

We Do Not Lose Heart (2 Corinthians 4:13-18)

Intro: Twice in this chapter (verses 1 and 16), Paul encourages the Corinthians not to lose heart. “To lose heart” (Gr. *ekkakeo*) means “to lose one’s courage” (Word Study Dictionary).

A. The Spirit of Faith (vv.13-16)

1. This is quoted from Psalm 116:10, a Psalm referencing the Messiah.
2. Jesus’s speech in the garden of Gethsemane revealed that He was committed to the Father’s will (Matthew 26:39).
3. Faith has a voice, and it springs from what we truly believe, both good and evil (Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 12:34).

B. This Light Momentary Affliction (v. 17; 4:7-12)

1. This reveals itself in several paradoxes (vv. 8-10).
 - a. Afflicted but not forsaken.
 - b. Perplexed but not given to despair
 - c. Persecuted but not forsaken.
 - d. Struck down but not destroyed.
2. An eternal perspective is a defining aspect of Christianity.
3. The eternal weight of glory beyond comparison informs us that what happens in this life is not forgotten in the next (Hebrews 6:10-12).
4. Paul is emphasizing the death of Jesus (the path to salvation, an unwavering fact) and the life of Jesus (the path to victory, an unfolding reality) are occurring in his life simultaneously.

“It was not a matter of life after death or life through death, but life in the midst of death” (Expositor’s Commentary).

C. The Now and the Not Yet (v. 18)

1. The seen and the unseen reveal:
 - a. A hidden realm (spiritual) and a known realm (physical).
 - b. A life in the present and one in the future.
 - c. Simultaneously experiencing the death of Christ (our perishing outward man) and the life of Christ (a constantly renewed inward man).
2. We must accept the fact that we are in a spiritual battle “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood” Ephesians 6:10-13) and the weapons we have are effective (2 Corinthians 10:3-6).
3. But we must not think that we are endeavoring to win the fight against darkness because it’s already won. The outcome is never in doubt. Any casualties are not lost but have completed their mission and received their reward (Colossians 2:13-16; 2 Timothy 4:6-8).

Postscript: 2 Kings 6 tells the story of Elisha being besieged by the Syrian armies because he was revealing their battle plans to the king of Israel. He did this by divine revelation. When his servant told him this alarming fact, Elisha replied, “Do not be afraid, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.” Then Elisha prayed and said, “O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see.” So the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha” (6:16-17).