**WE DO NOT LOSE HEART**

Would you like to memorize a text with me? 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 says,

16 *Therefore* ***we do not lose heart***. *Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 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*.”

What a powerful, and necessary, scripture to memorize in such a time as this. Let’s study it together to know why we should focus on this magnificent text.

The apostle Paul was defending his right to be called an apostle. He had all the needed credentials that made him equal to Peter, Andrew, James and John (and all the others). He had started chapter 4 by saying, ​“*Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy,* ***we do not lose heart***.” The “*we*” he mentions three times is the apostles. To be an apostle sounds to us in the 21st century like a dream job. I mean, wow, you get to work all kinds of cool miracles (2 Cor. 12:12), speak eloquently by inspiration of the Holy Spirit without studying (2 Cor. 4:7), and be known far and wide as the eyewitnesses who had lived with Jesus for three years (Acts 1:21). Sounds great, huh? Uh, not so fast. Keep reading…

8 *We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 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. 12 So then death is working in us, but life in you*.”

Being an apostle is not the glamorous job it is cracked up to be, *if* you view it only from a *this-world* viewpoint. Paul would describe his life as an apostle in these words:

*9 For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. 10 We are fools for Christ’s sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! 11 To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. 12 And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; 13 being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.* (I Corinthians 4:9-13)

After reading that list I doubt many of us would stand in line to volunteer for the position. Remember, these men had families and loved ones too. Yet they stepped up and became the tip of the spear, the frontline fighters, so that we can now stand on the shoulders of giants and see heaven so much clearer. Which brings me back to our opening text of 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. Read it again, and memorize it if you can:

16 *Therefore* ***we do not lose heart***. *Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 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*.”

Looking at life from that 10,000 foot perspective changes everything, doesn’t it? Seeing things from *heaven’s* viewpoint is a game changer. Suddenly you can fast-forward where you are right now to where you are going to be very, very, very soon. No, I’m not predicting we will die today, this week, or this year (but we might). I’m speaking from how God sees things when He says, “*For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away*” (James 4:14). Even if we were to live as long as Methuselah (969 years – Genesis 5:27), in the span of eternity we would have been but a blip on the radar screen.

Paul said all the things he went through (read his list in 2 Corinthians 11:22-33) were only “*our light affliction, which is but for a moment*.” He said, “*we do not look at the things which are seen*” (…*temporary*). Instead he focused all his attention on “*the things which are not seen”* (…*eternal*). That made all the difference to the apostles then, and to us now.

**Application:**

Far too many are losing heart. They are losing their jobs, their life savings, their health, and perhaps even their life. It leads them to a ***D****-state* *of mind*: Doubt, Discouragement, and Depression.

But not so with those of us who are Christians. Like the apostles and Christians before us “***we do not lose heart***.” Even if we lose everything in this life we see it as “*our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”*

We have history to fall back on. That great “*Cloud of Witnesses*” who are in heaven cheering us onward (Hebrews 12:1) remind us to keep the faith, then sing the song:

“Faith of our fathers living still, in spite of dungeon, fire and sword.
 O how our hearts beat high with joy, when-e’er we hear that glorious word.
 Faith of our fathers, holy faith, ‘We will be true to Thee till death!”

Until tomorrow… do not lose heart.

I love you.

Rick