

**Thesis: like Paul, we endure - the afflictions of this life by faith in Christ's Revelation, so that His grace can extend to all people and we can be changed in the process!**

**Remember/Review:**

1. we have this ministry by the mercy of God!
2. We were set free by this mercy (end of chapter 3) where the Spirit of the Lord is there is...?

Paul is the one showing us and preaching to us in this letter about the ministry he had given Him by Jesus. Jesus Himself showed Paul these truths, the things that he must suffer and by revelation. So he special received -

**Read Gal 1:11-18** 'revelation' that he could sink his teeth of faith into. (great light 2 Cor 4:6  
- the gospel was revealed/taught to Paul over an extended training in Arabia...teaching and warning...(read more in Acts 9:6)

How Do We Get This Revelation? By faith in what God has revealed through Christ's Word.

**Romans 10:17 Slide**

How did Jesus teach these things - well He is God - yes - but God became man...Jesus could know all things because He is and was and always will be God - but He is eternally the God-Man...so He learned these things - about affliction and ministry - because He lived them....

**So these were not things that Jesus taught as just theoretical truth nor had He been unwilling to go through.**

**Jesus over and over told His followers of Sufferings to come...**(just as I am warning you today)

Luke 9:22 " the Son of Man must suffer many things"

Matthew 17 and Mark 9 similar warnings. Our decision to speak about afflictions and hold onto faith in the midst of many afflictions must come out of our relationship to Christ. Ultimately we need to connect our afflictions by faith to our relationship to Him - or they won't make any sense.

**In Short Our a Focus is and must remain on Christ:**

Jesus said,

**Matthew 10:38**

Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. (no sugarcoat)

**Mark 1:17**

**17** And Jesus said to them, "**Follow** me, and I will make you become fishers of men."

We are told by Paul...to walk in a manner that is worthy of our calling: our calling is to **follow** after Christ. He sets the pace - He is the example...

The very term follow means to follow from the rear...to be " right in back of them" of the one you are following.

It sounds redundant - of course to follow means that - but most want to lead (sin nature)

There are few in our culture who are worthy to be followed.

Jesus is worthy of our following Him.

**The Kicker:**

**1 Peter 2:20-23 Read context**

For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. (follow here = to walk in His tracks) "

**kept entrusting Himself to....**

### Luke 14:27

And whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple

**Questions:** what's the end game = death, laying down life, picking up a cross/instrument of death?  
Are we putting our faith in suffering....in cross picking upism?  
Is that it? Do Christian people just consign ourselves to being trampled on. Are we the doormats of the world for nothing or forever?

## There's A Message is in the Clouds

### Clouds of Heaven Slide

Daniel 7 "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. - **Daniel 7:13** (Daniel was in the midst of great affliction - he had lost his home and his homeland - but God was revealing himself by way of revelation to Daniel...There will be One who will come - the Son of Man - His vehicle of choice are the clouds of heaven.

### In answer to the Sanhedrin (the very night before He dies on the cross)

Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." - **Slide Matthew 26:64**

#### Repeated:

And Jesus said, "I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven." - **Slide Mark 14:62**

### John Got It - Slide

5 and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood

6 and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

7 Behold, he is coming with the **clouds**, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen. - **Revelation 1:5-7**

I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. - **Revelation 1:9**

John - is part of a cloud of witnesses - our partner in afflictions as is Paul....

What else describes the coming of the Lord...? **Slide 1 Thessalonians 3:13, 4:17**

so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the **coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints**. - **1 Thessalonians 3:13**

Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. - **1 Thessalonians 4:17**

The Cloud is Going to be Brought IN THE CLOUD

...just how many will be there? **Slide Rev. 7:9** says a crowd so great no one can number!!!

Who Else???

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne **Matthew 25:31**

## How did Jesus cope with the afflictions of His suffering?

Hebrews 12:2

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,  
2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, **despising the shame**, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. -  
**Hebrews 12:1-2**

He did what He told us to do....1. He kept His eyes fixed on God...2. HE ENDURED THE CROSS and  
3. HE DESPISED THE SHME...

Jesus did get to sit at the right hand of the Father !!!!!  
He did endure the cross! By looking to His Father...and what He would enjoy with Him AND  
HE DESPISED THE SHAME...

How did He despise the shame? HE REALLY WAS SHAMED....

Jesus was covered in shame.

His coming to earth was a demotion.

He was despised and rejected by men.

He was abandoned by His disciples - that is shame.

His own family did not believe in Him for most of his ministry.

