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ILLUSTRATIONS, DEVOTIONALS, HOMILIES

2 Corinthians Resources

Part 3 of 3

Our Daily Bread

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Our Daily Homily - F B Meyer

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F B Meyer

Our Daily Homily

Who comforteth us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort. (r.v.)

Child of God, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which tries thee, as though some strange thing had happened. Rejoice, inasmuch as it is a sure sign that thou art on the right track. All the saints have gone by this road, notably the writer of this Epistle.

Its keyword is affliction, because written amid afflictions so great that the apostle despaired of life. It is steeped in affliction, as a handkerchief with the flowing blood of a fresh wound. But in this passage the apostle has built himself a little chamber of comfort, the stones of which were quarried from the pit of his own sorrow. He blesses God, who had led him into affliction to teach him the art of comfort, that by observing how God comforted, he might become proficient in the art.

The world is full of comfortless hearts — orphan. children crying in the night. Our God pities them, and would comfort them through thee. But ere thou undertake this lofty ministry thou must be trained, and thou must therefore pass through the very trials that they are exposed to. Now watch how God comforts thee. Keep a diary, if thou wilt, of his procedure. Ponder in thine heart the length of each splint, the folds of each bandage, the ministrations of each opiate, cordial, or drug. This will have a twofold effect, in turning thy thoughts from thy miseries to thy mercies, and in taking away the sense of useless and aimless existence.

There is evidently scope for comfort even in heaven, for it is said that God will wipe away tears from all faces. Oh thou that art sorrowful even unto death, be sure that some day the Comforter will get the victory over thy sorest griefs.

2 Corinthians 1:1-7

DAN Munro was a plastic surgeon at the University of Toronto. At one time, he was one of the few doctors in the world who could take apart and then rebuild the skulls of infants who had Crouzon's disease.

The head of a child who suffers from this condition becomes so misshapen that the extreme pressure put on the brain can cause mental retardation. Dr. Munro devised an operation in which as much as 90 percent of the skull and facial bones are broken in order to reshape the skull.

The motivation behind Dr. Munro's pioneering efforts in this highly specialized field was his own child, who suffered brain damage as a result of Crouzon's disease. A child's suffering created in the father's heart a deep sympathy for others with the same condition.

Dr. Munro's experience calls attention to the principle of 2 Corinthians 1:4. God in His grace uses the pain and suffering we experience to make it possible for us to empathize with and help others.

When we receive consolation and spiritual understanding through our troubles, God wants us to use what we have learned to benefit others.—H G Bosch

2Cor 1:3, 4

A mother who lost her son asked an elderly Chinese philosopher how to overcome her deep grief.

"I can help you, but you must first bring me some mustard seed," said the old wise man.

"But you must get it at a home where there has never been any loss or sorrow."

Eagerly the woman started her search, but in every home she visited was someone who had lost a loved one or had known some heartbreaking loss. Returning without any mustard seed, she exclaimed,

"How selfish I have been! Sorrow is common to all."

"Ah," said the philosopher, "you have learned a valuable lesson. Because you know sorrow, you can sympathize with others and comfort them. And when you do, your own sorrow will be lessened."

The best comforters are those whom God has comforted and who are willing to comfort others. —H G Bosch

GOD COMFORTS US TO MAKE US COMFORTERS.

2 Corinthians 1:3

What We Need

The heartbreaking stories keep coming. The friend whose grown daughter has left her husband and kids. The dads I recently met who lost their teen sons in car accidents. The pillar of the church whose retirement years have been marked by a string of bad medical news. You know the stories. You may have your own.

Where do we go for help when struggles and pain threaten to shake our faith and steal our last ounce of joy?

Second Corinthians 1:3 may be just the right destination. It is full of hope, help, and possibilities.

Examine what that verse tells us: Paul lifts praise to God on two levels (and remember, Paul had more struggles and trouble than most of us could stand). First, he simply sends praise to God, who is not just our God but the God and Father of Jesus Himself. Think about the power and the love behind that!

Then he gives us even better news: Our heavenly Father is the God of mercy and compassion. He cares for us with an everlasting, gracious love. And there's more—He is also the God of all comfort.

Need compassion? Need comfort? Go to God. He has an endless supply and is ready to pour it out on you in abundance. He is what we need in times of trouble! — by Dave Branon

I must have the Savior with me,

For my faith at best is weak;

He will whisper words of comfort,

That no other voice can speak. —Crosby

God's whisper of comfort helps quiet the noise of our trials.

2Corinthians 1:4

The English artist Joseph Turner once invited the clergyman and novelist Charles Kingsley to his studio to see a picture he had just completed of a storm at sea. Filled with admiration, Kingsley inquired, "How did you make it so realistic?" The artist replied, "When I decided to paint this scene, I thought it would be best to go to the coast of Holland and hire a fisherman to take me out in his boat during an actual storm. I knew this was the only way I could get a feel for my subject. The boatman bound me to the mast so I could watch the squall in safety. I not only observed it and sensed its power, but the tempest blew itself into me until I seemed to become a part of it. When it was over, I was able to depict on canvas all the fury I had felt at sea."

So too, in the Christian life we may acquire some wisdom in times of prosperity, but oh, the deeper lessons we can learn in the school of tribulation and sorrow! Experience is a great teacher. We learn the most from what affects us personally. If you have received consolation from the Lord in time of tribulation, God wants you to share with others the lessons you've learned. —H G Bosch

GOD COMFORTS US NOT TO MAKE US COMFORTABLE, BUT TO MAKE US COMFORTERS.

2 Corinthians 1:4

God allows His children to experience sorrow and suffering that they may be better able to comfort others who are going through deep waters. Today I received a letter from a dear Christian friend, Commissioner John Needham of the Salvation Army. It brought to mind an incident that occurred in the central territory where he has been serving.

One day Commissioner Booth-Tucker was preaching in Chicago when a man stepped out of the crowd and said to him before the entire audience, "Booth-Tucker, you can talk about how Christ is dear to you; but if your wife were dead, as my wife is, and you had babies crying for their mother, you couldn't say what you are saying."

A few days later, Booth-Tucker lost his lovely wife in a tragic train accident. Her body was returned to Chicago for the funeral. As the service concluded, the husband took his place by the casket and said, "The other day when I was preaching in this city, a man said that if my wife were dead and my children were crying for their mother, I couldn't say Christ was sufficient. If that man is here, I tell him that Christ is sufficient! My heart is crushed, bleeding, and broken. But there is a song in my heart, and Christ put it there. The Savior speaks comfort to me today." The man was present, and on hearing that, he came down the aisle to surrender his life to the Lord.

Are you going through troubled waters today? Just as the Savior is now sustaining you, He will enable you to make known His grace and love to others who need comfort in their trials. - P R Van Gorder

2 Corinthians 1:4

Many years ago I read an article about Ian Munro, a plastic surgeon at the University of Toronto. At that time, he was one of the few doctors in the world who took apart and then rebuilt the skulls of infants who had Crouzon's disease. The head of a child who suffers from this condition becomes so misshapen that the extreme pressure put on the brain can cause mental retardation. Dr. Munro devised an operation in which as much as 90 percent of the skull and facial bones are broken in order to reshape the skull. What motivated Dr. Munro to pioneer in such a highly specialized field? His own child is mentally deficient as a result of Crouzon's disease. This created in that father's heart deep sympathy for those who suffer from the same condition. -H G Bosch

2 Corinthians 1:7

While riding on a train through a small town in Georgia, my friend E. Schuyler English observed a large sign painted on the side of a fix-it shop. It read, "We can mend everything but a broken heart." That may be a bit of an exaggeration, but it is also clever advertising.

That sign raises a vital question—is there anything that can mend a broken heart? When sadness darkens each day and grief overwhelms us, where do we turn for comfort and help? Can the human wisdom of friends, family, or business associates—as well-meaning as they may be—offer effective healing prescriptions? We soon discover that they don't have the answer.

There is One, however, who does mend broken hearts—"the Father of mercies and God of all comfort." If you struggle today beneath a crushing weight of sorrow, pour out your sorrows to the "God of all comfort." He alone can give relief to your aching soul. He alone can mend your broken heart.—P R. Van Gorder

WHEN GOD ALLOWS EXTRAORDINARY TRIALS, HE GIVES EXTRAORDINARY COMFORT.

2 Corinthians 1:7

Pass It On

I've noticed through the years that those who have suffered are quick to comfort other sufferers. When a young couple suffers the loss of a child, another couple who also lost a child in the past asks if they can help. If a couple loses their main income, almost immediately another couple steps forward to offer their aid, remembering their own journey through foreclosure years earlier. Again and again we see the body of Christ supporting and encouraging one another. These Christians have learned that they can use the trials they've been through to reach out to others going through similar difficulties.

Have you been sick? Lost a loved one? Been imprisoned? Unfairly treated? In all of our trials, God promises to bring something good out of even our darkest moments (James 1:2-4). One key way this takes place is when we share the comfort He offered us with those who are now going through trials.

As Paul points out in 2 Corinthians 1:3-7, we are comforted by a Savior who knows our suffering, and we honor Him when we pass His comfort on to still others.

May we never leave someone to suffer alone. If we know the trail another is on, God will help us to guide that person to His presence—the surest comfort of all.— by Randy Kilgore

Dear Lord, help us to step forward when
others around us are suffering trials similar to
what we've been through. Enable us to be a
comfort, as You have been to us in the past.
God comforts us so that we can comfort others.

2 Corinthians 1:8

With patience in His love I'll rest,
And whisper that He knoweth best,
Then, clinging to that guiding hand,
A weakling, in His strength I'll stand. - Pentecost

Think less of the power of things over you and more of the power of Christ in you.

2 Corinthians 1:8

Pressure-Produced Power

We were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life. (2 Corinthians 1:8).

The pressures of life can be overwhelming. A young man who is just beginning his career feels the pressure of doing his job well, making the house and car payments, being a good husband and father, and making wise, long-range decisions. A working mother is concerned about keeping the house neat, making sure that all the laundry gets done, maintaining job security, satisfying her husband, and helping her teenagers become responsible adults.

Sometimes the stress gets to us, and we feel we can't survive another day. But as Christians we can endure the strain successfully if we view life's pressure situations as opportunities for us to demonstrate God's power. The following poem, which appeared in the old publication Record of Faith, makes that point:

Pressed out of measure and pressed to all length;

Pressed so intensely, it seems beyond strength;

Pressed in the body, and pressed in the soul;

Pressed in the mind till the dark surges roll.

Pressure by foes, and pressure from friends,

Pressure on pressure, till life nearly ends.

Pressed into knowing no helper but God;

Pressed into loving the staff and the rod;

Pressed into living a life in the Lord;

Pressed into living a Christ-life outpoured.

Under pressure? Sure. We all are. But we can be victorious if we let that pressure teach us to live in the power of Christ! - D.C.E.

With Patience

With patience in His love I'll rest,

And whisper that He knoweth best,

Then, clinging to that guiding hand,

A weakling, in His strength I'll stand.

- Pentecost

Think less of the power of things over you and more of the power of Christ in you.

2 Corinthians 1:9

When The Journey Gets Tough

In August 2009, Blair and Ronna Martin lost their energetic 9-year-old son Matti when he was dragged to his death by a family cow. I had a chance to meet this Kenai, Alaska, family and share in their grief. And I know how tough this tragedy has been for them.

I also know that they are seeking God's care and comfort for their pain. An observation made by Matti's mom is valuable for anyone walking through one of life's valleys. During one of her down times, Ronna was reading 2 Corinthians 1:9, which says that "we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead." She felt as if Jesus were telling her, "Ronna, I know the journey has been too much for you, and you are bone-weary. Do not be ashamed of your exhaustion. Instead, see it as an opportunity for Me to take charge of your life."

When the journey gets too tough to navigate, 2 Corinthians 1:9 is a reminder to us that we don't travel alone. We have the help of the One who showed us His power in the resurrection, and who will demonstrate His power again when He raises believing loved

ones of all generations to eternal life. "My strength and my hope have to be in Christ alone," Ronna said. That's a truth we all need as we travel the journey God has for us.— by Dave Branon

When life's journey gets so difficult

That it feels too much to bear,

Just remember, we don't walk alone—

Our almighty God is there. —Sper

The storms of life remind us to take shelter in the loving arms of our Savior.

2 Corinthians 1:1-11

THE older I get, the more I marvel that I am still alive. I thought of this when a woman told me that one of her brothers had died from typhoid fever after drinking water out of a creek. As a youngster, I read about pioneers and Indians and often imitated them by drinking from the creek that ran through our cow pasture. And during a polio epidemic I often put my head inside the oxygen tents to talk with and pray for dying people. Being somewhat clumsy, I've had a number of falls from barn rafters and roofs. And I've made some blunders as a driver. But I am still alive. God didn't let typhoid fever, polio, accidents, or anything else take me from this world. I really believe that a child of God will not die until his or her work is done.

This confidence should not lead to carelessness, however. We must never presume on God, thinking that He will protect us no matter what we do. It is possible, according to Ecclesiastes 7:17, for wicked and foolish people to die before their time. Paul lived confidently, but he wasn't foolhardy or reckless. He asked God's people to pray for him. On one occasion he allowed friends to help him elude his enemies who tried to capture him in Damascus (2 Corinthians 11:32, 33).

