

Sermon Notes
Good News Church
Greatest Hits of the Bible
"Do Not Lose Heart"
2 Corinthians 4:16-18
Drue Warner
5-3-26

"To live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21). This is not only one of the most prominent verses from our recent study in Paul's letter to the Philippians. It's one of the most prominent verses in the entire Bible. It's a great verse, but the question is, **"How do we do this?"** We're going to try to answer that question this morning in another great text from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. **Additionally, we're going to see a very real picture of what this looks like in real life.**

TEXT: 2 CORINTHIANS 4:16-18

¹⁶Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

MESSAGE NOTES

16 "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

In 2 Corinthians 4:1, Paul says, *"Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart."*

- What "ministry" is Paul talking about from which we do not lose heart (i.e., we're not discouraged)?
 - ANSWER: He's talking about the ministry of the Good News of the Gospel, as expressed in *vs. 6, For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness (a reference to Creation)," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ."* and in *vs. 14, "We know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself."*
 - Paul knows that this is all God's doing! It's God's mercy, from start to finish, that is the essence of the Good News and the foundation of "this ministry."

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes." - Romans 1:16

"But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you,

he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.” - Romans 8:10-11

- **THE MESSAGE PARAPHRASE (2 Cor. 4:16)** - *So we’re not giving up. How could we! Even though on the outside it often looks like things are falling apart on us, on the inside, where God is making new life, not a day goes by without his unfolding grace.*
- METAMORPHOSIS - Outwardly, we’re wasting away (i.e., we’re the caterpillar). Inwardly, we’re being renewed day by day (i.e., we’re the butterfly). There is a metamorphosis occurring in the life of the Christian, such that the outward beauty is fading away, decaying and dying, but there is an inward beauty that God is increasing and bringing out of us, such that in the end, the radiance of Christ on the inside will be perfected in glory on the outside.
- There is such a temptation to spend thousands (and hundreds of thousands) of dollars to perfect our outward appearances, but the truth is, our outward beauty is fading, decaying, and dying, and there’s nothing we can do to reverse that curse. But the Good News is that, when the Spirit of Jesus Christ is in us, the exact opposite is occurring. Our once dead hearts that have been made alive by God’s Spirit are transforming everything about who we are, from the inside out, to cause us to reflect the beauty and glory of Christ Himself, which is *“an eternal glory that far outweighs”* everything else in life, including *“our light and momentary troubles.”*

17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

- The troubles of this life are a drop in the bucket compared to the glory of eternity. Even more they are a drop in the ocean!

“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.” - Romans 8:18

- vs. 8** **Hard pressed, but not crushed** (squished but not squashed)
Perplexed, but not despairing (stressed but not stressed out)
 - **Latin proverb: *Dum spiro spero* - “While I live, I hope.”**
 - **Christian proverb: *Dum expro spero* - “Even while I die, I still have hope.”****Persecuted, but not abandoned** (discouraged but not deserted)
Struck down, but not destroyed (bewildered but not befuddled)

- “The Christian may be down, but the Christian is never out because the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in us.”
- **Paul’s confidence is not in himself and his ability to suffer well, but rather in the Savior who suffered for him.** In accomplishing our salvation, Jesus did it primarily not through his strength, but through his weakness. In fact, he took weakness to its extreme for our salvation: **Jesus was afflicted and crushed, perplexed and driven to despair, persecuted and forsaken, struck down and destroyed—so that we could say with Paul that we are**

not crushed or destroyed either. We deserve to be despairing and forsaken, but Jesus became sin in our place and took what our sins deserved.

18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. – Philippians 4:8

*“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”
- Colossians 3:1-2*

*“Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.”
- Romans 8:5-6*

What do we “set our minds” on and think about in order to “not lose heart”?

- **A: The love of God.** The goodness of God. The total forgiveness of God, in Christ. The grace of God to rescue, redeem, and adopt rebellious enemies.

“The Love of God” lyrics by Frederick Lehman (1917)

*Could we with ink the ocean fill and were the skies of parchment made,
were every stalk on earth a quill and every man a scribe by trade,
to write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry;
nor could the scroll contain the whole, though stretched from sky to sky.*

We have to wash our minds with these truths and the truth of the gospel such that the unseen is so saturated in our minds in our hearts that it is as if it is seen.

But how do we know that these invisible truths are true?

A: Focus our gaze on the cross of Christ and on the resurrection. And if we still need help believing, work from the cross up until now, looking at the lives that have been transformed by the undeniable, true hope and joy and peace that comes through Christ. Look especially at the martyrs and those who sacrificed and gave up everything (with joy) to follow Christ.

It’s real! And for Paul’s statement, **“To live is Christ and to die is gain”** to be real in our lives, we must fix our eyes on what is unseen, namely Jesus.

“Lord, I believe. Help my unbelief.”

The reality is that it's more difficult to "fix our eyes on the unseen" when everything is going well in life, but when sickness, disease, and death move to the front burner, our priorities get a whole lot clearer and setting our minds on things above becomes a lot easier to do.

Ben Sasse Interview w/ the NY Times (55:37 - 1:06:00)

2015-2023 U.S. Senator (Nebraska)

2023-2024 University of Florida President

- Melissa diagnosed with epilepsy

2025 Pancreatic cancer diagnosis

3 kids (2 older daughters in early 20's, 1 son age 14)