Message for THE LORD’S DAY EVENING, August 18, 2019
Christian Hope Church of Christ, Plymouth, North Carolina
by Reggie A. Braziel, Minister

TOPIC: Eternity, Christian Living

Life From A Different Perspective
II Corinthians 4:16-18 (NKJV)

Please open your Bibles to our scripture text in II Corinthians chapter four. And let’s read verses 16-18.

II CORINTHIANS 4:16-18 (NKJV)

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.

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Introduction

Illustration: Back in the late 1980’s my dad accepted the call to become the minister at Old Ford Church of Christ, Washington, NC. Since dad and mom would be moving over 800 miles from Indiana, dad asked the leaders of the Church if they might help him locate a house to rent or buy since they were familiar with the area.

About three weeks before the planned move, one of the men in the Church called dad to let him know they had located a house to rent that was a little over one mile away north of the Church on Highway 17. The man described the house to my dad. He told him it was a very nice three bedroom home, with one bath, a large living room and dining room, and a very large storage building out behind the house. He said, “Bob, you and Joyce are going to absolutely love it! The house sets back off the road and with all the beautiful trees around it, it looks like a scenic park.”
Three weeks later, Linda and I helped my dad and mom load all their belongings and together we made the **815 mile trip from Washington, Indiana to Washington, North Carolina**. We pulled into Washington real late on Monday night and spent the night at the old Holiday Inn.

On Tuesday morning we got up early, had breakfast and headed up Highway 17 to move mom and dad into their new home. When we pulled into the driveway the place didn't quite look like “the scenic park” the man had described to dad on the phone. The grass was all grown up......the hedges looked like they had been trimmed in quite some time......and there were dead branches and pine cones littering the yard.

When we stepped inside the house for the first time we were immediately hit with the pungent aroma of something very dead. As we made our initial tour through the house I saw my mom trying to hide her disappointment behind her pleasant smile. The whole house was filthy! The walls, the floors, the carpet, the counter tops, EVERYTHING WAS DOWNRIGHT NASTY!

We spent the entire day cleaning the house from top to bottom, while trying to unload everything off the Ryder truck as well. By late morning Linda discovered the source of the pungent odor.........who would ever thought there would be a dead black bird under the stove? Of course we also came across a various assortment of dead mice, dead cockroaches, and dead flies scattered throughout the house; and all the while my mom was fighting back tears.

After a long, hard day of cleaning and scrubbing and unloading the truck, we finally stopped to eat some supper around 8:30 or 9:00 that night. After supper Dad got up from the table and he said, “**Come with me, I want to show you all something.**” After a day “full of surprises” we didn’t know what to expect. Dad led us clear across the long front yard out to the edge of Highway 17 and dad said, “**Ok, everybody turn around and look back toward the house and tell me what you see.**” I said, “**Dad, its pitch dark, you can barely even see the house.**” Dad said, “**That's my point! From here it really does look like a scenic park. We just needed a different perspective.**”
Sometimes life is like that. Sometimes all we can see is the filth, and the nastiness, and the troubles and sorrows of this life; and it’s hard to fight back the tears.

In our scripture text, the apostle Paul says, “Come with me, I want to show you something. I want to show you life from a different perspective.”

First, Paul has us look at........

I. **LIFE From An EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVE** (v.16a)

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing........

1. Paul begins with a positive affirmation: “Therefore we do not lose heart.”

2. To understand what Paul is talking about we have to put this statement in the context of what Paul was talking about in the verses before it.

Back in **verses 7-10** Paul talked about how difficult this life is. He said,

II Corinthians 4:7-10 (NKJV)

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.
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.

3. Paul is telling us when we look at life from an external perspective sometimes it seems like we have troubles and problems and hardships coming at us from every side. And it feels like we are crushed and forsaken and struck down.
4. But then in verses 13, 14 Paul reminds us that no matter how hard life gets, we as Christians possess something the world can never take away from us and that is the wonderful hope of our resurrection through Jesus Christ!

5. It is that wonderful hope that led Paul to say, “Therefore we do not lose heart, even though our outward man is perishing........”

Illustration: I'll never forget something my High School biology teacher said one day in class. Mr. Reid said, “We start dying the very minute we are born.”

Now, I never got the impression that Mr. Reid was a Christian, but what he said that underscored a very fundamental truth of scripture and that is God did not create these human bodies of ours' to last forever.

6. From “an external perspective” it is obvious that our outward man is perishing isn’t it? Just like that old house we moved my mom and dad into, these “old houses” of ours' begin to show signs of wear and tear. We feel it in our bones every morning when we get out of bed. We see it every time we look at ourselves in a mirror. And we are reminded of it every time we go to see the doctor. “Ain't none of us getting any younger!”

-Our appearance isn't the same as it was twenty-five years ago. (The other day I saw a picture on Facebook of someone I went to Bible College with and I couldn’t believe how old they looked. And then the thought occurred to me that they probably saw my picture on Facebook and thought the same thing about me.)