God cares for us, and that gives us comfort and confidence. But we have a responsibility to be careful! The unmistakable message from Scripture is this: "You are cared for, but be careful!" —H V Lugt

2 Corinthians 1:1-11

A WOMAN with a beautiful singing voice took lessons for several years from an outstanding teacher. Although she learned to sing every note perfectly, her performances were cold and mechanical.

One day her teacher told her: "My dear, I have taught you all I know; yet you lack one thing that I cannot supply. Something will have to come into your life that will break your heart. Only then will you be able to sing with feeling!"

Sir Malcolm Sargent (1895-1967), the outstanding orchestra conductor, found this principle to be true in his own life. Early in his career he battled tuberculosis. After he regained his health, his thirteen-year-old daughter was stricken with polio.

One night, as he was about to conduct Handel's Messiah, he was handed a note that read, "Your daughter Pamela is dying." With tears in his eyes, he directed the orchestra and choir through such tender passages as "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people." Not only did he find strength from God's Word set to music, but his sorrows produced in him a deep feeling that flowed through his conducting.

Life may hold bitter experiences for us, but God can use them to help us understand the suffering that others go through and to minister to their needs.

2 Corinthians 1:11

"Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit" 2 Corinthians 5:5)

This is a fascinating concept and a wonderful reality. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is said to be an "earnest"—that is, a pledge or deposit—on an ultimate fulfillment of a magnificent promise from God Himself. The word translated "earnest" (Greek *arabawn*), translated "pledge" in the Old Testament (see Genesis 38:17-20).

Now if the guiding presence of God, through the Holy Spirit, is merely an earnest payment, the fulfillment must be glorious beyond comprehension. This "selfsame thing," as our text calls it, is a wonderful "house which is from heaven," the spiritual body we shall receive when we go to be with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:1,2).

The phrase also occurs in 2 Corinthians 1:11: "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." In context, the earnest payment here is associated with the "sealing" of God and the assurance that "all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him amen" (2 Corinthians 1:20).

The third and last use of this word in the New Testament is in Ephesians 1:13,14: “.in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.” We are “joint-heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17, and He is to inherit all things.

Thus, the Holy Spirit, a present possession of all who have received Christ as Savior, is also God’s pledge of a glorious future—a perfect body, a great inheritance and the certain fulfillment of all of God’s gracious promises. - HMM

2 Corinthians 1:20

Promises You Can Bank On

Read: 2 Chronicles 6:1-11

For all the promises of God in [Christ] are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us. —2 Corinthians 1:20

After a global financial crisis, the US government enacted stricter laws to protect people from questionable banking practices. Banks had to change some of their policies to comply. To notify me of such changes, my bank sent me a letter. But when I got to the end I had more questions than answers. The use of phrases like “we may” and “at our discretion” certainly didn’t sound like anything I could depend on!

In contrast, the Old Testament quotes God as saying “I will” numerous times. God promises David: “I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever” (2 Sam. 7:12-13). No uncertainty in those words. Recognizing God’s faithfulness to His promises, King Solomon says in his prayer of dedication for the temple: “You have kept what You promised Your servant David my father; You have both spoken with Your mouth and fulfilled it with Your hand” (2 Chron. 6:15). Centuries later, the apostle Paul said that all of God’s promises are “yes” in Christ (2 Cor. 1:20).

In a world of uncertainty, our trust is in a faithful God who will always keep His promises.

Whatever trouble may assail,

Of this we can be sure:

God’s promises can never fail,

They always will endure. —Hess

Faith knows that God always performs what He promises.

2 Corinthians 2

2 Corinthians 2

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Welcome Home!

Forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. —2 Corinthians 2:7

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 2:1-11

For many teenagers who run away, returning home isn't always all they had hoped for. More than a few 15-year-olds have been confronted by a father who has snarled, "I don't know if I can ever forgive you. It's bad enough that you've given your mother migraines ever since you outgrew the backyard. But now you've done it. Coming home doesn't change the fact that you're just a dirty little delinquent."

Our attitude toward the delinquent in the family of God should be quite different. In 2 Corinthians 2, Paul told how to receive a repentant Christian back into the fellowship of the church (vv.6-8).

From what he said, we can draw this conclusion: When a Christian returns after falling into sin and being separated from the fellowship of God's people, we must avoid a well-you've-really-done-it-this-time attitude. Instead, we should convey love, acceptance, and a desire to see him fully restored (Galatians 6:1). That's not to say we're to take his disobedience lightly. We should long for his spiritual health just as parents want to see their child avoid the consequences of delinquent behavior. But when a person sincerely repents and comes back to the Lord, the best way to help him is to give him a warm "Welcome home!" By: Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, speak to me, that I may speak
In living echoes of Thy tone;
As Thou has sought, so let me seek
Thy erring children lost and lone. —Havergal

The backslider who turns back to the Lord needs the backing of the church.

Ring The Bell

I urge you to reaffirm your love to him. —2 Corinthians 2:8

Today's Scripture: 2 John 1:1-6

The story is told of a king who had a silver bell placed in a high tower of his palace early in his reign. He announced that he would ring the bell whenever he was happy so that his subjects would know of his joy.

The people listened for the sound of that silver bell, but it remained silent. Days turned into weeks, and weeks into months, and months into years. But no sound of the bell rang out to indicate that the king was happy.

The king grew old and gray, and eventually he lay on his deathbed in the palace. As some of his weeping subjects gathered around him, he discovered that he had really been loved by his people all through the years. At last the king was happy. Just before he died, he reached up and pulled the rope that rang the silver bell.

Think of it—a lifetime of unhappiness because he didn't know that he was warmly loved and accepted by his loyal subjects.

Like that monarch, many lonely souls live out their days without the joy of knowing they are loved and appreciated by others. Do you know people who need an encouraging word? If so, tell them how much they mean to you. It may be just what's needed to bring joy into their lives. By: Richard DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Someone gave me a cheering word
Of which I was in need,
And faith was bolstered once again
By just that tiny deed. —Sheldon

The human spirit rings with hope at the sound of an encouraging word.

2 Corinthians 2:11

Not Ignorant - General George Patton of World War II fame was seldom at a loss for words. What he said during a battle in North Africa may be legend, but it typifies the man. Patton's troops and tanks were engaged in a successful counterattack of German forces under General Erwin Rommel. Patton is reported to have shouted in the thick of the battle, "I read your book, Rommel! I read your book!" And that he did. In Rommel's book *Infantry Attacks*, the famed "Desert Fox" carefully detailed his military strategy. And Patton, having read it and knowing what to expect, planned his moves accordingly.

Satan has authored no book. God, however, has exposed our enemy's tactics in His Holy Word. Here are but a few of his subtle strategies:

- Quote Scripture to lead us astray (Mt 4:6).
- Afflict the body (2Cor. 12:7).
- Pluck away the seed of the Word (Mark 4:15).
- Tempt by impure thoughts (1Cor 7:5).
- Tempt by pride (1Ti 3:6).
- Hinder through circumstances (1Thes 2:18).
- Seduce by pleasure (1Ti 5:11,15).
- Severely buffet in a crisis (Luke 22:31).
- Tempt to hypocrisy and lying (Acts 5:3).

The name Satan means adversary. He is also described as "the accuser of our brethren" (Rev 12:10) and "a murderer from the beginning" and a liar (John 8:44). Study these passages and plan your defense. Be always on the alert. Submit to God and resist the devil. Victory can be yours, but first you must know your enemy so you can recognize his strategy. - D J DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

2Cor 2:14

Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ (2 Corinthians 2:14).

As British writer Guy King stood on a railroad station platform waiting for a train from London, another train pulled into the station from the opposite direction. Members of a soccer team returning from a game in another city got off. News had not yet reached home as to the outcome of the game, so those awaiting the team didn't know if they had won or lost. A small boy wiggled his way through the crowd and asked one of the players the score. As soon as he heard it, he ran excitedly up and down the platform shouting, "We won! We won!" That youngster was brimming with joy because he identified himself with the players. In one sense, their victory was his victory.

We too can participate in a great celebration because Jesus won the victory over sin nearly two thousand years ago. He paid sin's penalty by dying on the cross, and He broke its power by rising from the dead. We share in His victory through faith because "as He is, so are we in this world" (1John 4:17). He is the conquering Savior before whom no foe can stand. We can thank God "who always leads us in triumph in Christ" (2 Cor 2:14).

Victory, not defeat, should be the norm in the Christian life. God sees every believer as being in Christ, whom He raised from the dead and seated "at His right hand ... , far above all principality and power" (Eph 1:20,21). Because He is the Victor and we are "in Him," we too can be victorious over sin. —P R Van Gorder. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We can be "more than conquerors" when we yield ourselves to the all-conquering Christ.

A Mysterious Fragrance

We are to God the fragrance of Christ. —2 Corinthians 2:15

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 2:12-3:6

Most of us can think of someone—perhaps a relative or a friend—who is known for a particular perfume she wears. Even without seeing her, we know when she's nearby. Wordlessly, her fragrance welcomes us into her company.

Every Christian should also be known for wearing a particular perfume—the fragrance of Christ. But it can't be bought at a cosmetic counter. It can't even be bottled and sold by the church. This mysterious perfume rises always and only out of our inner communion with Christ and wafts a subtle yet noticeable influence toward others.

Someone said about a Christian in his small town, "That man never crosses my pathway without me being better for it!" Another remarked of him, "You need only shake his hand to know that he is full of God." Most likely, this admired believer had given a verbal witness at some point. But without the perfume of Christ, his witness would not have been empowered by the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:6).

The apostle Paul asked, "Who is sufficient for these things?" (2:16). The answer is plain: Our fragrance, our entire sufficiency, is from Christ alone, not from ourselves. What fragrance will you be wearing today? By: Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC](#)

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Oh, make me, Lord, so much like Thee,
My life controlled by power divine,
That I a shining light may be
From which Thy grace may ever shine. —Robertson

If you walk with Christ, others will sense His presence with you.

The Scent Of Flowers

We are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved. —2 Corinthians 2:15

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 2:12-17

I was visiting a cattle ranch outside of Memphis. As my friend and I walked to the barn, he took a deep breath and commented, "Doesn't it smell great? I love coming out here. The sights and smells are wonderful!"

I didn't think so. Having grown up in the city, I told him I thought it smelled like something had died. He laughed. What had the odor of life to him smelled like death to me.

This reminds me of what the apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians about how people respond to the gospel of Christ. As we, His followers, journey through life, we proclaim the good news about Christ by our holiness and testimony. And our message is received in one of two ways.

To those who hear and believe, the story of Christ is a sweet, welcome aroma (2 Cor. 2:15-16). But to those who reject Him, it has the repulsive odor of death. The gospel forces them to face the thought of death and eternity, which terrifies them.

The bouquet of flowers that reminds some people of a pleasant spring garden reminds others of a funeral home. The message of salvation through Christ is the smell of death to those who do not accept Him. But to those who believe in Jesus, it is the wonderful perfume of life. By: David C. Egnor ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I want to be a fruitful Christian,
Winning precious souls for Thee,
Telling them of how my Savior
Gave His life to set them free. —Ozbun

Do others sense the fragrance of Christ when they're with you?

2Cor 2:14

British writer Guy King told of standing on a railroad station platform, waiting for a train from London. Another train pulled into the station from the opposite direction, and the members of a soccer team got out. The players were returning from a game in another city News had not reached home as to the outcome of the game, so those awaiting the team didn't know if they had won or lost. A small boy wiggled his way through the crowd and asked one of the players the score. As soon as he heard it, he ran excitedly up and down the platform shouting, "We won! We won!" That youngster was brimming with joy because he identified himself with the players. In one sense, their victory was his victory.

You and I can live triumphantly because almost 2,000 years ago Jesus paid sin's penalty by dying on the cross and broke its power by rising from the dead. We share in His victory through faith. Friend, we won! We won! —P R. Van Gorder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

WE ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS THROUGH THE ALL-CONQUERING CHRIST.

Signature Scent

Through us [God] diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. — 2 Corinthians 2:14

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 2:14-17

You can't see it, hear it, or touch it, but scent is powerful. The smell of things like crayons, petunias, and colognes evoke memories

that transport me to the past and bring to mind people and places I might not otherwise recall.

Some celebrities have fragrances named after them. Fans can identify with an actress or singer by dabbing on the scent bearing her name. Along those lines, Ladies Home Journal published a quiz to help readers determine the perfect fragrance for them. The idea is that every woman, to be memorable, should have a specific scent associated with her.

The idea of a signature scent is not new. God introduced it as part of worship. In the tabernacle, a certain scent was to be associated with the Lord (Ex. 30:34-35). The people were forbidden to use this fragrance for anything but worship (vv.37-38).

This idea continues under the new covenant, but with a stunning difference. Instead of using incense to make people think of Him, God uses Christians as His "signature scent" to the world (2 Cor. 2:14-15). The fact that God identifies Himself with us in such a powerful way is a truly humbling thought, and causes me to ask, "What do people think about God as a result of being around me?"

By: Julie Ackerman Link ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When we've been alone with Jesus,
There's a difference others know;
And to them it's like a fragrance
That we leave where'er we go. —Hess

A life lived for God has a pleasing aroma.

Sweet Scent

Thanks be to God, who . . . uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere. 2 Corinthians 2:14

Today's Scripture & Insight: 2 Corinthians 2:14–16

Author Rita Snowden tells a delightful story about visiting a small village in Dover, England. Sitting outside a café one afternoon enjoying a cup of tea, she became aware of a beautiful scent. Rita asked a waiter where it was coming from, and was told it was the people she could see passing by. Most of the villagers were employed at a nearby perfume factory. As they walked home, they carried the fragrance that permeated their clothes out into the street.

