

2 COR. 4:7-18 - DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

DON'T LOSE HEART! - ([SERMON MP3](#))

We often assume that our weakness will hinder the gospel and detract from it. On the contrary, how does our weakness reveal God's power (2Cor. 4:7)?

- *Can you think of a biblical or modern day example of how the Lord used weakness to display his power?*
- *What are some things you have learned about God in your weakest times of life?*
- **We can be renewed when we look at life through the lens of faith.** According to (2Cor. 4:18), faith focuses us on the _____ and _____.

What unseen things in the future are you looking forward to that encourage you to endure in the application of your faith? List three unseen future things worth focusing on.

- *How do you feel it would change your experience of life if you were able to see your troubles as Paul saw his and focus on what is unseen and eternal?*
- **What does (2Cor. 4:8-9) bring to your mind concerning Paul's attitude about hardship?** In your opinion, are most Christians today living with the same attitude? Explain.

Earthenware vessels were common in every home in the ancient world. They were not very durable (compared to metal), and they were useless if broken. As such, they were cheap and of little intrinsic value. What we find in (2Cor. 4:7) is that God chose to put His light and glory in the everyday dishes, not in fine china. Why do you think God chooses earthen vessels like you and me?

Glory is tied to suffering, and God will accomplish in us a glory far heavier than any affliction we have suffered here. Affliction is not something to be endured in order to reach glory, it is the very process which creates the glory. Someone used the analogy of a baby being born and said, "Through travail comes birth." The agony of our suffering is the means of producing eternal glory. Instead of viewing suffering and sacrifice as a means of glory, how do most people view them?

God doesn't want us to lose heart, but suffering and sacrifice can threaten our joy. How have you struggled this past year with discouragement?

- What did you do in the midst of those discouraging times?
- *What should we do when we feel like we are losing heart in the midst of serving Christ?*
- *What passages of Scripture have encouraged you when you are down? Write down a few to share with the group.*

PRAYER REQUESTS

Suffering and afflictions can capture us and overwhelm us because we don't understand the comparison of _____ (Rom. 8:18). What are three practical ways we can focus on glory? Suffering and afflictions can bother us and ruin us because we are too tightly tied to them. How can we develop a deeper affinity for the glories of heaven than this fallen and fleeting world?

In (2Cor. 4:14) we are reminded of the resurrection. How is the resurrection a source of comfort in the midst of suffering and sacrifice?

Living on mission for Christ is hard, and the difficulty associated with it can threaten your joy. But don't lose heart. Instead, remember that God is doing great things through your hardship and he offers fresh renewal for your soul if you'll look at your struggles through the lens of faith. In what ways does that statement encourage, challenge, or convict you most?

Steinway pianos are built today the same way they were 140 years ago when Henry Steinway started his business. Two hundred craftsmen and 12,000 parts are required to produce one of these magnificent instruments. Most crucial is the rim-bending process in which eighteen layers of maple are bent around an iron press to create the shape of a Steinway grand. Five coats of lacquer are applied and hand rubbed to give the piano its outer glow. The instrument then goes to the Pounder Room, where each key is tested 10,000 times to ensure quality and durability. Much like a Steinway piano, followers of Christ are also being "handcrafted." We are pressed and formed and shaped to make us more like Him. We are polished, sometimes in the rubbing of affliction, until we "glow." We are tested in the Pounder Room of suffering and sacrifice. The process is not always pleasant, but we can persevere with hope, knowing that the bending and pounding in our lives is producing "music" that graces so many others. (2Cor. 4:12) "So death is at work in us, but life in you."

- **Can you think of a time when you were "bent" and "pounded" in the midst of trying to live for Christ.**
- *How was the pounding and bending of your life used by God to produce the sweet music of grace in someone else's life?*