

INTRODUCTION

- * As we began our study of Paul's second epistle to the church of Corinth, we considered the purpose of affliction in the life of the believer. Through afflictions, we have the opportunity to receive the encouragement of God and, subsequently, to dispense that same encouragement to others who are experiencing afflictions. Hence, rather than seeing trials as the world sees them – as hindrances and enemies to our happiness – we must come to embrace them knowing that our Sovereign God allowed them into our lives in order that we might grow in our knowledge of Christ and glorify He who redeemed us by His blood!
- * Two weeks ago, we saw how Paul declared that there were points in his life and ministry where he despaired of even life itself (1:8). Yet, he found his strength in God who delivers from death itself!
- * He then, seemingly, changed the subject to contrast the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Yet, Paul was laying the foundation and instructing the believers regarding the existence of spiritual afflictions which are a result of the spiritual war in which we walk – unbeknownst many times! Paul revealed the superiority of the New Covenant which is spiritual, not physical.
- * Truly, the core of our consideration of "Embracing Afflictions" will come as we consider the constant battle between the physical and the spiritual. Paul told the Ephesians, "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood ..." Though we live in a physical plane, as spirit beings we must learn to think beyond the moment.
- * In today's passage, Paul challenges the Corinthians to Maintain a Proper Focus, first by using his own life, and ministry, as an example.

INSTRUCTION ... In the face of affliction, we do not lose heart ...**I. IN M _____: Keeping Our Focus On G _____ (4:1 – 15)****A. In The Proclamation of the Gospel** (cf. 4:1-6)

1. OUR M _____ (v. 1-3,5; Galatians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:3-8)
2. OUR M _____ (v. 3-4; cf. 1 Corinthians 15:3-5; Colossians 1:15,19; 2:9)
3. OUR M _____ (v. 6)

B. In The Presentation of our Lives as a Willing Sacrifice (cf. 4:7-15; Romans 12:1; Philippians 1:21-26; 2:1-5)

1. THE MANIFESTATION OF THE P _____ OF G _____
 - a. In The F _____ of Our C _____
 - b. In The S _____ of Our A _____
2. THE MANIFESTATION OF THE L _____ OF C _____
 - a. The Source: _____ (cf. Psalm 116:10)
 - b. The Reason: _____
 - i. To the Glory of God
 - ii. For the Grace of God

II. IN L _____: Keeping Our Focus On E _____ (4:16 – 5:8)**A. The Contrast Between The P _____ and the S _____** (v. 4:16)**B. The Contrast Between The T _____ and the E _____** (v. 4:17-5:8; Colossians 3:1-3)

1. THE P _____ OF THE S _____ (cf. John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:35-54)
2. THE G _____ OF THE S _____ (cf. Ephesians 1:11-14)

INTROSPECTION

- * What is the focus of your life? What is it that you are seeking?
- * Do you consider the needs of others as being more important than your own? This is the mind of Christ and core of ministry!
- * Is the Power and Glory of God being manifested in your life?
- * Are you setting your mind on things above and living for eternity?
- * Is there a need to change the way you think ... and therefore act?

INTERACTION ... Thoughts & Questions to ponder for later discussion

It may be helpful to re-read the passage before the discussion.

- * Read Ephesians 6:10-20. How does this passage apply to dealing with, and embracing, afflictions in our lives?
- * Read 1 Peter 2. How does this passage apply to our topic of embracing afflictions?