What a beautiful image of the Christian life! As the apostle Paul says, we are the aroma of Christ, spreading His fragrance everywhere (2 Cor. 2:15). Paul uses the image of a king returning from battle, his soldiers and captives in tow, wafting the smell of celebratory incense in the air, declaring the king's greatness (v. 14).

We spread the aroma of Christ in two ways. First, through our words: telling others about the One who is beautiful. Second, through our lives: doing deeds of Christlike sacrifice (Eph. 5:1–2). While not everyone will appreciate the divine fragrance we share, it will bring life to many.

Rita Snowden caught a scent and was driven to seek its source. As we follow Jesus we too become permeated with His fragrance, and we carry His aroma into the streets through our words and deeds. By: Sheridan Voysey ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord Jesus, make us carriers and communicators of Your beauty to the people in our homes, offices, and neighborhoods.

We are the aroma of Christ to others.

2Cor 2:15.

F B Meyer

Our Daily Homily

We are a sweet savor of Christ unto God. (r.v.)

The idea is borrowed from an ancient Roman triumph, which to the eyes of the world of that day was the most glorious spectacle which the imagination could conceive. The apostle compares himself first to one of the prisoners led in long chains behind the conquerors chariot; then to a servant bearing incense; and lastly to the incense itself that rose all along the line of the procession.

Nothing touches the sense more quickly than sweet odors, unless it be noxious ones; and they almost instantly recall some scene of the past with which they were indissolubly associated. For instance, the scent of new-mown hay will carry us off to merry scenes in

the far away days of childhood. Thus the apostle wished that his life might be a sweet perfume, floating on the air, reminding men, and above all reminding God, of Christ. It was as though he said, "I desire so to live that I may perpetually remind God of the obedience, sacrifice, and devotion of the Lord Jesus, so that my words and deeds may recall to His heart similar ones in the earthly life of Jesus."

A sweet savor of Christ! It does not consist so much in what we do, but in our manner of doing it; not so much in our words or deeds, as in an indefinable sweetness, tenderness, courtesy, unselfishness, and desire to please others to their edification. It is the breath and fragrance of a life hidden with Christ in God, and deriving its aroma from fellowship with Him. Wrap the habits of your soul in the sweet lavender of your Lord's character.

The secret of abounding joy in self-sacrifice is the happy consciousness, such as Enoch had, that we have pleased God. To have this is to secure deliverance from self-consciousness.

The Fragrance of Christ

We are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ. 2 Corinthians 2:15

Today's Scripture & Insight: 2 Corinthians 2:14-17

Which of the five senses brings back your memories most sharply? For me it is definitely the sense of smell. A certain kind of sun oil takes me instantly to a French beach. The smell of chicken mash brings back childhood visits to my grandmother. A hint of pine says "Christmas," and a certain kind of aftershave reminds me of my son's teenage years.

Paul reminded the Corinthians that they were the aroma of Christ: "For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ" (2 Cor. 2:15). He may have been referring to Roman victory parades. The Romans made sure everyone knew they had been victorious by burning incense on altars throughout the city. For the victors, the aroma was pleasing; for the prisoners it meant certain slavery or death. So as believers, we are victorious soldiers. And when the gospel of Christ is preached, it is a pleasing fragrance to God.

As the aroma of Christ, what perfumes do Christians bring with them as they walk into a room? It's not something that can be bought in a bottle or a jar. When we spend a lot of time with someone, we begin to think and act like that person. Spending time with Jesus will help us spread a pleasing fragrance to those around us. By: Marion Stroud ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, please shape my thoughts and actions so people may sense that I have been with You.

When we walk with God, people will notice.

Sweet Fragrance

We are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. —2 Corinthians 2:15

Today's Scripture & Insight: 2 Corinthians 2:12-17

Some scents are unforgettable. Recently, my husband mentioned he was running low on shaving cream. "I'll pick some up," I offered. "Can you get this kind?" he asked, showing me the can. "I love the smell—it's the kind my dad always used." I smiled, recalling the time I had been momentarily taken back to my childhood when I got a whiff of the same shampoo my mom used to wash my hair. For both Tom and me, the fragrances had brought an emotional response and pleasant memory of people we loved who were no longer around.

Oliver Wendell Holmes said, "Memories, imagination, old sentiments, and associations are more readily reached through the sense of smell than through any other channel."

So, what if our lives were a fragrance that attracted people to God? Second Corinthians 2:15 says that "we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing." Our fragrance is pleasing to God, but it also attracts others to Him or repels them. We who understand the sacrifice of Jesus have the opportunity to be the "fragrance of Christ"—a reminder of Him—to others.

The sweet scent of the likeness of Christ can be an irresistible pull toward the Savior. Cindy Hess Kasper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Let my hands perform His bidding,
Let my feet run in His ways,

Let my eyes see Jesus only,
Let my lips speak forth His praise. —James

When we walk with God, we leave behind a sweet fragrance that can inspire others to follow.

They Smelled Like Christ

For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved. 2 Corinthians 2:15

Today's Scripture & Insight: 2 Corinthians 2:14–17

Hot and dusty, Bob dismounted from the bus he had ridden to a city far from home. He was tired from a long day of travel and grateful that he would be able to have dinner with friends of friends who lived in the area. They welcomed him in, and he immediately felt a sense of peace. He felt at home, comfortable, safe, and valued.

Later, wondering why he had felt such peace in an unfamiliar place, Bob found an answer in 2 Corinthians. The apostle Paul describes people who follow God as having the “pleasing aroma of Christ.” “That’s exactly it!” Bob said to himself. His hosts had “smelled like” Christ.

When Paul says that God leads His people in Christ’s “triumphal procession” spreading the fragrance of His truth, he’s referring to a practice in the ancient world. Victorious armies would burn incense as they marched through the streets. For their supporters, the smell brought joy. In the same way, Paul says the people of God carry a pleasing fragrance to those who believe. It isn’t something we create on our own but something God gives as He leads us in spreading the knowledge of Him.

Bob is my dad, and that trip to a faraway town took place more than forty years ago, but he’s never forgotten it. He’s still telling the story of the people who smelled like Christ. By: Amy Peterson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Heavenly Father, thank You for leading Your people in triumph and spreading the fragrance of Your truth through us.

Who smells like Christ to you?

Posies

We are to God the fragrance of Christ. —2 Corinthians 2:15

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 2:14-17

One morning I was looking at a bouquet of flowers in a vase on an old carpenter’s bench in front of our “window on the world.” I realized the bouquet was spent; its leaves had wilted and the blossoms were falling.

The same morning I also read George Herbert and quite by “accident” came across his poem titled “Life.” In it Herbert talks about a “posy” (a bouquet of flowers) he gathered so that he could smell the fragrance. But, as he put it, “Time did beckon to the flowers, and they by noon most cunningly did steal away, and withered in my hand.”

The loss of his flowers caused him at first to see “time’s gentle admonition.” Herbert wrote that it “[made] my mind to smell my fatal day; yet sugaring the suspicion.” Yet even as the wilted flowers reminded him of his own death, he found in the metaphor something that sweetened the thought. Herbert concluded:

Farewell dear flowers, sweetly your time ye spent,
Fit, while ye lived, for smell or ornament,
And after death for cures.
I follow straight without complaints or grief,
Since if my scent be good, I care not, if
It be as short as yours.

What wisdom in this poem! Our time, however short, may be spent “sweetly”—a sweet fragrance of Christ to others (2 Cor. 2:14-16). Should not this be our prayer each day as we arise? David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

A godly life is a fragrance that draws others to Christ.

A Pleasing Aroma

We are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ. 2 Corinthians 2:15

Today's Scripture & Insight: 2 Corinthians 2:12–17

A perfumer who works in New York declares that she can recognize certain combinations of scents and guess the perfumer behind a fragrance. With just a sniff she can say, "This is Jenny's work."

When writing to the followers of Christ in the city of Corinth, Paul at one point used an example that would have reminded them of a victorious Roman army in a conquered city burning incense (2 Cor. 2:14). The general would come through first, followed by his troops and then the defeated army. For the Romans, the aroma of the incense meant victory; for the prisoners, it meant death.

Paul said we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ's victory over sin. God has given us the fragrance of Christ Himself so we can become a sweet-smelling sacrifice of praise. But how can we live so we spread this pleasing fragrance to others? We can show generosity and love, and we can share the gospel with others so they can find the way to salvation. We can allow the Spirit to display through us His gifts of love, joy, and kindness (Gal. 5:22–23).

Do others observe us and say, "This is Jesus's work"? Are we allowing Him to spread His fragrance through us and then telling others about Him? He is the Ultimate Perfumer—the most exquisite fragrance there will ever be. By: Keila Ochoa ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Do others recognize the work of God in my life? Am I spreading the fragrance of Christ? How?

A godly life is a fragrance that draws others to Christ.

They Smelled Like Christ

For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved. 2 Corinthians 2:15

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Bob is my dad, and that trip to a faraway town took place more than forty years ago, but he's never forgotten it. He's still telling the story of the people who smelled like Christ. By: Amy Peterson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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Who smells like Christ to you?

A Fragrance and a Letter

We are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ. 2 Corinthians 2:15

Today's Scripture & Insight: 2 Corinthians 2:14–3:3

Every time I get close to a rosebush or a bouquet of flowers, I'm unable to resist the temptation to pull a flower toward my nose to savor the fragrance. The sweet aroma lifts up my heart and triggers good feelings within me.

Writing to the Christians in Corinth centuries ago, the apostle Paul says that because we belong to Christ, God "uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere" (2 Cor. 2:14). Through His strength we can live a victorious life, exchanging our selfishness for His love and kindness and proclaiming the goodness of His salvation. When we do this, we are indeed a sweet

fragrance to God.

Paul then switches to a second image, describing Christians as a “letter from Christ” (3:3). The letter of our lives is not written with ordinary ink, but by the Spirit of God. God changes us by writing His Word on our hearts for others to read.

Both word pictures encourage us to allow the beauty of Christ to be seen in us so we can point people to Him. He is the One who, as Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:2, “loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” By: Lawrence Darmani ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, let Your splendor fill my life, that I may draw people to You. Help me walk in the way that spreads the fragrance of Your love to others.

Our actions speak louder than our words.

The Sweet Aroma of Christ

We are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. 2 Corinthians 2:15

Today's Scripture & Insight: 2 Corinthians 2:14–17

I knew a rancher who lived near Lometa, Texas. His two grandsons were my best friends. We would go into town with him and follow him around while he shopped and chatted with the folks he knew. He knew them all by name and he knew their stories. He'd stop here and there and ask about a sick child or a difficult marriage, and he'd offer a word of encouragement or two. He would share Scripture and pray if it seemed the right thing to do. I'll never forget the man. He was something special. He didn't force his faith on anyone, but he always seemed to leave it behind.

The elderly rancher had about him what Paul would call the sweet “aroma of Christ” (2 Corinthians 2:15). God used him to “spread the aroma of the knowledge of [Christ]” (v. 14). He's gone to be with God now, but his fragrance lingers on in Lometa.

C. S. Lewis wrote, “There are no ordinary people. You have never talked with a mere mortal.” Put another way, every human contact has eternal consequences. Every day we have opportunities to make a difference in the lives of people around us through the quiet witness of a faithful and gentle life or through encouraging words to a weary soul. Never underestimate the effect a Christlike life can have on others. David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

What do you think about the statement, “There are no neutral contacts”? What difference could it make in the way you view every contact and conversation throughout the day?

Fill me, Holy Spirit, with love, gentleness, and kindness toward others.

Read Compassion: Learning to Love Like Jesus at DiscoverySeries.org/Q0208.

What Does Your Life Say?

You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men. —2 Corinthians 3:2

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 2:14-3:3

A woman asked an acquaintance whose husband had recently died, “Did he have any last words?”

“No,” said the widow. “He slipped away so quickly that we didn't have a chance to talk about anything.”

“How sad,” the friend replied. “It must break your heart.”

The widow graciously responded, “Oh, don't feel sorry for me. I have something better. I recall so well the night he testified in church about his faith in Christ. I also have the wonderful memory of his consistent life that spoke far more effectively of his devotion to God than a few comforting comments in his final moments.”

It's wonderful to have that kind of testimony. In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul used two word pictures to describe the type of influence we should have on those around us. Our lives are to be a fragrance, sweet to believers but repulsive to the unsaved (2 Cor. 2:14-17). And we are to be like living letters that speak well of our Lord and the gospel (3:2-3).

A deathbed testimony of one's faith can bring comfort to those who sorrow, but a faithful life is even better. That's something to keep

in mind as we evaluate how our lives are being viewed by others. At our own death the testimony of our lives will say even more than our final words! By: Richard DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O help us, Lord, to serve You well
And live a life so true
That when we die our friends may say,
"His life spoke well for You." —DJD

The memory of a faithful life speaks more eloquently than words.

The God Of Victory

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. —Romans 12:21

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 2:14-17

In Greek mythology, Nike was the goddess of victory. Nike fought on the side of the Olympian gods, gaining a victory over the mighty Titans. As a result, she became a symbol of winning. But Nike's alleged powers were not just limited to warfare. She also became a favorite goddess of athletes who wanted to win in competitive sports. The Romans adopted her into their worship and gave her the Latin name Victoria.

