

January 1, 2017

Many events have happened in 2016 that have set things up to happen in 2017 that cause fear and anxiety for many. A new administration will be taking office in a few weeks. Many are ready for a change. However, there is still the mystery of what will be done.

We learned last week that churches in the US are now on the hit list for ISIS. That concerns me of how much expansion ISIS has made in the US in the past several years. That has many concerned.

It is simply a mystery as to what will happen. I simply say to you, "Do not lose heart. Do not lose courage. Do not be so dismayed so that you give into evil."

I say that not in wishing that it were possible to lose heart, lose courage. I say that because that is a great possibility for Christ followers. What, then, is the secret to living life without losing heart, without losing courage, and without giving in to evil? I want you to go to a passage that gives us possibility and the secret to living with courage, not losing courage, not losing heart, not giving into evil.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

Verse 16. There is the statement. Therefore, so then, we do not lose heart. We do not lose courage. We do not give in to evil. Quite literally, "We continuously do not lose heart, we continuously do not lose courage, and we continuously do not give in to evil."

That next phrase of v. 16 NASB has it, "but though our outer man is decaying yet our inner man is being renewed day by day." It is a fact, a declaration of what is presently taking place. Since our outer man is decaying, our inner man is being renewed day by day.

Verse 17

¹⁷For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, ¹⁸while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

There are some connectors in these verses that we need to understand that will help us in appreciating what needs to be shared today.

There are two connector words you need to be aware of that are not only found in this passage, but throughout scripture. When you learn to make the connections, it opens us up more to understanding what God has to tell us through His word.

The two connector words are therefore of verse 16 and for or because in verse 17.

Therefore...What's it there for? This is a connector word. We Look back on previous verses to find those connectors. Let me share with you three.

Go back to verse 7. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels. What treasure? Go back to verse 6.

For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

That's the treasure. The Light is Jesus Christ.

Because we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; therefore, we do not lose heart.

Look at verse 8. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing. Therefore, we do not lose heart. The first has to do with negative stuff relating to our body. The second has to do with the soul. We are afflicted in our body in every way, but we are not crushed in our spirit. Therefore, we do not lose heart.

Look at verse 14. Knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you, therefore we do not lose heart.

We do not lose heart, Paul says, because of the fact that our outer man, this shell is being decayed, quite literally being destroyed, but our inner man is being renewed day by day by day.

So we looked at the connector, therefore. Now, let's look at the second connector found in verse 17. The connector is the word "for." We can also say because. Why do we not lose heart knowing our inner man is being renewed while our outer man is being decayed?

Verse 17 – Because the momentary, light affliction (the suffering we encounter as we are in Christ) is producing an eternal weight in glory for beyond comparison.

We suffer the destruction of our bodies. Like it or not, this body will wear. It will be due to direct forces as those who are persecuted, or it will be due to indirect forces that are the result of being in a sinful, broken world.

As we seek to glorify Jesus Christ in our suffering, the eternal weight of glory being produced by our seeking His glory will be far, far greater than this temporary, momentary, light affliction.

Therefore, we do not lose heart.

So, we have made our connectors. Are you encouraged? Do you now see the secret of not losing heart, courage, and not giving in to evil?

Now let's make the application.

Value the inner man. Value your inner man. Put greater value on your inner man than your outer man. Now that is no excuse to abuse our bodies. We are, after all, temples of the Holy Spirit.

Put greater value on your inner man as oppose to the outer man.

Let me give you three reasons for valuing the inner man.

1 The inner man is the part of our being that makes us aware of God.

Our inner man, by nature and by birth, is spiritually dead. Ephesians 2:1 says that we were dead in trespasses and sin. To be spiritually dead is to have no awareness of the presence of God. It is to have no awareness of sin and the consequences of sin because the Holy Spirit is not active in us. We know about God like I know about George Washington.

But as we are made right with God by faith, the Holy Spirit brings life to that part of your lives. The inner man becomes alive because of the Holy Spirit. He then enables us to know God as you do your spouse or your best friend. We come to know God in a personal way that is real and that is relevant.

There is another name for this—justified, being made right with God and placed in the position of being right with Him. Once there, we will not be moved.

2 The inner man is the only part of our being that is not going through decay.

This part is being renewed day by day. What it means to be renewed? It means to be refreshed. It means to be re-strengthened. What that means is that we spiritually run out of gas. There is a leak in our buckets. Some of the giants of scripture needed that renewal. Elijah needed renewal and got it after rest and hearing God in the still, small voice.

The disciples needed it after spending time in ministry and missions. Jesus needed it. We find him in Mark 1 after spending a night in ministry rising up early in the morning to go to a solitude place, he prayed.

Then again that is by design of God. It is by God's design that we come to Him for renewal day by day. If God fills us up at the point of salvation, we would have no need to come to Him. We will forget that he is all-sufficient. We will find ourselves not growing in our experience with God.

There is another name for this—sanctification, growing more and more into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

3 The inner man is that part of our being that is eternal.

Should the inner man not receive spiritual life, it will suffer eternal death. That death is a separation from God or anything that reveals God. That is eternal. Eternally, there is only one place designated as eternal separation from God. That place is hell. Hell is real. Hell is eternal. Once there, there is no escape. There is no rescue.

As we receive spiritual life by Holy Spirit, the inner man is eternal. No one can kill our spirits. When this outer man dies, which it will should the Lord not return, our inner man will live. That is called eternal life. There is another word for that—glorification. We will see Jesus as He is and we will be glorified with Him.

Let us, therefore be renewed day by day by day.

Verse 18 Look not at the things that are seen, but look at that which is unseen.

Focus, think about, let that which drives you forward be that which is heavenly focused.