Then He was arrested by men.

He was bound.

He was lied about - shame.

He was spit on - an act of shame.

He was hit about the head - that is shameful.

He was stripped and His nakedness is shameful.

People wagged His head and scoffed. Shame again.

He was covered in it as Piper says.

But He despised it!

How?

HE TURNED TO JOY

Hebrews 12 it was for the joy set before Him.

IT IS WITH JOY that we despise the shame...future joy - but also faith filled Joy that fills your heart with the peace that passes all understanding....

How does Paul say we can follow Christ in this way?

2Corinthians 4 **Slide**

13 Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak,

14 **knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.**

15 For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

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. - 2 Corinthians 4:13-18

### **Sermon Outline Slides (follow me and I will make you fishers of men.)**

#### **1. Faith - WE MINISTER FROM a spirit of faith - a faith attitude... southern = spit 'N Image - spirit and image like Christ!**

A. We **believe** so we speak - we testify to what we believe in - in the midst of affliction otherwise it is not real faith. The basis of our sharing the Word is our faith that it is the truth despite my momentary condition. Jesus implicitly trusted His Father's plan while He stood in the midst of those who would condemn Him to death!!!! He kept testifying to the truth!! I am the Christ though I don't look like it to you - but you will see when I Come on the Clouds of Heaven like Daniel said.

#### **2. WE PUT OUR Faith in our future-ultimate joy - vs. 14 knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.**

We can have a measure of joy here...we want our family to enjoy life...even our animals we love to see enjoying a bone or a run or our love for them.

But this earth is not our home we are just passing through, so we keep our eyes on the prize of the upward call of God. Phil. 3:14

He will raise us...it is an upward call.

Faith in our future ultimate joy.

This will help us despise the shame we must now endure for His sake.

#### **3. Faith in His Grace Extension for Many Others**

The grace of God is moving beyond us to others.

We must know that is why we are here - the very ones who know shame us can be reached.

What about the Roman soldier who said "surely this man was the son of God" Mark 15:39

He went from Shaming to believing - (can't wait to hear his testimony) Paul would go on to preach and the whole Praetorium guard would hear and many would believe. Phil1:13)

#### **4. Faith in His Transformation Work in Us**

Vs. 16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day - inner self...our character - our heart our mind renewed...and He will finish it on the DAY of Christ - when we get into the cloud! (say to your neighbor - I will be in the cloud)

**And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. - Philippians 1:6**

#### **5. Faith in the Eternal Weight of Future Glory - the opposite of shame is glory -7 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison**

29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also **glorified**. - Romans 8:29-30

Our hope is glory - God glorified in Us! He calls us as though it is already a fact...

One pastor put this eternal weight of glory in these words:

And the point is not that the afflictions merely precede the glory; they help produce the glory. There is a real causal connection between how we endure hardship now and how much we will be able to enjoy the glory of God in the ages to come. Not one moment of patient pain is wasted. I do not lose heart . . . FOR all my troubles are producing for me an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison. (J. Piper)

## **6. Faith in the Eternal Unseen**

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

Eternal Focused Eyes of Faith!!!!

we can't afford to become myopic - obtuse is not an option. (failing to see what is obvious)

definition of obtuse: annoyingly insensitive or slow to understand.

We have to foster a spirit of faith in our God - in Our Savior!

***Faithful eyes - will produce for us the ability to contain and carry and eternal weight of glory we can't even imagine yet!!!!***

***Repeat the six truths of the text in 2 Corinthians 4***

**Applications:**

**1. The Good** - We can have real assurance that our faith will be rewarded with the (1) extension of grace to others and (2) our own glory and reward in heaven.

Our grace given ministries will have eternal consequences and reward and in those things we can face all that the devil and this works throws at us.

**2. The Bad** - no acceptance of this grace - if people reject the work of the Spirit of God in us they are really refusing Christ!

We believe therefore we speak - what do we speak about? Christ Jesus! Paulmaaid earlier we don't proclaim ourselves but Christ!

This message in 2 Corinthians 4 is so we don't lose heart...but you can chose to lose heart!

**Slides of Stop signs....**

**Hebrews 10:26-31**

26 For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

27 but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.

28 Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses.

29 How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people."

31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. - Hebrews 10:26-31

How do we stay far away from the precipice, from the edge of the cliff of sinning deliberately?

**The Warning in 26-31 is Preceded by the Antidote in 29-25**

19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,  
20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,

21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,

25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. - Hebrews 10:19-25

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. - Philippians 1:6 10:19ff