In the Greco-Roman world where Paul taught, victory was highly valued. So when he expressed Christian truth, he used words his audience could understand. In his letters, he described Christ as the One who leads us in a military procession of triumph (2 Cor. 2:14-17) and compared the Christian life to someone training for the ancient Olympic games (1 Cor. 9:24-27).

Paul also used the word for victory in reference to our struggles with those who intentionally hurt us. "Overcome [be a victor over] evil with good" (Rom. 12:21). This may mean returning kindness for spite or respectfully setting limits on evil behavior. In either case, an attitude of love cannot be generated in our own strength. But in Christ, we have divine power that ancient pagans could only hope for. Jesus Christ is the genuine God of victory. By: Dennis Fisher ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Through trials we learn to overcome,
Through Christ our victories are won;
Come lay your burdens at His feet
And find this inner peace so sweet. —Halsey

God will give us the victory when we join Him in the fight.

Bloom Where You're Planted

Thanks be to God who . . . through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. —2 Corinthians 2:14

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 2:14-17

A friend of mine used to operate a ranch in the Owyhee desert south of Boise, Idaho. Once when I was visiting his old homestead he pointed out a gnarled juniper tree, the only one in sight. You wouldn't travel very far to see it and it wasn't much to look at, but it was doing its job—providing shade for a cow or two. My friend said that it was the best illustration he had ever seen of the principle: "Bloom where you're planted."

His analogy made me think of another rancher I used to know who lived near Lometa, Texas. He knew everyone in town—called them by name and knew what was happening in their lives. He would stop and ask about a sick child or an ailing marriage, and then he would offer a word of encouragement and prayer. He didn't force his faith on anyone, but its influence lingered wherever he had been. He had about him "the fragrance of Christ" (2 Corinthians 2:15).

We can have that same fragrance wherever we go, as we quietly manifest Jesus' love. Even if no one acknowledges our efforts, God sees and knows.

So don't be discouraged. Never give up. Bloom where you're planted. What you do has eternal significance in God's eyes. — David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God has placed you here for a purpose,

Whatever it might be;
Know He has chosen you for it
And labor faithfully. —Anon.

You are never in the wrong place to serve God.

A PARADE WORTH MARCHING IN - Joseph Stowell

“But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him.” 2 Corinthians 2:14

For Americans, the Fourth of July is usually a day of picnics, parties, and parades. Putting aside partisan differences and political perspectives, the people of the nation gather to celebrate Independence Day—the founding of the United States. Across the nation, people will line the streets of their towns and villages to see a line-up of brightly decorated floats, shiny fire trucks, antique cars, and grown men driving go-carts in circles. It’s a wonderful holiday and a great celebration!

I find it interesting to note that the apostle Paul actually uses the picture of a parade to teach the Corinthian believers an important biblical truth about the work of Jesus on our behalf. In the second chapter of 2 Corinthians he says that God “always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ” (2 Corinthians 2:14). The Corinthians would have been very familiar with the idea of “triumphal processions.” In fact, anyone living under the Roman Empire would have instantly pictured what Paul was describing.

Historians tell us that whenever Roman forces captured another region, the victorious Roman commanding general would stage a parade. Gathering his victorious soldiers, he would march through the streets of the city with crowds lining the roads. The captured general and his subdued men would be forced to march, shackled and humbled, with the Roman forces to demonstrate the power and might of Rome’s reach. While they marched, the pagan priests of Rome would burn incense to symbolize the sweet smell of victory.

Paul takes that powerful picture and uses it to illustrate the immensity of Christ’s victory over sin and death in the lives of His followers. He says that in the spiritual world, we are being led by the victorious one—Jesus—in a triumphal parade that displays His victory over the forces of evil. We have been set free from our enslavement to sin, and we are now “slaves to righteousness” (Romans 6:18). We have a new master now that we have been gloriously set free!

Paul even takes the illustration one step further by referencing the incense burned in the Roman processions. Look again at what he says in 2 Corinthians 2:14, “God . . . through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him.” Isn’t that incredible! Our lives, Paul says, are to be a sweet-smelling reminder of how attractive and appealing the freedom and victory we find in Jesus can be! The scent of God’s grace is supposed to linger in the lives of those in our sphere of influence.

So today, if you are an American, enjoy the parades. But if you are first and foremost a follower of Jesus, revel in the independence and freedom that you have found in Him. Picture yourself being led through the streets of your town, on display to your friends and family as a trophy of Christ’s victory. And pray that your encounters with others will leave behind the sweet smell of God’s goodness.

And here’s the good news: When Jesus is the victor, no one can rain on your parade!

YOUR JOURNEY...

- What are some practical ways to celebrate and remember the day that Jesus set you free from your sin?
- What freedoms and blessings do you enjoy now because of Christ’s victory on the cross? (If you need some ideas, look at Romans 6-8 and 1 Corinthians 15.)
- How effectively is your life spreading the “fragrance of the knowledge of Him”? Do the people in your sphere of influence tangibly see and experience the goodness and grace of God through you?

Salt: Good Or Bad?

To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. —2 Corinthians 2:16

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 2:14-17

Is salt good or bad? It’s not that simple, is it? For instance, the salt that melts dangerous ice on winter roads is also the salt that eats through the steel of cars. And the salt that an athlete needs to prevent dehydration is the salt that some experts believe plays a significant role in many health problems, such as high blood pressure.

Truth, like salt, has more than one side. As we learn more about what the Word of God says on a specific subject, we grow in our

understanding of how to apply God's truth to life. Then, as we obey that truth, our lives will demonstrate its different effects.

For example, as Christians we are the preserving salt of the earth (Mt. 5:13), but we are also a sign of destruction to those who resist Christ (2 Cor. 2:15-16). These were both true in Christ's ministry. And because He lives in us, our lives are to have the same effect on others. The Savior is merciful and patient to those who call upon Him in faith, but He is also the Judge, whose anger rests upon those who arrogantly resist Him.

Let's diligently study God's truth so that we will increasingly become the aroma of life to those who believe in Christ, but a warning of death to those who reject Him. It's God's way of making our witness effective. By: Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Thinking It Over

Does anyone treat you with cold contempt
because of your faith in Christ?

Has anyone responded warmly to your witness?

If we are like Christ, some will not like us.

Columbus' Eclipse

We are not, as so many, peddling the Word of God. — 2 Corinthians 2:17

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 2:14-17

On one of Christopher Columbus' voyages, he found that his crew's food supply was almost depleted. Anchored off the island of Jamaica, he was grateful to be given food by the islanders. But as time went on, the gifts of food decreased so that the crew began to starve.

Columbus knew from an astronomy book that a lunar eclipse would soon occur. He called the native chiefs together and told them God was angry about their selfishness and would blot out the moon. At first the islanders scoffed. But when they watched the night's silver disc slowly become dark, they became terrified and quickly brought food. Columbus said that if he prayed, the moon would be restored. Though we may empathize with his circumstances, Columbus' "message from God" was dishonest and self-serving.

Aware of religious charlatans who "peddled" God's Word for their own desires, the apostle Paul wrote, "We are not, as so many, peddling the Word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God" (2 Cor. 2:17).

At all times we must be on guard not to misrepresent God's message to acquire what we want from others. With a heart yielded to God, we must honestly share spiritual truths that will benefit those who hear. By: Dennis Fisher ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Don't compromise the Word of God
Or twist what He has said;
For blessing comes from faithfully
Proclaiming truth instead. —Sper

The purpose of sharing God's truth is to profit others, not to prosper ourselves.

2 Corinthians 3

2 Corinthians 3

[2 Corinthians 3](#)

[2 Corinthians 3:1-5](#)

[2 Corinthians 3:1-6](#)

[2 Corinthians 3:1-6](#)

[2 Corinthians 3:2](#)

[2 Corinthians 3:5](#)

[2 Corinthians 3:5](#)

[2 Corinthians 3:5](#)

[2 Corinthians 3:5-18](#)

[2 Corinthians 3:7-18](#)

[2 Corinthians 3:7-18](#)

[2 Corinthians 3:16](#)

[2 Corinthians 3:17](#)

[2 Corinthians 3:18-4:1](#)

[2 Corinthians 3:18](#)

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[2 Corinthians 3:18](#)

[2 Corinthians 3:18](#)

[2 Corinthians 3:18](#)

[2 Corinthians 3:18](#)

[2 Corinthians 3:18](#)

2Corinthians 3:3

F B Meyer

Our Daily Walk

AN AUTOGRAPH LETTER

"Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the Living God."--
2Cor 3:3.

THE APOSTLE Paul's life was made weary by the incessant opposition of his enemies and critics, who sowed discord in the churches which he had formed in Europe. Amongst others, they visited Corinth and challenged him to produce letters of commendation from the leaders of the Church. With justifiable indignation he cries: "Why should I carry letters, when my converts, given me by the Lord, are circulating everywhere, with the attesting signature of Christ upon them?" Surely they are a sufficient guarantee and proof that I have been commissioned and sent forth by the Lord Himself.

St. Paul gave utterance to a true and striking description of a Christian disciple. He is an autograph letter, the Author and Writer is the Lord Himself--"an epistle of Christ." The ink is "the Spirit of the Living God." The pen is the teacher or preacher of the Gospel, "ministered by us." The Material is the heart and life--"not on tables of stone, but on hearts of flesh."

We ought to be Christians in large type, so that it would not be necessary to be long in our society, or to regard us through spectacles, in order to detect our true discipleship. The message of our lives should resemble the big advertisements which can be read on the street-boards by all who pass by. The merit of good letter-writing is to state what the writer wants to say as clearly and concisely as possible. Sometimes we have to wade through long and weary pages before we can get at the gist of our correspondent's meaning. Let us take care that the message of our lives is clear, concise, and unmistakable.

We are to be pens in the hand of Christ--our sufficiency is of God, who makes us ministers. Milton's pen had only to yield itself relentlessly to the hand of the daughter or amanuensis, to whom the blind master dictated his immortal words. And the messages which we are to inscribe on the hearts and lives of men do not originate in us, but with Christ. If others are used more than we are, it is because they are more meet for His use (2Ti2:15-21).

PRAYER- Live in us, blessed Lord, by Thy Holy Spirit, that our lives may be living epistles of helpfulness and blessedness. May the Name of the Lord Jesus be glorified in us. AMEN.

2Corinthians 3:1-10

The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life (2Corinthians 3:6).

A group of ministers attending an evangelistic conference gave testimonies as to how they came to know Christ. Most spoke of dramatic conversions. One pastor, however, had been born into a Christian home and had grown up in the church. "It seems from

my earliest years I have always known and loved the Lord," he said. The other clergymen couldn't identify with this, since most of them remembered a definite time and place when they trusted in Jesus. The first minister quickly added, "But I do remember when 'have to' became 'want to.'"

Yes, that's the key to knowing that our faith is real. The Holy Spirit fills us with a love for God that creates a desire to keep His commands for Christian living, not from force but from the impulse of a renewed heart. That's what Paul meant when he said that "the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

If our service for the Lord is all "have to" but no "want to," we have probably become legalistic, having substituted adherence to man-made rules for loving obedience to God's commands. We need to ponder again the great price Jesus paid for our redemption. God exposed His heart of love for us. He inflicted on His beloved Son the punishment we deserve so that we could be forgiven. As we confess our sins and ask the Holy Spirit to fill us, we'll experience afresh His marvelous love. And this will bring us back to the place where "want to" replaces "have to." —D. J. De Haan

Legalism weighs us down; love lifts us up.

2 Corinthians 3:7-18

A WOMAN went to a diet center for help in losing weight. The director took her to a full-length mirror, and on it he outlined a figure. "This is what I want you to be like at the end of the program," he told her. Days of intense dieting and exercise followed, and every week the woman would stand in front of the mirror, discouraged because her bulging outline didn't fit the director's ideal. But she kept at it, and finally one day she conformed to the longed-for image. (Discipleship Journal, Carole Mayhall)

Our ideal is Christ. Putting ourselves next to His perfect character reveals how "out of shape" we are. Being transformed into Christ's image does not mean sinless perfection. It means becoming complete and mature. God often works through suffering to bring this about (James 1:2, 3, 4). Sometimes He uses the painful results of our sins or the sins of others. Although no specific sin may be the cause of our day-to-day difficulties, we undergo the pain of learning obedience, suffering for doing the Father's will.

Are you hurting? Perhaps a shaping-up process is in progress. Jesus was perfect, yet He had to learn obedience through the things He suffered (Hebrews 5:8). If we keep on trusting Jesus, we'll increasingly take on the image of His loveliness. —D J DeHaan

2Corinthians 3:18

Years ago, Walter A. Maier, an eloquent radio preacher, told about an African tribal chief who was presented with a mirror by a visitor. He peered curiously into the glass and commented on the ugliness of the person he saw. When he realized he was looking at himself, he became enraged and smashed the mirror on a rock.

The apostle James described God's Word as a mirror in which we can see ourselves reflected (James 1:23, 24). It shows us that although we were created to reflect God's character, in our fallen condition we are spiritually ugly and marred by sin.

But when we put our faith in Jesus Christ, we are spiritually reborn (John 3:3, 8). Then, as we look into God's Word, we see ourselves as God sees us—our ugliness has been transformed into the beauty of Christ's likeness. And we grow in His likeness from that point on. —V C. Grounds

THE WORD OF GOD IS THE ONLY MIRROR THAT CAN TRANSFORM OUR APPEARANCE.

