

# Heavenly Reasons for Earthly Endurance

## 2 Cor.4:16-18

Why do we need endurance?

1. Duration develops, Mt.10:22
2. Difficulties distract, Ro.12:12
3. Duty directs, 1 Co.13:7
4. Delight demands, Ja.5:11

But how do we get endurance?

# I. 16: Value Spiritual Strength over Physical

# Outer man: body (v.11; 7)

Three contributing factors...

1. Paul is aging, decaying, dying – continuous process. Ec.12:1-7, normal
2. Paul is wearing himself out for sake of gospel. 2 Co.12:15
3. His enemies were killing his outer man.

# Outer man

- Body (v.11); clay pot (7)
- One can take only so many beatings, stonings, and anxiety over churches.
- Paul aged before his time.
- Rust appears on car; it won't last long.
- When signs of age appear in our body, we know it can't last much longer.
- Exercise, diet, transplants may extend life a few years, but death is irresistible.
- So what? We have a better place awaiting us (5:1ff).

## Inner man: our real being; lives forever

- Paul: member of Sanhedrin, knew of Jesus in Jerusalem
- He wanted to rid world of Lord's followers.
- Then, he saw Him on the road to Damascus – Ac.9.
  - From this point on, he never knew Jesus after the flesh.

I. Value Spiritual Strength over Physical

II. Value Future over Present

# Paul looks at earthly circumstances through heavenly eyes

- Light – slight, insignificant
- Affliction – Ac.14:22, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.
- Momentary – lifetime of pain?



# Paul looks at earthly circumstances through heavenly eyes

- Heavy – Paul would endure present pain for future glory. 1 Pt.4:13
- Far more exceeding and eternal glory –
  - 1:8, suffering beyond all comparison ... but glorified beyond all comparison.
  - Ro.8:17-18, far outweighs any suffering experienced on earth

Paul gladly endures present pain for future glory. Do We?

I. Value Spiritual Strength over Physical

II. Value Future over Present

**III. Value Eternal Realities  
over Temporal**

# Why such endurance?

- It's for eternity...
  - “While we look...”
    - Conditional force: as long as we gaze in right direction... seeing things not seen... we can endure
  - Temporal – includes everything in universe
    - Compared to eternity, time is but a moment

# What is eternal?

- Father, Son, Holy Spirit, souls of men, angels...
- “Poor Paul”
- What if Paul became a rich, political powerhouse?
  - Could enjoy few years of earthly joy, but...what about his eternal destiny?
  - ‘Successful men’ often are not...

# “In Christ”

- Nero, d. AD 68
- Domitian, AD 96
- Diocletian, AD 313
- Galerius
- 300 Notre Dame students...
- Editor of *Yankee* magazine
- Mohammed Ali

# “In Christ”

- “To be under His control – totally dominated by His mind so that one becomes a new person.’
- Illustrated in Saul . . . Paul
- Purpose of this passage: to keep our focus on the eternal