

Our Light Affliction

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“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” 2 Corinthians 4:17.

- I. The righteous are not exempt from affliction and suffering.
 - A. It is certain to be our portion, as well as the portion of the wicked.
 - B. Our righteousness or our standing with God does not exempt us from affliction.
 - C. There is a great difference between the righteous and the wicked in every respect, and also in this area.
 - 1. Afflictions and suffering hurt the wicked, but help the righteous.
 - 2. The joy of the righteous is never referred to as short, but long, enduring, deep, and full – the beginning of heaven for them. Joy is long and grief is short.
 - 3. The joys of the wicked are light, fleeting, and temporary.
 - D. We must keep our perspective in the matter so that we don’t despair or faint under the circumstances.
 - E. The mind sustained by God can endure whatever is laid upon it to bear.

- II. Our afflictions are light.
 - A. In the light of what we know that we deserve, any affliction of this life seems light.
 - B. They are light compared to what Christ suffered for us.
 - C. They are light compared to what awaits the wicked – compared to those they are not worth even mentioning at all.
 - D. Our afflictions are light compared to what they would have been had Christ not died for us.
 - E. Our afflictions are short – compared to the eternity of suffering and anguish that awaits the wicked.
 - F. All our afflictions are the means of grace to “work in us “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”
 - 1. The afflictions themselves do not merit a reward, but the results they produce in us prepare us for glory.
 - 2. They work in us a weight of glory that far exceeds the weight of the affliction here.
 - G. When we realize the design and tendency of the afflictions, the sting and hurt is taken away. Then you will be able to honestly say:

It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes. – **Psalm 119:71**

Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word. **Psalm 119:67**
 - H. Our own consciousness of what we deserve inspires patience and submission to the afflictions of this life.
 - I. Knowing it is short and there is an end ahead to the affliction gives us strength and courage to endure.

For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. **Psalm 30:5**

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. **Psalm 42:5**

- III. The case of the wicked is not so.
- A. The things he calls joy are mere excitement and vanity.
 - 1. They are not made of anything substantial and the slightest adversity drives them away like chaff – and they are gone.
 - 2. There is nothing in them worthy of being called joy.
 - B. The joy of the sinner is short-lived, fleeting, and disappointing.
 - 1. They are vain, false, fickle, and unsatisfying.
 - 2. “Disappointment has hidden her sting beneath their fairest flowers.”
 - C. As the joy of a saint is a prelude to heaven, so the joy of a sinner is a prelude to hell.
 - 1. He is always disappointed and his joy always fades away.
 - 2. His joys were only the mercy of God, which he abused and will suffer for in hell.
 - 3. For eternity in hell he will remember those mercies of God that he abused in this life.
 - D. The afflictions and sufferings of the wicked must be borne alone – comfortless and nothing to sustain him.
 - 1. No hope such as the Christian has cheers or gladdens their heart.
 - E. The afflictions of the wicked are not light, as the Christian – but heavy.
 - F. The afflictions of the wicked are not short – but long, even everlasting.
 - 1. He may get a short respite, but only to face another avalanche of sorrow and torment.
 - G. The afflictions of the righteous work a far more exceeding weight of glory, but for the wicked they work a far more exceeding weight of damnation.
 - H. While all things work together for good for the Christian, all things work together for ill for the sinner.
 - 1. His joys and his afflictions all work to increase his bitterness and unbelief in God, and therefore his suffering in eternity, also.