- Our strength and stamina and energy level aren't what they were twenty-five years ago.

- And chances are, none of our memories are as keen as they were twenty-five years ago. We forget people’s names, where we left our car keys or cell phone, what we had for lunch, or we show up for an appointment a week early or a week late.
As we advance in years it becomes harder to hear...harder to see...and harder to move. Our teeth fall out...Our skin wrinkles up...and our hair turns white, or gray, or turns loose.

And if we just look at our lives from a purely external perspective and focus on what's happening to us as we grow older, we can “lose heart” and grow very discouraged.

So Paul has us to continue walking with him as he show us........

II. LIFE From An INTERNAL PERSPECTIVE (vs. 16)

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

1. While it is very easy to see and feel what is happening to us outwardly as we grow old; Paul is reminding us there is something wonderful going on inside of us that we can't see.

2. Paul is reminding us that even though our physical glory is fading away as we grow older, OUR INWARD GLORY is getting stronger and better with every passing day!

   There is something going on inside of you and me that we can't visibly see. As our time on earth passes, the Holy Spirit has been transforming us, and changing us to become more and more like Christ as we move toward heaven our final destination.

3. Although we can't visibly see these things going on inside of us we can certainly see evidence that there is an inward renewal going on inside of us.

   If you will stop and think about it, chances are spiritual matters have taken a greater place of priority in your life than when you were younger. Perhaps Church means more to you now that it did years ago. Maybe you are more interested in reading your Bible and spend more time in prayer than you used. That's evidence that the Holy Spirit is renewing you day by day.
Do you find yourself growing weary of this old world and longing for heaven more and more?

Do you find yourself being more content with what God has blessed you with and desiring material things less and less?

Do you have a greater sense of peace about things that used to worry you to death?

Do you seem to have much more concern about the salvation of your lost loved ones and friends than you used to?

4. These are just a few of the evidences that the Holy Spirit is renewing you day by day as your earthly journey starts to wind down.

Paul has shown us **LIFE FROM AN EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVE** and he has shown us **LIFE FROM AN INTERNAL PERSPECTIVE**, but now Paul has us come a little farther as he shows us........

III. **LIFE From An ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE** (vs. 17,18)

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.

1. To help us see our life from an **eternal perspective** Paul paints a word picture for us here. It is the **picture of a balance scales**.

One one side of the scales Paul has us place all of our earthly trials.....and troubles......and sorrows......and losses. Paul refers to these things as “light and momentary afflictions.”

When you and I go through really tough times in this life they hardly seem “light and momentary” do they? They seem **heavy**! They seem like they will go on and on and never end.
2. When **JOB** lost all of his children and all of his earthly possessions, do you think he thought of his troubles as “light and momentary afflictions?”

When **JOSEPH** was sold by his own brothers to Midianite merchants and carried off to Egypt and spent the better part of his life away from his loving father, do you think Joseph thought of his troubles as “light and momentary afflictions?”

When **Mary and Martha** were grieving over the death of their beloved brother Lazarus do you think they thought of their time of grief as a light and momentary affliction?

3. None of us look at our trials and troubles that way. When we place all of our trials and troubles on the balance scales all by themselves they seem very, very heavy!

4. But now on the other side of the balance scales Paul has us place something he calls “our eternal weight of glory.”

   \[ \text{v. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,} \]

When you place “our light and momentary afflictions” on the balance scales with “our eternal weight of glory” the scales are so heavily tipped that it makes our light and momentary afflictions seem weightless.

   In other words, when you weigh everything we have had to go through in this life with what is awaiting us in heaven, we will realize it was worth it all!

5. The very moment we set foot in heaven we will never remember any of the trials or troubles we went through. We will never remember any of the grief and sorrow we experienced. We will never remember any of the bad stuff; because our minds will be so over-whelmed with the beauty and glory of heaven that those things will be erased from our memory forever and ever!
6. In verse 18 reminds us that the things we see now are the things that won’t last, they are just temporary. But the things we can’t presently see are the things that will last forever, those things are eternal!

CONCLUSION

Going back to the story I told you in the beginning. My dad knew my mom was greatly disheartened when she saw the condition of the home they were going to be living in. And to be honest, dad was disheartened too!

In his wisdom, dad knew he needed to give mom a different perspective along with a good dose of humor. That’s why dad had all of us go outside and look at the house from a distance in the dark of night. He wanted us to picture what we could not presently see. He wanted us to imagine the place as the “scenic park” as the man described.

One day you and I are going to be leaving our home here and moving to our new home! God our heavenly Father has described it in His Word as a home that more beautiful and more wonderful than anything our minds can ever imagine! And one thing we can be sure of is that none of us are going to be disappointed when we get there.

For now, let us continue to live our lives here and let us be faithful unto death, but let us do so with an eternal perspective!