

2 Corinthians 4:17

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[0 : 0 0] Thank You again for this opportunity of gathering around Your Word, and we do pray, Lord, as we come to meditate upon it, that You would give us a hearing ear, that You would give us a heart to understand, and most of all, that You would give us a humility to know that it is You who speaks to us. Remove man from it. Enable us, Lord, speaker and hearer alike, to know Your leading, Your Spirit's presence in our midst. In Christ's name we ask. Amen.

I'd like you to turn back with me to the passage we read together in 2 Corinthians chapter 4. And what I want to look at is verse 17 as a text, For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

I don't know whether it's I'm sweating one minute and I'm cold the next and the blood stopped my finger, it's nerves, I'm sure, but hence the prayer to God.

Our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. Last Wednesday, as I had started looking at this, I was due to go on a driving lesson on a man known to many of you, whose test was the next morning at 8.20 a.m.

Tommy Montgomery. And I had to phone Tommy at 10 past 2 to tell him the car wouldn't start.

[2 : 1 3] The momentary troubles, the car wouldn't start, I've got a test booked, it's cost him 62 pounds, which was flashing before my eyes, being a bit of an Aberdonian.

What was I going to do? I found a garage, I got it towed there and was told that a camshaft sensor was gone and was required to be replaced at a cost that is of no great interest to you, but that there was none available. The nearest one was in Huntley.

So I jumped in my other car and took off for Huntley and I won't tell you how fast or how slow, but I got the camshaft sensor to come back to the garage at 20 past 4 to be told, well, we close at 5 o'clock. And I thought, wow, where am I now?

I phoned Arnold Clark and temporarily booked a car, not telling Tommy that he would have a strange car for his test. However, the man in the garage very kindly saw my predicament and the car was repaired by 6 o'clock, back at 6. I went out with Tommy in the evening and we went over things and we had a time of prayer, thanking God that the car was now going again.

And he went and sat his test and against all the odds or my expectations came back with three minors. And the examiner said, it's the first pupil I've had who's told me his own faults without me having to write them down. But Tommy was praising God and I can tell you so was I. But momentary troubles, it seemed my whole world had collapsed. My business was in its depths. What could I do?

[4 : 1 2] Pray to God and he answered our problems. The passage we read here together, what kind of man is the Apostle Paul? When he could speak of his troubles as being light? They weren't really of great significance to him, were they? One might immediately say, what a man of strength he must have been. What a robust individual Paul must have been. Another might say, well, I have had my problems.

I've had to stand at the graveside of a loved one in their young years. I've had to look after an elderly relative for many years. I've been told of a serious illness, possibly terminal. My problems are not light.

What kind of man could say that his troubles, his trials were light when we read of the afflictions, such as verse 8, where we are hard pressed, he says. We are perplexed. We are persecuted. We are struck down.

There's another passage in chapter 11 Paul relates to, I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, been exposed to death again and again. Five times from the Jews I've received the 40 lashes, mine is one. Three times I was beaten with rods, I was stoned, I was at sea shipwrecked, spent a night and a day in the open sea, been constantly on the move. I've been in danger from rivers, bandits, danger from my own countrymen, danger from Gentiles, danger in the country, danger at sea, danger from false brothers. And yet, he goes on, I have labored and toiled, gone without sleep.

I've known hunger, I've known thirst. Without food, I have been cold and naked. And yet, he says, my troubles are light. What a list of dangers have ever a man lived on the precipice of life, it was surely Paul. Yet, it's him who says his troubles are light. And you know, he knew troubles additional to many people. He also knew that his troubles were peculiar because of his apostleship.

[7 : 07] As one who was gifted, as one who was sent out to the far ends of the known world at that time, Paul knew his troubles. Eventually, into the hands of the Emperor Nero, where he was martyred. How could Paul describe his troubles as light? How can you or I describe your troubles as light? Wednesday there this last week, my world had collapsed around me. But you know, in the cool light of day, you think of it, what did I to worry about? What was it? A car broken down in a test. What was the big worry?

What was it? What was it? What was it? What was it? What was it? What was it? What was it? What was it? One thing I would suggest to you for whatever our troubles may be in comparison to the desire of our hearts, surely our desire should be to see the elect of God gathered in, into His kingdom.

Whatever that might involve, whatever the lost might be found, that the perishing might be saved.

