life of Christ

III. The Future of Suffering (vv.13-15)

A. Present truth brings future assurance

1. The regenerating work of the Spirit
2. The Spirit of dwells in the believer
3. Guarantees future inheritance
4. **Ephesians 1:13-14**

B. Grace extended to others

1. God's numbers
2. Produces gratitude
3. Bringing glory to God
4. **2 Corinthians 1:3-4**
5. **Adoniram Judson (1788-1850)**

IV. The Encouragement in Suffering (vv.16-18)

A. We do not lose heart!

1. Weighty encouragement
2. **2 Corinthians 4:1-6**
 - a) This has been the point all along
 - b) This encouragement is not a passive waiting

B. Outer man wasting / Inner man renewed

1. Outer man is afflicted in the moment of this life reminding us of eternally glorifying God
2. Right-minded comparison
3. The seen is destroyed to drive us deeper to faith, that which is unseen
4. One day, faith will then give way to sight
 - a) Until that day, embrace that God loves you enough to deepen and lengthen your faith (**James 1:2-4**) through suffering so that His grace at work in you is never forgotten (**2 Corinthians 12:7-10**)
 - b) Until that day, commend yourself to others by righteous living, both in and out of suffering
 - c) Until that day, on this day, be encouraged that through prayer and God's community in the church you can find the encouragement to keep on
 - d) On this day...COME TO CHRIST!
 - (1) **1 Peter 3:18**
 - (2) **Philippians 3:8-11**