2 Corinthians 3:18.

F B Meyer

Our Daily Homily

Beholding as in a glass (a.v.). Reflecting as a mirror. (r.v.)

Moses veiled his face, and the veiled lawgiver was characteristic of the dispensation he inaugurated. It was a partial revelation, gleaming through a veil, expressing truths in rites and types and symbols. But Christ has torn away the veil, removed the fences of the mount of vision, and revealed to babes the deepest secrets of God's heart. The apostle's phrase is characteristic of Christianity, "Behold, I show you (i.e., unveil) a mystery."

The object of visions. — "The glory of the Lord." Concerning which we may accept the statement of a trustworthy commentator, that the reference is not to the incomprehensible, incommunicable lustre of the absolute Divine perfectness; but to that glory which, as John says, tabernacled in the Lord Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth — the glory of loving, pitying words and lovely deeds; the glory of faultless and complete manhood; the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The nature of the vision. — “We behold.” It is true that we cannot see. “Whom, not having seen, ye love.” But it is also true that the heart has eyes, by which it looks away unto Jesus. “Seeing is believing” is a familiar proverb among men; but “believing is seeing” is a true aphorism of the spirit which clings to the Lord by its faith and love.

The effect of the vision. — First, we reflect. The beauty of his face glancing on ours will be mirrored, as a man’s eye will contain a tiny miniature picture of what he is beholding. Then we shall be changed. If you try to represent Jesus in your character and behaviour, you will become transfigured into his likeness. Love makes like. Imitation produces assimilation. Reflect and resemble.

2Corinthians 3:18.

F B Meyer

Our Daily Walk

COMMUNION AND TRANSFORMATION

"Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him."-- Ex 34:29.

"We all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image."-- 2Corinthians 3:18.

MOSES, AS he returned from the mountain of vision, where he had beheld as much of God's glory as seems possible to man, caught some gleam of the Light which he beheld. There was a strange radiance on his face, unknown to himself, but visible to all. He remained long enough in the presence of God to become saturated with the light and glory of the Lord. What wonder that he sparkled with it and was compelled to cover his face with a veil!

St. Paul refers to this incident, and show that the light which shone upon the face of Moses is the symbol of the lustre of character which shines from those who behold or reflect the glory of the Lord. As we behold the glory shining in the face of Jesus Christ, we are changed into His likeness.

There are two laws for Christian living: keep looking at Jesus until you become like Him, and beholding are changed into the same image; then reflect Him to others, and as you endeavour to reflect Him, the work of transformation goes on. "Tell me the company a man keeps, and I will tell you his character"; so runs the old proverb. We might go further and say, tell us what are the subjects of his habitual consideration--art, literature, theology, law, commerce, Philanthropy--and we shall be able to anticipate the expression that will come upon his face.

If we desire to be pure and good, Christ-like and God like, we must live in fellowship with Christ; beholding and reflecting His glory, even the lowliest and most sinful may become changed into His image. How different to Moses is the unveiled glory of Christ. Let us beware of anything that might bring a veil between Him and us, and nothing will so soon do this as sin, and inconsistency. Moses wist not that his face shone, and Samson wist not that the Lord had departed from him (Judges 16:20). There is a tragic as well as a blessed unconsciousness. Let us see to it that we watch and pray, that we may not be taken unawares, and deprived of our purity and strength whilst wrapt in unconsciousness.

PRAYER - We long to be holy as Thou art holy; to love as Christ also loved us; to be patient and uncomplaining as He was, and so to resemble Him that men may love Him for what they see of His likeness in us. AMEN

2Corinthians 3:18.

F B Meyer

Our Daily Walk.

TRANSFIGURED LIVES

"Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."-- Ro 12:2.

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image."-- 2Co 3:18.

IN OUR texts the word rendered transformed, or changed, is the same as is used in Mt17:2; and this must have been in the mind of the Apostle when he said, "Be ye transfigured," and "we are transfigured into the same image." How can this transformation be effected? First, from within, by the renewing of the mind; and second, by beholding the glory of the Lord.

The renewing of the mind. This is no matter for emotion or ecstasy, but of bringing our minds into close and constant contact with the truth as contained in the Holy Scripture. You have not to study yourself in the mirror, to see whether you are becoming transfigured; but as day by day you steep your mind in God's Word, without your realising it, you will become transfigured. Moses

wist not that his face shone. It was for the crowd that waited for him at the mountain-foot to see it, not for him.

Our Lord said: "Abide in Me and I in you." This is somewhat mystical and profound; but He said again: "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you"--that is surely within our reach. "It is not too high, not too deep, not too inward, not too mystical," said Dr. Whyte on one occasion; "and when the Master asks that His words shall abide in me, He can mean nothing else than that I shall often recall and recollect His words, and shall repeat them to myself at all times."

As a man thinketh in his heart so is he; and if we think those thoughts of self-giving, which characterised our Lord's forecast and determination on the Mount of Transfiguration--if we are animated by the resolve to present ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God; as we steep our minds in His mind--the transfiguring glory of that high resolve will insensibly pass into our faces, thus irradiating our meanest actions, our simplest speech.

Beholding and reflecting the Glory of the Lord. The mirror again is Holy Scripture. We find there the reflection of our Lord's highest glory, which is patent, not in His Creative but in His Redemptive work. As we gaze on Him who, for our salvation hid not His Face from shame and spitting, but became a willing Sacrifice on our behalf, we shall be changed.

PRAYER - O Lord Jesus Christ, grant me such communion with Thyself that my soul may continually be athirst for that time when I shall behold Thee in Thy glory. In the meanwhile, may I behold Thy glory in the mirror of Thy Word, and be changed into the same image. AMEN.

2 Corinthians 4

2 Corinthians 4

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2 Corinthians 4:4

Color Blind

The famous agnostic Thomas Huxley was once lovingly confronted by a very sincere Christian. This believer stressed to Huxley that he was not in any way impugning Huxley's sincerity. Nevertheless, might it not be possible that mentally the great scientist was color blind? That is, some people cannot see traces of green where other people cannot help but see it. Could it be that this was Huxley's problem—that he was simply blind to truth that was quite evident to others? Huxley, being a man of integrity, admitted that this was possible, and added that if it were, he himself, of course, could not know or recognize it.

2 Corinthians 4:5

Service And Witness

While serving as a maid in London, England, in the early part of the 20th century, Gladys Aylward had other dreams. Her goal was to be a missionary to China. Having been rejected by a Christian missionary organization as "unqualified," Gladys decided to go there on her own. At the age of 28, she used her life savings to purchase a one-way ticket to Yangcheng, a remote village in China. There she established an inn for trade caravans where she shared Bible stories. Gladys served in other villages as well and became known as Ai-weh-deh, Chinese for "virtuous one."

The apostle Paul also spread the gospel to distant regions of the world. He extended himself as a servant to meet the needs of others (2 Cor. 11:16-29). He wrote this about serving: "We do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake" (4:5).

Not all of us are called to endure hardship to spread the gospel in distant lands. But each of us is responsible as a servant of God to share Christ with people in our sphere of influence. It's our privilege to help our neighbors, friends, and relatives. Ask God for openings to serve and to talk about Jesus who gave Himself for us.— by Dennis Fisher

My life is a painting created by God,

And as such I've nothing to boast;

Reflecting the image of Christ to the world

Is what I desire the most. —Sper

We serve God by sharing His Word with others.

2 Corinthians 4:7-15

THESE bodies of ours truly are "earthen vessels" (2 Corinthians 4:7). They are fragile and weak and susceptible to injury and disease. But physical limitations need not limit the spirit. Many believers have learned that to be "struck down" does not mean "destroyed."

Leon Wood exemplified this truth during the closing years of his life. While this brilliant Old Testament scholar was in his prime as an author and as the dean of a seminary, he contracted amyotrophic lateral sclerosis—Lou Gehrig's disease. Bit by bit, it struck down Wood's body. When he could no longer run, he had to give up tennis. Walking became difficult as he grew weaker and weaker. Finally he was confined to his bed. But as his body weakened, his faith and resolve strengthened. He continued to study, to teach, and to write. Some of his most significant books were written in the latter stages of his illness. The last seminary class he taught met at his bedside. His spirit remained strong to the end. He was not destroyed.

When we are struck down by disease or stopped by some serious setback, we need not allow it to destroy us. We can choose instead to hold fast to God's goodness. As we trust and obey Him through difficulty, we demonstrate the power of God and we encourage others. In so doing, we strengthen the very thing Satan is trying to destroy.—D C Egner

2 Corinthians 4:7

God Chooses Nobodies

God can achieve his purpose either through the absence of human power and resources, or the abandonment of reliance on them. All through history God has chosen and used nobodies, because their unusual dependence on him made possible the unique display of his power and grace. He chose and used somebodies only when they renounced dependence on their natural abilities and resources. Oswald Chambers,

2 Corinthians 4:7-18

A TRAVELER visiting Amsterdam was intrigued by a chiming tower in the middle of the city. Every hour, when the melody was played on the chimes, he would watch and listen. He became so interested that he asked permission to climb to the tower room to watch the musician. When he got there, however, he didn't hear any music. All he heard was the thump and bang of the keys. In the chime room there was nothing but a terrible clatter, yet outside beautiful music was floating across the city.

The apostle Paul's circumstances were marked by dark, con-fusing, and disappointing events—the thumping and banging of life. Yet his "inward man" was being renewed day by day, and the life of Jesus was being modeled in his daily life.

In the clatter and thump of life, we often wonder what is happening. But what sounds like discord to us may indeed sound like beautiful harmony to those who hear us speak of our faith and confidence in Christ during days of doubt and confusion.

The work God is doing in our lives may not be apparent to us because we are too close to it. But no matter how discordant things seem, God is keeping all things in tune. —P R Van Gorder

Lord, all I hear around me is loud clattering, thumping, and banging, and it's hard to imagine that to someone somewhere this noise sounds like music. May I trust You to strike the right keys at the right time, and may I not worry so much about whether or not it sounds pleasant to me.

2 Corinthians 4:7-18

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20).

The frigid waters around Greenland contain countless icebergs, some little and some gigantic. Sometimes the small ice floes move in one direction while their massive counterparts flow in another. The explanation is simple. Surface winds drive the little ones, whereas deep ocean currents carry the huge masses.

When we face trials and tragedies, our lives are subject to two forces—surface winds and ocean currents. The winds represent every-thing changeable, unpredictable, and distressing. But operating simultaneously with these gusts and gales is another force that's even more powerful. It is the sure movement of God's wise and sovereign purposes, the deep flow of His unchanging love. The secret of victory is to be certain that we are in touch with that unseen current. Asaph, buffeted by thoughts of the prosperity of the wicked, went into the sanctuary to be alone with God. Only then did he gain the divine perspective (Psalm 73:17). Job faced his

calamities by affirming, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him" (Job 13:15). And the apostle Paul, realizing that he had been "crucified with Christ," was convinced that the Lord Jesus was living in him. He could therefore say, "We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed" (2Cor. 4:8).

Although the surface winds of trial become severe, we need not be alarmed. If we trust the Lord, the deep currents of His love and wisdom will carry us peacefully along. —D. J. De Haan

Better the storm with Christ than smooth waters without Him.

2 Corinthians 4:7-18

SPARKY ANDERSON, the former manager of the Detroit Tigers, has been known to make some rather unusual statements. Among my favorites is a remark he made to Alan Trammell during spring training one year. Trying to convince his all-star shortstop that he could play despite a sore shoulder, Anderson said, "Pain don't hurt."

In a sense, this is true in the Christian life. When we dedicate ourselves to serving Jesus, we may have to endure trials, difficulties, and even pain. But, like the apostle Paul, we must refuse to let the pain hurt our efforts.

That's the testimony of Laurie Collins, missionary to Bolivia. Despite chronic arthritis that has left her hands and feet crippled, she keeps going. She teaches a children's club and supports her husband, Jim, in his work as a Bible teacher. Nothing, not even the pain, stands between her and her work for the Lord.

What enables Christians like Laurie to keep the pain from hurting their labors? It happens because, as Paul said, "the inward man is being renewed day by day" (2Corinthians 4:16). And this comes about when we depend daily on God. Only with His help can we keep on serving Christ as if the "pain don't hurt." —J D Brannon

2 Corinthians 4:7-18

The Greatest Blessing

"For our light affliction worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

If we could ask the apostle Paul what he saw as life's greatest blessing, I suspect he would answer something like this: "Personal salvation with its provision of the present and the future." For him, nothing else really mattered. He constantly looked beyond his trials and adversities, sensing the presence of Jesus Christ and rejoicing in the prospect of happiness in heaven with Him.

Romanian pastor Richard Wurmbbrand spent 14 years in prison for preaching the gospel. Although his captors smashed four of his vertebrae and either cut or burned 18 holes in his body, they could not defeat him. He testified, "Alone in my cell, cold, hungry, and in rags, I danced for joy every night." During this time he turned to a fellow prisoner, a man he had led to the Lord before they were arrested, and asked, "Have you any resentment against me that I brought you to Christ?" His response: "I have no words to express my thankfulness that you brought me to the wonderful Savior. I would never have it another way." These two men exemplify the supernatural joy that can be experienced by believers who live on the edge of death as the result of being severely persecuted.

Salvation, which brings strength for today and hope for tomorrow, lasts forever. Therefore, we don't have to be defeated by troublesome circumstances. When we know we are saved, we have the assurance that God is at work in our lives, preparing us for the eternal realities of the better world. Yes, salvation is life's greatest blessing. - H.V.L.

