

We Need Not Lose Heart in the Face of Death

Small Group Follow-up Study for 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

RE-READ

[16] So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. [17] For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, [18] as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

RECAP

Sir Frederick Catherwood, Christian businessman and onetime chairman of the European Parliament, once sat at lunch with one of Britain's greatest scientists, at that time president of The Royal Society of Britain, and the two discussed the Bible and Christianity. The aged scientist remained firm in his unbelief. Catherwood writes:

Only three or four years later, a few months before his death, I saw the same man in the library of our club, a gaunt, gloomy, silent figure, hunched over the fire, staring into nothing, face to face with oblivion. When I left the club some time later, he was standing in the rain without a coat. I offered him a lift; he told me not to bother. He had come to the end, and nothing seemed to matter any more.

He had given up. He had lost heart and given up. How do we keep from losing heart in the face of death?

We can fix our eyes, as Martyn Lloyd-Jones did, on the truth of 2 Corinthians 4 verses 16 to 18. We see that our affliction, whatever it is that's causing us to waste away, is limited only to our outer selves, that it's light, that it's momentary, and that it's working for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison. O that we would be able to point to this text on our deathbed and say, "Absolutely, that's my experience! Absolutely!"

RESPOND

1. What caught your attention from Sunday's sermon? What are you still thinking about/mulling over? What questions did Sunday's sermon raise that remain unanswered in your mind?
2. The hope of glory is hard to keep in view because it is concrete (solid) but immaterial and can only be kept in view by painful effort. What do you do to keep the hope of glory in view?
3. Why is heaven such an attractive prospect for Christians? Give biblical reasons for your answers.
4. What are the evidences of God's Spirit living within us?