Put yourself in the situation. I was just recollecting yesterday, and I looked back, a little personal diary I kept.

Twenty-three years ago, around at Grey Hope Road, I was called on duty to an incident where a drunken sailor had put a trawler onto the rocks at the entrance to Aberdeen Harbor. It was blowing a forced 10-11 gale into the harbor entrance. And I witnessed that man, as far as the pulpit to the front seat there, before me, perish and die over four hours, almost four hours.

[9 : 18] Soon here, but yet so far, restrained by a senior officer because I was quite willing to put a rope around my waist and go for him, but had to be removed because they wouldn't take the risk.

How would it be if you went out to the North Railway Line there and you witnessed a young child playing on the railway line? Would you not jump over the fence and remove that child and take her back to safety?

Yes, it may cost us to reach out to strangers, but they are strangers to grace, and surely it would cost us nothing in comparison to getting them into safety. Now, I'm looking and making the comparison of the lost our soul into the safety of God's salvation. Then again, we may ask ourselves that our troubles are light in comparison to man's chief end, which is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

We should always be mindful of what it cost the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation, that we might enjoy eternal peace with God. How He left the glory of heaven to come into this world, left His Father's side and the privileges He enjoyed there to live and to suffer and ultimately die.

As we're told in the Bible, He who knew no sin made sin for us. When I take a careful thought and think of what Jesus did for me, have you given thought what He's done for you? What a rescue was here the day the Lord Jesus came and saved me. Do you say that today?

[11 : 24] What about you? Jesus came to rescue you. What troubles have we got to worry about? But then again, our troubles are light compared to those of so many others when you think of it.

There's a report yesterday through an agency I keep in touch with on the internet that people in Burma are suffering for their faith quite severely again. And there is no doubt there are times we suffer, but how many people lie in an unidentified cell, an unknown cell behind a locked door for their faith?

As we read off and heard that Paul went to martyrdom, and how many people since have lost their lives because of their faith? The psalmist said, the Lord does not treat us as our sins, deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. It's imperative that we remind ourselves that your sin, my sin, my sin, one day is to be judged. Our sins are to be judged. And a question for us, each one of us is, where will our sin be judged? Because it's in one of two places our sin will be judged. It will either be judged here or it will be judged in Christ. It will be on my own head or upon the head of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And as I come to Him and I confess my sin, I receive Him as my Savior. I trust in His finished work. When He cried out from that cross, it is finished, He said. Christ gave up His life for me. He gave up His life for you. Will your sin be judged in Christ?

You know, if I were to leave or you are to leave this world Christless, then the troubles we would know we could make no comparison of.

[13 : 49] We're well warned, friends, what these troubles will be. With light troubles here, there is no comparison what eternity will be without Christ.

Think carefully of the consequences. Depart into the fathomless pit. It's a fearful thought. The lake of fire. You know, just think how the rich man begged that Lazarus be sent. I know the words are so descriptive there, that the tip of his finger could be dipped in cold water so that it could relieve what he was going through.

If that's not descriptive, I don't know. The rich man begged Father Abraham to send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in chilled water to cool his tongue.

But for those of us who are safe in Christ today, there is no fear of such a trouble.

And then again, we can say our troubles are light compared with the blessings we receive. You thought of the blessings that you have received since you got up this morning.

[15 : 18] The blessings of this day alone, far less the blessings of the last week, the last month, the last year. We're given the blessing of even being here present today, richly blessed to come under the hearing of God's Word.

We have known the blessing of that sweet voice, that still voice calling us through the ministry of God's Word. The power of the Holy Spirit called us to Himself.

Once dead in our transgressions. You know the example given of Lazarus in that tomb, and Jesus called out to Lazarus.

The voice of Jesus sounded into the grave, and Lazarus arose. There's a great example there. If you're without Christ today, friend, you are in a grave of sin.

And Jesus is calling out, come, come to me. Is that voice calling you to come? There is also a blessing of justification, being justified.

[16 : 39] Wherever I have been, the Lord no longer sees those filthy rags of my sin that I was once clothed in.

But all that is seen is the righteousness of Christ. As a believer in the Lord Jesus, I'm accepted. You are accepted as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Justified. Never sinned in the sight of God. Because your sins have been washed away by the blood of Christ.

Yes, conversion. I'm using old-fashioned words today. Good old-fashioned words that bring a soul into God's kingdom.

Are you converted? Are you saved? That is also the blessing of being sanctified.