2Corinthians 4:8

Explorer Samuel Hearne and his party had just set out on a rigorous expedition in northern Canada to find the mouth of the Coppermine River. A few days after they left, thieves stole most of their supplies. Hearne's response to the apparent misfortune can inspire us all, for he wrote,

"The weight of our baggage being lightened, our next day's journey was more swift and pleasant."

Paul too knew what it was to face all sorts of perilous circumstances (2Cor. 11:26). And time and time again he turned to Lord for His deliverance and provision.

How about you? How did you respond the last time you learned that the refrigerator needed to be replaced or the car engine had to be rebuilt? When things go wrong, ask God for strength and wisdom. Then thank Him for working to perfect your faith. —D. C. Egner

UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES? LEARN TO LIVE ABOVE THEM!

2 Corinthians 4:8

No Rear

Historian Shelby Foote tells of a soldier who was wounded at the battle of Shiloh during the American Civil War and was ordered to go to the rear. The fighting was fierce and within minutes he returned to his commanding officer. "Captain, give me a gun!" he shouted. "This fight ain't got any rear!"

2 Corinthians 4:8-18

THE Steinway piano has been preferred by keyboard masters such as Rachmaninoff, Horowitz, Cliburn, and Liszt— and for good reason. It is a skillfully crafted instrument that produces phenomenal sound.

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.

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 laboratory of everyday human experience. The process is not always pleasant, but we can persevere with hope, knowing that our lives will increasingly reflect the beauty of holiness to the eternal praise of God.—D C Egner

2 Corinthians 4:16

A traveler visiting Amsterdam was intrigued by a chiming tower in the middle of the city. Every hour when the melody was played on the chimes, he would watch and listen. He became so interested that he asked permission to climb to the tower room to watch the musician. Once he got there, however, he didn't hear any music. All he heard was the thump and bang of the keys. In the chime room there was nothing but a terrible clatter, yet beautiful music floated across the city.

In a small way this illustrates the difference between what we see happening in our lives and the beautiful work God is accomplishing in us as He works through us. Often in the clatter and thump of life, we wonder what is happening. But if we are faithful to God and obedient to His Spirit, others will see and hear the beauty and harmony of Christ's life in us. Let's hope in God. No matter how discordant things seem, He keeps the melody playing. —P R. Van Gorder

WE GO FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH AS WE GO FROM STRUGGLE TO STRUGGLE.

2Corinthians 4:17,18.

June 6

F B Meyer

Our Daily Walk

HOW TO MEET DISCOURAGEMENTS

"Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen."-- 2Co 4:17,18.

NOTICE THE marvellous antithesis of this chapter: light and darkness; life and death; pressure, perplexity, pursuit, and persecution; but side by side, victory, elastic hope, and the brightness of Christian faith. The decay of the outward man and the renewal of the inward; the light affliction and the weight of glory; the brief moment of earth's pilgrimage contrasted with the eternity of reality and bliss.

It is very important that we should not miss the mighty blessing which is within the reach of every troubled soul. Of course it is quite possible to sit down before troubles and afflictions, hopeless and despairing, confessing that we are over-powered and defeated; it is also possible to be hard and stoical, bearing adversity because we cannot help or avoid it, but the highest Christian way is to be thankful that the earthen vessel is breaking if only the torch will shine out; to be content that the dying of Jesus should be borne about in our mortal body, if only His life will thereby become manifest.

When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of grief shall not thee overflow;
For I will be with thee in trouble to bless;
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

PRAYER - Fix my heart, O Lord, on Thyself, that amid the changes and chances of this mortal life I may be kept steadfast and

unmoveable and ever abounding in Thy work. AMEN.

2Corinthians 4:18.

F B Meyer

Our Daily Homily

While we look ... at the things which are not seen.

We are here bidden to look through the things which are seen; to consider them as the glass window through which we pass to that which is behind and beyond. You do not waste your time by admiring the frame or casket of some rare jewel, but penetrate to the jewel itself; so, day by day, look through the material and transient to the eternal purpose, the Divine idea, the deep that lieth under.

"All visible things," said Carlyle, "are emblems. What thou seest is not there on its own account; strictly speaking, is not there at all. Matter exists only spiritually, and to represent some idea and body It forth." This is an exaggerated way of stating the old saying, "Everything that is, is double." Both, however, illustrate the affirmation of the text.

Look for God's thought in all the incidents, circumstances, and objects of your daily life. Do not stop at the outward; penetrate to the inward and eternal. Beneath that bitter physical suffering there are stores of Divine fortitude and grace. Beneath that trying dispensation there are celestial compensations. Beneath those sweet family ties there are suggestions of love and friendship, which can never grow old or pass away. Beneath the letter of Scripture is the spirit; beneath the ordinance, oneness with the loving Savior; beneath the world of nature, the processes of the eternal husbandry.

When such is the attitude of the soul, afflictions, that might otherwise have weighed as heavy, become light; and those that drag through long and tedious years, seem but for a moment. And without exception, they all go to produce that receptivity of character that can contain the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

2 Corinthians 4:18

TOWARD ETERNITY

things... seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:18

Men have varying reactions when faced with the possibility of departure from this earthly existence. When quite suddenly confronted with eternity, the soul is stripped of sham and pretense.

John Bacon, eminent English sculptor, said on his deathbed, "What I was as an artist seemed to be of some importance while I lived; but what I really am as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is the only thing of importance to me now." Michael Faraday, chemist, electrician, and philosopher, was asked by a distinguished scientist, "Have you ever pondered by yourself what will be your occupation in the next world?" Faraday hesitated awhile and then responded, "I shall be with Christ, and that is enough." The Scottish theologian Samuel Rutherford gave this triumphant testimony before he took the step into eternity, "Mine eye shall see my Redeemer. He has pardoned, loved, and washed me, and given me joy unspeakable and full of glory. Glory shines in Immanuel's land!"

These are the words of men who rested their case in the all-sufficient keeping of a living Lord. Worldly attainment meant nothing to them as they contemplated seeing the Lord Jesus. Theirs had been a life lived in communion with God, and not in slavery to a world that is passing away. Let us say with the poet: "Not life, nor all the toys of art, nor pleasure's flowery road, can to my soul such bliss impart as fellowship with God."

Robert Murray McCheyne said, "Live so near to God that all earthly things will appear to you as little in comparison with eternal verities."

The things of sight shall pass away,
But things unseen abide for aye;
O soul, what will thy portion be,
Where will you spend eternity? —Anon.

Let us never forget that the texture of eternity is woven on the looms of time!—Lehman

2 Corinthians 4:18

The Optimist

The famous preacher D.L. Moody told about a Christian woman who was always bright, cheerful, and optimistic, even though she was confined to her room because of illness. She lived in an attic apartment on the fifth floor of an old, rundown building. A friend decided to visit her one day and brought along another woman—a person of great wealth. Since there was no elevator, the two ladies began the long climb upward.

When they reached the second floor, the well-to-do woman commented, “What a dark and filthy place!” Her friend replied, “It’s better higher up.” When they arrived at the third landing, the remark was made, “Things look even worse here.” Again the reply, “It’s better higher up.”

The two women finally reached the attic level, where they found the bedridden saint of God. A smile on her face radiated the joy that filled her heart. Although the room was clean and flowers were on the window sill, the wealthy visitor could not get over the stark surroundings in which this woman lived.

She blurted out, “It must be very difficult for you to be here like this!” Without a moment’s hesitation the shut-in responded, “It’s better higher up.”

She was not looking at temporal things. With the eye of faith fixed on the eternal, she had found the secret of true satisfaction and contentment.

2 Corinthians 5

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2 Corinthians 5:5

Fallen Leader

William Shent was a barber who had been converted and had become a Methodist preacher. But he fell into sin, and the society in Keighley had to deal with him. Hearing that the society had been unusually hard on Shent, John Wesley wrote the members a letter.

"I have a few questions which I desire may be proposed to the Society at Keighley. Who was the occasion of the Methodist preachers first setting foot in Leeds? William Shent. Who received John Nelson into his house at his first coming hither? William Shent. Who was it that invited me and received me when I came? William Shent. Who was it that stood by me while I preached in the street with stones flying on every side? William Shent. Who was it that bore the storm of persecution for the whole town and stemmed it at the peril of his life? William Shent. Whose word did God bless for many years in an eminent manner? William Shent. By whom were many children now in paradise begotten in the Lord and many now alive? William Shent. Who is he that is ready now to be broken up and turned into the street? William Shent.

And does nobody care for this? William Shent fell into sin and was publicly expelled [from] the Society; but must he be also starved? Must he with his grey hairs and all his children be without a place to lay his head? Can you suffer this? O tell it not in Gath! Where is gratitude? Where is compassion? Where is Christianity? Where is humanity? Where is a concern for the cause of God? Who is a wise man among you? Who is concerned for the gospel? Who has put on bowels of mercy? Let him arise and exert himself in this matter. You here all arise as one man and roll away the reproach. Let us set him on his feet once more. It may save both him and his family. But what we do, let it be done quickly.

2 Corinthians 5:7

A colony of small water-bugs living in a pond noticed that every once in a while one of their fellow bugs would climb up a lily stem and never be seen again. They agreed that if this should ever happen to one of them, they would return to tell the others about their journey. Sure enough, the day came when one of the bugs found himself going up the stalk and crawling onto the lily pad at the top. He fell asleep in the warm sunshine, and when he awakened he stretched himself, only to hear a crackling sound as his old outer coat fell off. He sensed that somehow he was larger, cleaner, and freer than ever before. Spreading his wings, he flew into the air as a beautiful green dragonfly. Suddenly he remembered his promise. But then he realized why none of the others had ever returned. He couldn't go back and tell his friends what to expect because he was no longer a part of their world. Besides, one day they too would experience the wonderful freedom he now enjoyed.

We naturally shrink from the mysterious thought of dying. But we need not fear. Nor do we need a message from a departed loved one. God has told us all we need to know. So let's "walk by faith" and wait in hope. —H. V Lugt

FAITH LOOKS BEYOND THE DARKNESS OF EARTH TO THE BRIGHTNESS OF HEAVEN WHEN THE MASTER PLUCKS A ROSE

2 Corinthians 5:8

The young musicians hired to play for the Duke of Austria's summer festivities were ready to go home. Summer was over and they were tired, but the Duke kept them there.

The brilliant classical composer Franz Joseph Haydn was sympathetic and offered to help them. So he composed a unique symphony that began with full orchestra. As the symphony progressed, fewer instruments were included in the score. One by one, as their parts were finished, the musicians took their instruments and walked off the stage.

By the end of the composition, only two musicians remained—the first and second violinists playing a beautiful duet. The Duke got the point. Shortly afterward, he sent the grateful musicians home. To this day Haydn's Symphony No. 45 is known as "The Farewell Symphony"

God's people are part of another farewell symphony. One by one, God is calling His people home. And one day the trumpet of God will sound for all who believe on Him. What a day of rejoicing that will be!—D C Egner

AT DEATH, GOD'S PEOPLE DON'T SAY "GOODBYE" BUT "SEE YOU LATER."

2Corinthians 5:8

Winston Churchill (1874-1965), former British prime minister, made specific requests regarding his funeral service. He asked that it begin with the playing of "Taps," the traditional military signal played at the end of the day or the end of life. But when Churchill's funeral service was over, those in attendance were startled to hear trumpets play the familiar strains of "Reveille," the stirring call that awakens the troops at the beginning of a new day.

The end of life is in some ways like the end of a day. Life's journey is long. We get tired. We long for our labors to be finished and the suffering to be over. Ahead lies the night of death. But thank God, morning is coming! A wonderful life lies just ahead for the weary Christian traveler. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord forever. —D. C. Egner

THE END OF THE CHRISTIAN'S LIFE IS THE BEGINNING OF A FAR BETTER ONE.

2 Corinthians 5:8

We are ... willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. 2 Corinthians 5:8

Jesus is the joy and glory of Heaven; therefore we long to reach that blissful abode only in proportion to our deep, heartfelt love for Him. Paul, who had been caught up to the paradise of God for special revelations (2Cor 12:1-7), knew the joy and rapture of that happy place. Therefore, he speaks with eagerness of his longing to depart and to be with Christ, "which is far better." Oh, that we might grow in grace so that our earnest desires, too, would coincide with that of the apostle. If we but understood a little of the wonderful "pleasures" of the Father's right hand (Ps. 16:11), we would more readily rejoice through our tears at the passing of our saved loved ones.

A certain nobleman had a spacious garden which he left to the care of a faithful servant, whose delight it was to water the seeds, support the stalks of tender plants, and to do everything he could to make the estate a veritable paradise of flowers. One morning the gardener rose expecting to find his favorite blooms increased in loveliness. To his surprise and grief, he discovered that one of his choicest beauties had been rent from its stem. Looking around he missed from every bed the most beautiful of his flowers. Full of anxiety and anger, he hurried to his fellow servants and demanded who had thus robbed him of his treasures. He found no solace from his grief until someone told him, "The lord of the manor was walking in his garden this morning, and I saw him pluck them, and carry them away with a smile of joy." He realized then that he had no cause for sorrow. It was well that his master had been pleased to take "his own."

Has the Savior plucked some favorite "rosebud" or lovely "bloom" from your "garden" and transported it to His Home above? Rejoice that your dear one is now so radiantly happy. The Master has but taken His own which in grace He lent to you for a few fleeting hours.