[17 : 40] Sanctification. Being sanctified. Those who are not believers in the Lord Jesus live a life of emptiness. And if you don't trust in the Lord Jesus today, I don't care who or what you are, your life is an empty clanging symbol, the Bible tells us.

It's empty. Sanctification is a blessing. Are you adopted into the family of God?

Those who have been called, those who have been quickened, have been justified and sanctified adopted, part of a new family. Brothers and sisters in Christ, we belong to God.

We can call Him Abba. We can genuinely say, our Father who art in heaven. Can you say that today? Yes, adopted into the family of God.

And there's another blessing too, the grace of perseverance. How often we fear that we may stumble and fall and never be able to pick ourselves up again.

[19 : 00] I could identify that on Wednesday. I thought my world had clasped around me. And there are situations you'd identify and I could go further on too. But we look to God and we pick ourselves up.

We persevere. Perseverance is a doctrine in the Scriptures. And it's something we have to work on. We have to read and pray and feed on that book and persevere.

Perseverance of the saints. Yes, this morning you may very well feel defeated. You may very well feel on the edge of giving up on your faith.

But you will keep going. Keep going to the end because Jesus has promised, I will come back. I will come back. And that's what we hold on to.

Now, He's coming back. Our troubles are light compared with the many blessings. Are not our troubles light compared with the troubles of the Lord experienced for our salvation?

[20 : 17] Yes, I fully realize and appreciate we all get different cups to drink from. Some cups are very bitter. There's many of you here present.

No. These cups. Cups of bitter experience. Difficult. But no matter how difficult, how would your cup compare with the cup that Jesus prayed to His Father and asked Him, if it is possible that this cup be passed on from Him.

That's why Jesus died the bloody cruel death on Calvary's cross. For your sin, for my sin.

He bore it all for His beloved. And how could one man take in himself the sin? That's what crushed Jesus.

We're so inclined sometimes, and my hand and heart say it to myself, we look on the cruelty and how Jesus was battered and all the rest of it.

[21 : 31] What we don't see and maybe take on board sufficiently is not just the physical pain that Jesus went through, but what He bore with the sin of my heart, far less your heart.

What Jesus took upon Himself. You know, there was when I worked on the West Coast as a Presby worker in Skye and Lafalche, I had the pleasure of visiting a lot of different homes, and I took an attitude, well, I didn't care what church they went to, I just visited the home if there was a door and a light on.

And I met lots of lovely people. And this woman hadn't been to church for many years, for one reason or another, I'm not going into, but she was a great woman of faith.

And you wouldn't be with her long until she would come round to speak about her faith. And she always used to center with a cup of tea shaking in her hand. I remember yet.

She's in glory now. And she used to say, Bill, I suffer every day, but I never suffer the way Jesus did. And that poor woman was in a lot of pain and housebound, but yet with a tear in her eye, I never suffered the way Jesus did.

[23 : 04] Yes, our troubles are light compared to the troubles of our Lord. These troubles He endured for us. You know something, and it's a good little policy to keep with you.

The day you are no longer able to stand is the day that you should kneel before God. Don't try and stand, and I'm as guilty as anybody in my own strength.

Come before God, on your knees, and pray. Here you are today, friend, and I would ask you to think, and if you ever get the opportunity, think it through. Go down to the end of Dice Airport and watch these big jets.

Go down to the far end. Ian Bowman there will tell you all about it. And I find it fascinating. I love to be sitting in a jet taking off. It gives me a great feeling of power, like past cars. But you feel this jet hurtling along, and you watch it, and you think to yourself, well, all the forces of gravity are pushing this thing down. Is it ever going to take off? And you've all had that feeling, as it goes along and further and further. I remember once taking off in Corfu, thinking it was going to go head first into the water. But eventually you find, as the forces are overcome by the speed and the design of the aircraft, up it goes. So it is, if we go on our knees before God, up we go. We're communicating with the Creator. The hymn writer wrote, I heard the voice of Jesus say, Come unto me and rest. Come unto me, thou weary one. Lay down thy head upon my breast. I came to Jesus as I was, weary, worn, and sad. I found him in a resting place, and he has made me glad. 1979, 10th of June, I was saved. I'm not saying it's all been glad, but it's assurance. And I believe that when Jesus does come back, he'll come back for me.