Death to the Christian is "gain" because it means Heaven, holiness, happiness, and Him — Hallelujah! —Hertel

2Corinthians 5:9.

F B Meyer

Our Daily Walk

THREE AMBITIONS

"We make it our aim (we are ambitious) to be well-pleasing unto Him."-- 2Co 5:9 (R.V., see marg.).

THERE IS scope for ambition within the sphere of the Christian Faith, and to be without it is to miss an influential incentive to high and holy endeavour. Our Lord does not destroy any natural faculty, but directs it to a worthy object. Instead of living for Material good, or the applause of the world, we must stir ourselves to seek those things which are the legitimate objects of holy ambition. In two other passages the Apostle Paul uses this same word. See 1Th 4:11; Ro 15:20 (R.V. marg.).

There is the ambition of daily toil,--"Be ambitious to be quiet, to do your own business, to work with your own hands." In the age in which the Apostles lived there was much unrest, and in the case of the Christian Church this was still further increased by the expectation of the approaching end of the world; many were inclined to surrender their ordinary occupations, and give themselves up to restlessness and excitement, all of which was prejudicial to the regular ordering of their homes and individual lives, But the injunction is that we are not to yield to the ferment of restlessness; we are not to be disturbed by the feverishness around us, whether of social upheavals or for pleasure or gain.

The ambition to be well-pleasing to Christ. At His judgment-seat He will weigh up the worth of our individual mortal life, and He is doing so day by day. Not only when we pass the threshold of death, but on this side, our Lord is judging our character and

adjudicating our reward. Let us strive to be as well-pleasing to Him in this life, as we hope to be in the next.

The ambition of Christian work--"Being ambitious to preach the Gospel." The great world lies open to us, many parts of it still unevangelized; and all around us in our own country are thousands, among the rich and poor, who have no knowledge of Christ. Let us make it our ambition to bring them to Him, always remembering that the things we do for Christ must be that which He works through us in the power of the Holy Spirit (Ro 15:18,19).

PRAYER -Give us grace, O Lord, to work while it is day, fulfilling diligently and patiently whatever duty Thou appointest us; doing small things in the day of small things, and great labours if Thou summon us to any; rising and working, sitting still and suffering, according to Thy word. AMEN.

2Corinthians 5:10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15

For the love of Christ constrains us (2 Corinthians 5:14).

The Lord loves us first, and we in turn love Him. Because we do, we should serve Him out of devotion—not duty. This is the law of love.

A husband and wife didn't really love each other. The man was very demanding, so much so that he prepared a list of rules and regulations for his wife to follow. He insisted that she read them every day and obey them to the letter. Among other things, his "do's and don'ts" indicated such details as what time she had to get up in the morning, when his breakfast should be served, and how the housework should be done.

A few years after the husband died, the woman fell in love with another man, one who dearly loved her, and they were married. This husband did everything he could to make his new wife happy, continually showering her with tokens of his appreciation. One day as she was cleaning house, she found tucked away in a drawer the list of commands her first husband had written for her. As she looked it over, she realized that even though her new husband hadn't given her any kind of list, she was doing everything her first husband's list required. She was so devoted to this man that her deepest desire was to please him out of love, not obligation. Doing things for him was her greatest joy.

So it should be with us in our relationship to Christ. Because He loves us, we love Him and want to serve Him. That's the law of love.—R. W. DeHaan

Serving Christ under law is duty; under love it's delight

2 Corinthians 5:8

Blessed Assurance

As I was talking with a gentleman whose wife had died, he shared with me that a friend said to him, "I'm sorry you lost your wife." His reply? "Oh, I haven't lost her; I know exactly where she is!"

To some this may seem like a rather bold or even flippant assertion. With so many after-death theories, one might wonder how we can be really sure where our loved ones go after death, let alone where we ourselves will end up.

Yet, confidence is appropriate for followers of Jesus Christ. We have the assurance from God's Word that when we die we will immediately be with our Lord (2 Cor. 5:8). Thankfully, this is more than just wishful thinking. It is grounded in the historic reality of Jesus, who came and died to cancel our penalty for sin so that we could receive eternal life (Rom. 6:23). He then proved that there was life after death by exiting His grave and ascending into heaven where, as He promised, He is preparing a place for us (John 14:2).

So, rejoice! Since the benefits of this reality are out of this world, we can boldly say with Paul that "we are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8).— by Joe Stowell

Lord, when I take my final breath

And see You face to face in death,

Then shall my heart forever sing

The heavenly praises of my King. —Raniville

For the follower of Jesus, death means heaven, happiness, and Him.

2 Corinthians 5:16

Seeing The Person Inside

On February 1, 1960, four students from an all-black college sat down at a “whites only” lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. One of them, Franklin McCain, noticed an older white woman seated nearby looking at them. He was sure that her thoughts were unkind toward them and their protest against segregation. A few minutes later she walked over to them, put her hands on their shoulders, and said, “Boys, I am so proud of you.”

Recalling the event years later on National Public Radio, McCain said he learned from this never to stereotype anyone. Instead he should pause to consider others and seek an opportunity to talk with them.

The first-century church, like ours today, was often fractured by divisions based on race, language, and culture. Paul wrote to the followers of Jesus in Corinth to help them respond to those who were more concerned with outward appearance than with what is in the heart (2 Cor. 5:12). Because Christ died for all, Paul said, “From now on, we regard no one according to the flesh” (v.16).

May we all look closely to see the person inside, for everyone is made in the image of God and can become a new creation in Christ.— by David C. McCasland

First impressions can mislead us

For we do not know the heart;

We can often be mistaken

Since we only know in part. —Fitzhugh

It's what's in the heart that matters.

2 Corinthians 5:12-21

WHEN asked to tell an incident that showed he was different because of his faith in Jesus, a recently converted truck driver replied, “Well, when somebody tailgates my truck, I no longer drive on the shoulder of the road to kick gravel on him.”

That driver's experience illustrates an important truth: Those who are in Christ are indeed new creations. They do things differently because they are not the same as before they trusted Jesus. This doesn't mean they will not fall into sin nor that they become mature overnight. But a miraculous transformation has taken place.

Theologian Lewis Sperry Chafer pointed out several changes that happen at conversion. We are joined with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Ro 6:3, 4, 5, 6); made alive (Ephesians 2:1); made children of God (1Jn 3:1, 2, 3); justified before God (Romans 5:1); forgiven (Colossians 1:14); delivered from the powers of darkness (Colossians 1:13); loved by God (Ephesians 2:4); indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1Cor 6:19); and made the objects of Christ's intercession (Hebrews 7:25).

Yes, to know Christ makes us brand new people. How does that difference show in our lives? J D Brannon

2 Corinthians 5:14

Rejecting the Word

Charles T. Studd gave himself without reservation to Christ. He was born into a wealthy British family in 1862. He became an outstanding cricket player, most notably at Cambridge University. In his third year at the university, he was converted at a Moody-Sankey meeting and dedicated his life to Christ. Author Stanley Collins explains, “The world was at his feet, as had been forecast and expected, when suddenly the whole picture changed. He announced he was giving away his personal fortune, leaving the world of sports, and becoming a missionary to China.” For 9 years, Studd served with Hudson Taylor's mission until poor health forced him to return to England in 1894. A few years later, a growing burden led him to begin plans to open Africa from the Nile to the Niger for missions. He left for the continent in 1910, and in 1919 he established the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade. Studd explained his motivation in these words: “If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice that I make can be too great for Him.” - R.W.D.

2 Corinthians 5:14

Love of Christ

When Hudson Taylor was director of the China Inland Mission, he often interviewed candidates for the mission field. On one occasion, he met with a group of applicants to determine their motivations for service. “And why do you wish to go as a foreign missionary?” he asked one. “I want to go because Christ has commanded us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,” was the reply. Another said, “I want to go because millions are perishing without Christ.” Others gave different answers.

Then Hudson Taylor said, "All of these motives, however good, will fail you in times of testings, trials, tribulations, and possible death. There is but one motive that will sustain you in trial and testing; namely, the love of Christ."

Love Constrains Us

A missionary in Africa was once asked if he really liked what he was doing. His response was shocking. "Do I like this work?" he said. "No. My wife and I do not like dirt. We have reasonable refined sensibilities. We do not like crawling into vile huts through goat refuse. But is a man to do nothing for Christ he does not like? God pity him, if not. Liking or disliking has nothing to do with it. We have orders to 'Go,' and we go. Love constrains us."

2Corinthians 5:14-20,

F B Meyer

Our Daily Walk.

LOVE'S CONSTRAINT

"For the love of Christ constraineth us... We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us."-- 2Cor 5:14-20.

AN AMBASSADOR may live in a foreign country, but he does not belong to it. He is there to represent his own country, and no opportunity of helping forward her interests is allowed to pass. We have to represent Christ to the world. The word "constrain" suggests a constant pressure, an urge, as when water is forced down a certain channel. St. Paul says: "I act as I do because I am under the spell of a mighty constraint; I can do no other; I am not master of myself. Do not wonder at what may seem to be unusual and extravagant. Attribute my eccentricity to Christ--His love actuates me, and bears me along."

What is meant by "the love of Christ?" Is it His to us, or ours to Him? It is impossible to divide them thus, for they are one. As the sunlight strikes the moon, and is reflected from her to the earth, so the love we have to Christ, or to man, is the reflection of His love to us. All love in our cold and loveless hearts is the emanation and reflection of the Love which began in Him, was mediated to us in Calvary, and is reflected from us, as sunlight from a mirror.

The love of Christ does not constrain all Christian people, because they do not understand the profound significance of the Cross; but when the soul once appreciates that, and passes through the gate of death into the life of God, then it begins to feel the constraining love of Christ. The pivot of our life must be the Risen Christ: "We no longer live unto ourselves, but unto Him who rose again." We sometimes hear people described as eccentric---out of the centre. A man is ex-centric to the world when he is concentric with Christ. It is thus that we become a new creation. When by faith we are united to Jesus Christ in His Cross and Grave, the transition is made. We pass over into the Easter life. He has reconciled us unto Himself, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation--therefore we are ambassadors. We have to proclaim forgiveness to the sinful, the loosening of their chains to those who sit in prison-houses, and the near approach of salvation to all (Isaiah 52:7, 8, 9, 10).

PRAYER

This empty cup for Thee to fill;
This trembling heart for Thee to still;
This yielded life to do Thy will,
O Lord of Love, I bring Thee. AMEN.

2 Corinthians 5:17

A woman who restores valuable paintings says many works of art that seem hopelessly damaged can be saved by an expert. Rebecca McLain has brought color and life back to dulled oil paintings by carefully removing dirt and discolored varnish. But she has also seen the damage done when people attempt to clean their own soiled art with oven cleaner or abrasive powders. Her advice? If you value the art, take it to an expert in restoration.

The same need exists in lives soiled by sin. Our efforts at ridding ourselves of the guilt and defilement of sinful actions and attitudes often end in frustration and despair. In our attempts to get rid of guilt, we sometimes blame others. Or we simply give up, thinking that we cannot be any different.

When it comes to cleansing the canvas of our souls, we cannot do it ourselves. But Jesus our redeemer is the expert who can restore the most damaged and discouraged person. Call on Him today for expert restoration. —D. C. McCasland

ONLY GOD CAN TRANSFORM A SIN-STAINED SOUL INTO A MASTERPIECE OF GRACE.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Augustine

The story is told that when Augustine was still without God and without hope, the Holy Spirit convicted him on the basis of Paul's words in Romans 13:14, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts." Augustine acknowledged his sinfulness, accepted Jesus as his Savior, and became a different person. His entire outlook on life began to change because of his new nature. One day he had to attend to some business in his old haunts in Rome. As he walked along, a former companion saw him and began calling, "Augustine, Augustine, it is I!" He took one look at the poor, disreputable woman whose company he had formerly enjoyed, and he shuddered. Reminding himself of his new position in Christ, he quickly turned and ran from her, shouting, "It's not I! It's not I!" Augustine had found the secret of Paul's words: "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). Satan would like to defeat us by telling us that we are no different than we were before we were saved. But God says that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." And I'd rather believe Him, wouldn't you? - H.G.B.

2 Corinthians 5:17

John Newton

A few years before John Newton died, a friend was having breakfast with him. Their custom was to read from the Bible after the meal. Because Newton's eyes were growing dim, his friend would read, then Newton would comment briefly on the passage. The day the selection was from 1 Corinthians 15. When the words "by the grace of God I am what I am" were read, Newton was silent for several minutes. Then he said, "I am not what I ought to be. How imperfect and deficient I am! I am not what I wish to be, although I abhor that which is evil and would cleave to what is good. I am not what I hope to be, but soon I shall put off mortality, and with it all sin. Though I am not what I ought to be, nor what I wish to be, nor yet what I hope to be, I can truly say I am not what I once was: a slave to sin and Satan. I can heartily join with the apostle and acknowledge that by the grace of God I am what I am!"

All Things New

London businessman Lindsay Clegg told the story of a warehouse property he was selling. The building had been empty for months and needed repairs. Vandals had damaged the doors, smashed the windows, and strewn trash around the interior.

As he showed a prospective buyer the property, Clegg took pains to say that he would replace the broken windows, bring in a crew to correct any structural damage, and clean out the garbage.

"Forget about the repairs," the buyer said. "When I buy this place, I'm going to build something completely different. I don't want the building; I want the site.