And I ask you the question, How heavy are your troubles today? You know, if I had told you at the start of this sermon that I had eight points, many of you would have shut your eyes.

[25 : 57] But I am on the final point, the eighth point. And I wish to develop this one further this evening. I we, as I said, thing. We don't know which one of us knows how close we are to eternity.

Some of us may be sitting on the riverbank, ready to cross. None of us know. None of us know. There are some of you here present, maybe hope, for 20, 30, maybe more years to go on in the Lord's work. But all I can say to you is the miles go by quickly.

James asks the question, what is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. And so it is. But you know, friend, if you're born again today, if you're saved, if you're a believer, the best is yet to come. I enjoy life. I do enjoy life despite trials and tribulations.

But I look forward to what is to come. Yes, we see through a glass darkly just now. We don't know. John tells us in Revelation, there will be no more tears. Yes, every tear will be wiped away. But you know, the interesting thing there is, it's not that Jesus is going to come and wipe a big towel over Bill McClellan's tears. No, the Greek there infers there will be no capacity for tears. There will be no need for tears. There will be no more death or mourning or crying for the order of things. The old order of things has passed away. Our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. I hope and trust that you have that perspective of your troubles. And I'm not taking away from your troubles. Please don't think that. We all have our troubles. We all have our worries.

We all have our concerns. But if you today are without the Savior, if you do not and have not yet put your trust and faith in Christ, you have trouble. How hopeless is the end and the end of the day is your case.

[28 : 55] If you are not saved, I would say this to you in these quiet moments as Jesus calls you, realize His calling and respond to you, realize His calling. I'm not asking you to stand up or to put your hand up or anything else.

But what I'm asking you is to come out of the tomb of your salvation. Come out of that grave. Come from death. Come from the death of sin into the marvelous light of God's grace.

Let's pray. Our gracious and eternal God, we give you thanks.

We give you thanks for this passage of your Word that we have looked at and the reminder of the comparison of our troubles, of what trouble the Lord Jesus took upon His life for us.

We thank you even for the writings of the Apostle Paul and the many troubles and trials that he went through and yet was able to say these marvelous words and how and what comparison they were to what was yet to come.

[30 : 26] We do pray, Lord God, that if there is anyone here present today who has personal troubles or sufferings, that we will enable them to realize that it is not in any derogatory way that one is mentioning such things, but in the reality of making a comparison that our troubles in this life are nothing in comparison to what troubles and sufferings we will have to leave this world without Christ as our Savior.

Lord, you have told us clearly some horror descriptions of hell itself. And we pray, Lord, that each one of us here present today that you would fix our eyes upon Jesus, that we would realize that He holds His hand out to us for us to take hold of it and to trust Him, and that He will take us safely to be with Him in eternity in heaven itself.

We do pray, Lord God, that you would speak to each one of us and allow us to see your love and concern and the suffering that Jesus took for our sin, the suffering that He took upon Himself for each one of us.

And that you would pray, Lord, that you would pray for us to be with us. And that you would pray for us to be with us as we part one from the other. Be with us as we sing our final praise and guide us and help us.

And in your will, take us together again this evening. These things we ask again with the forgiveness of sin. Amen. Amen.

[32 : 20] We'll conclude our service by singing in Psalm 130 in the Scottish Salter. That's on page 421. And the tune this time is Martyrdom.

Lord, from the depths to Thee I cried, my voice, Lord, do Thou hear, and to my supplications' voice, give an attentive ear. And you know, there's the great promise.

And plenteous redemption is ever found with Him, and from all His iniquities He, Israel, shall redeem. Psalm 130, tune Martyrdom, Lord, from the depths to Thee I cried, and we'll stand to sing.

Psalm 130, tune Martyrdom, Lord, from the depths to Thee I cried, my voice, Lord, do Thou hear, and to my supplications' voice, may Thou not attend to me.

My precious Son, may Thou, O Lord, should snorke iniquity.

[33 : 55] But yet with Thee, for goodness' voice, may Thou mayest be.

I wait for God, my soul of wait, my hope is in His word.

For heavenly God, for barring watch, my soul is for the Lord.

I say, Lord, that they can't do what, the morning light to see.

Let Israel, hope in the Lord, for within mercy's need.

[35 : 29] And when to earth's redemption is ever found with Him, And from all His iniquities, He is the Lord shall redeem.

May grace, mercy, and peace, and Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with each one of us now and evermore. Amen.