Compared with the renovation God has in mind, our efforts to improve our own lives are as trivial as sweeping a warehouse slated for the wrecking ball.

When we become God's, the old life is over (2 Cor. 5:17). He makes all things new. All he wants is the site and the permission to build.

2Corinthians 5:17.

F B Meyer

Our Daily Walk

A NEW CREATION

"Wherefore if any man is in Christ, there is a new creation: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new."-- 2Co 5:17 (R.V. marg.).

TRUE CHRISTIANITY is very different from much that we see around us, and which is known as such, and is summed up in orthodoxy of creed, in religious service, in gifts and deeds which cost little or nothing. If Christianity is anything, it is self-giving, even to death. If Christianity means anything we must renounce self as the centre of our life and be willing to sacrifice ourselves for others. Nothing will save the world, which is cursed with the spirit of selfishness, but the repetition and filling-up as far as possible of Christ's sacrifice by those who profess to be His servants and followers. Selfishness is destructive, but the love that gives itself even to blood and tears is constructive.

But we must be sure that the supreme thought of every word and act must be Christ who died and rose again (2Co 5:14,15). Let us not live only for humanity, but for the Son of Man, and as we live for Him the bitter will be sweet and the rough smooth, and we shall find ourselves living for the whole race of men for whom He died.

When this becomes the law of life, we are necessarily a new creation; we live under a new heaven, and walk over a new earth. There is a new aspect upon the most familiar objects of our environment. It is not that they have altered, but that we are changed from self to the spiritual; from the old life of sin to the new life of which the centre is the glorified Saviour. In his book "Grace Abounding," Bunyan gives expression to this thought of the wonderful change that passes over the face of creation, and the aspect of human life, so soon as the heart is full of the love of God.

Let us notice the emphasis of 2Co 5:18. God was in Christ when He bore the burden of the world's sin upon the Cross and that we have been brought to know and love Him as of His grace. It is God also who has given us the right to carry the message of mercy and forgiveness to all within our reach. "He hath given to us," that is, to you and me, "the ministry of reconciliation." It is for us to go forth into the world, our hearts filled with Christ's love, telling men and women that this is a redeemed world, and that God is waiting for them to accept His love and mercy. This is the message of Christianity.

PRAYER- O Lord, forgive what I have been; sanctify what I am; and order what I shall be. AMEN.

2 Corinthians 5:17

A BIG CHANGE - ... if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new 2 Corinthians 5:17

Two flies landed on a man's head. One said to the other, "There have been some mighty big changes made around here. Why, the last time we visited this place, there was just a foot-path. Now, there's a huge landing strip!" We too see change all around us. It is characteristic of the very world in which we live. When visiting a city we have not seen for some time, how striking to observe the transformation that has taken place. Yes, there is change all about us, and yet, oftentimes we do not notice such improvement in that one place where we should most expect it. I am thinking of the lives of those who profess to know Christ as Savior. There are many who make an outward profession, but who give no evidence of an inward possession, or of spiritual growth. It is well for believers periodically to take spiritual inventory. Determine how much progress has been made. Comparing your Christian life as it is now with one year ago, has there been any change? Was it for the better? The Bible says, "But grow in grace" (2Pe 3:18). We revel in the truth of salvation by grace through faith apart from human works. Yet certainly, the very ones who are thus saved by grace should increasingly show forth its transforming power in their lives. Ephesians 2:8, 9 tells us: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God — Not of works, lest any man should boast." I am afraid, however, that many do not realize there is a verse 10 which follows this thrilling declaration. It . reads,

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

When folks who knew you before your conversion see you, they too should exclaim, "There's been a big change around here! Let us all therefore "bring forth fruit unto God" (Ro 7:4)!

*What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought
Since Jesus came into my heart!
I have light in my soul for which long I have sought,
Since Jesus came into my heart! —R. H. McDaniel

LIVE for Christ — He DIED and lives for you!

2Corinthians 5:17, 18, 19, 20, 21

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Words cannot fully express the worth of Christ's work for us on the cross. To think that He endured separation from the Father because of our sins staggers our finite minds. Elizabeth Barrett Browning tried to capture the deep theological significance of this in these poetic words:

"Deserted! God could separate from His own essence rather; And Adam's sins have swept between the righteous Son and Father Yes, once Immanuel's orphaned cry His universe hath shaken It went up single, echoless, 'My God, I am forsaken!'"

A girl in Gary, Indiana, terribly burned in a flash fire, lingered between life and death. A delicate and extensive skin graft offered the only hope for her restoration. When the hospital issued a call for volunteer skin donors, a young boy responded. During the surgery, complications set in and the boy died. But through his sacrifice he made it possible for that young girl to be completely restored.

Nothing in our Lord's life called for His death. He was free from sin's fatal infection. Yet He willingly offered Himself to die in our

place. A poet wrote:

"He suffered in our stead,
He saved His people thus;
The curse that fell upon His head
Was due by right to us."

Having been restored to God's favor by the sacrifice of His Son, we should lift our hearts to our sinless Substitute. —P R Van Gorder.

Christ was delivered for sins that we might be delivered from sin.

2 Corinthians 5:18.

F B Meyer

Our Daily Homily

All things are of God.

Of here is equivalent to out of. All the precious contents of the Gospel have emanated from the heart of God; so that we may say with the psalmist, "All my springs are in Thee."

That we have a building, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, to which to go when the earthly house of this tabernacle is broken up; that it is possible for the mortal to be swallowed up in the descending glory of the Second Advent; that we have received the Spirit as earnest of our future glory; that we shall be one day at home with the Lord; that One died for all that the dominion of the self-life should be destroyed, and that they should henceforth live, not to themselves, but to Him; that it is possible to become a new creation in Christ; that God is already reconciled to the world of men, and is only waiting for them to be reconciled to Him; that He hath committed to men the ministry of reconciliation, and commissioned them to be his ambassadors; that it is possible for us to be the righteousness of God in Jesus — all these things have issued from his heart of love.

Oh for a soul as wide as the utmost circle of the highest heaven that containeth all, to contain his love! Oh, world's wonder! Oh, what a sight to be up in heaven, in "the fair orchard of Paradise!" But the very greatness of his provisions will make our doom the greater, if we refuse or ignore them. The men who made light of the king's invitation had their city burnt. This is the terror of the Lord; and our duty is to beseech men not to put away the reconciliation which God offers. Let the "all things" of your life be of God's direction, impulse, and inspiration.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20

Christ's Ambassador

Paul considered himself Christ's ambassador. What is an ambassador? He is an authorized representative of a sovereign. He speaks not in his own name but on behalf of the ruler whose deputy he is, and his whole duty and responsibility is to interpret that ruler's mind faithfully to those to whom he is sent.

Paul used this "ambassador" image twice—both in connection with his evangelistic work. Pray for me, he wrote from prison, "that utterance may be given me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph. 6:18-20). He wrote also that God "gave us the ministry of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:18-20).

Paul called himself an ambassador because he knew that when he proclaimed the gospel facts and promises and urged sinners to receive the reconciliation effected at Calvary, he was declaring Christ's message to the world. The figure of ambassadorship highlights the authority Paul had, as representing his Lord, as long as he remained faithful to the terms of his commission and said neither less nor more than he had been given to say.

2Corinthians 5:19

There's a story about a bell that hung in the belfry of an old church. When some visitors tried to ring it, nothing happened. So they investigated and discovered something most unusual. The bottom of the bell was plugged with wood. Stranger yet, a door had been cut in the side of the bell and a padlock had been used to secure the door. The church was using the old bell as a strongbox in which to store money. This was a clever idea, but it certainly wasn't what the bell was designed for.

Just as a bell is made for ringing, Christians are meant to sound out the good news of salvation. But many remain silent and keep

the precious message all to themselves. Think carefully about your own life. Do you keep your knowledge of Scripture and your joy of knowing God locked up inside? Sound out the gospel story! —P. R. Van Gorder.

IF CHRISTIANITY IS WORTH HAVING, IT'S WORTH SHARING.

2Corinthians 5:20.

G Campbell Morgan

As though God were entreating by us; we beseech.- 2 Cor 5.20

What urgency breathes through these words! The subject is that of the reconciliation made possible between man and God, because "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." That word of reconciliation is committed to those called to serve Christ. They are ambassadors on behalf of Christ. Therefore the urgency. They must deliver their message in a way worthy of the One Who sends them: "As though God were entreating by us; we beseech." That was Paul's conception of the way to preach Christ; and it is manifest in all the records we have of his journeyings, his spoken messages, as well as in his letters. The marvel and the glory of the Divine provision, and the terror and peril of human need, were such as to make anything in the nature of indifference to results or coolness in presentation impossible. Every call was a beseeching. Moreover he dared to say that in this attitude he was representing God; and every soul who knows anything of the real meaning of the Cross, knows that this is a true word. God does not treat human salvation as a matter about which He can be indifferent or careless. The Cross is His passion, His earnestness; may we not dare to say, that by which He entreats men to be reconciled. In face of that, what can be worse than to declare His message as though it were not a message vital, tremendous, demanding all passion and power in its delivery? All this makes us think! And perhaps the thinking is better done alone! (Life Applications)

2 Corinthians 5:21

He made Him ... to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

More than four hundred years before Jesus' birth, the Greek poet Agathon said, "Even God cannot change the past." Historically speaking, he was right. What happens cannot be undone. Yet when God sent His Son to die on the cross, He provided a way to erase our sinful past.

Here is how Donald Grey Barnhouse described what Jesus did for us: "Just as a hole in the ocean floor would let sea water into the volcanic fires, creating force that could blow the world apart, so the Lord Jesus Christ by dying and rising again broke through the past and allowed eternity to pour in, shattering, turning and overturning, changing, and altering all things. He took the past of all believers and cleansed it by His blood and transformed the life in such a way that the time-rooted life gave way to life eternal."

The poet said, "I wish there were a land of beginning again." There is. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1John 1:7). And the hymn writer said, "Calvary covers it all, my past with its sin and stain; my guilt and despair Jesus took on Him there, and Calvary covers it all."

This is the wonder of the gospel. For those who have accepted Christ's offer of forgiveness, He "wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, ... having nailed it to the cross" (Col 2:14). God has completely cleansed our sin-stained past. —P R Van Gorder.

Salvation can change the worst sinners into the most honored saints.

2 Corinthians 5:21

Barabbas

Commenting on Barabbas, Donald Grey Barnhouse wrote, "He was the only man in the world who could say that Jesus Christ took his physical place. But I can say that Jesus Christ took my spiritual place. For it was I who deserved to die. It was I who deserved that the wrath of God should be poured on me. I deserved the eternal punishment of the lake of fire. He was delivered up for my offenses. He was handed over to judgment because of my sins. Christ was my substitute. He was satisfying the debt of divine justice and holiness. That is why I say that Christianity can be expressed in the three phrases: I deserved hell; Jesus took my hell; there is nothing left for me but His heaven." - D.C.E. Our Daily Bread

2 Corinthians 5:21

Shortcomings

A man was greatly disturbed about his sin, so he wrote to Martin Luther. The reformer, who had agonized much over his own shortcomings, replied, "Learn to know Christ and Him crucified. Learn to sing to Him and say—Lord Jesus, You are my

righteousness. You took on You what was mine; You set on me what was Yours. You became what you were not that I might become what I was not." - D.J.D.

Christ became what we are in order that we might become what he is. - Irenaeus

2 Corinthians 5:21

THE SIX-LEGGED LAMB - For he hath made him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. 2 Corinthians 5:21

When God saves a man, He does more than pardon that sinner of his guilt; He also completely erases the old offenses from the "books," clears the penitent's name, and bestows upon him the perfect righteousness of the Savior. For that reason believers may justly be called "saints," for they stand perfect in Christ!

Dr. Harry A. Ironside used to tell of an experience he had while he was the guest of a western sheep herder. One morning he saw an old ewe lope across the field followed by the strangest looking lamb he had ever seen. It apparently had six legs! The last two seemed to be torn from the body and were just dangling there. The shepherd caught the odd lambkin and brought it to Dr. Ironside for examination. Closer inspection showed that the skin from another lamb had been stretched over its body. The shepherd explained that this little one had been orphaned, and none of the ewes would adopt it. However, a day or two later a rattlesnake killed another young lamb. Its bereaved mother could not be consoled. She also stoutly rejected this orphaned animal when it was offered to her as a substitute. However, when they skinned her own dead lambkin and draped its woolly coat over the orphaned one, she immediately accepted it, because it smelled right to her. Dr. Ironside was much impressed, and said: "What a beautiful picture of substitutionary atonement. We too were once orphans — spiritual outcasts — without hope of Heaven. We were not acceptable to God because of our sin. However, the lovely Lamb of God took the sting of the 'old serpent' and died upon the cross for a lost world. Now by receiving Him through faith we are redeemed and made ready for Heaven because His righteousness has been applied to our account."

Sinner, have you been made acceptable to God "in the Beloved"?

*God sees my Savior, and then He sees me
"In the Beloved," accepted and free!— C. D. Martin

God formed us, sin deformed us,
but Christ alone can transform us!

2 Corinthians 6

2 Corinthians 6

[2 Corinthians 6:1-7:1](#)

[2 Corinthians 6:1-10](#)

[2 Corinthians 6:1-10](#)

[2 Corinthians 6:1-10](#)

[2 Corinthians 6:1-10](#)

[2 Corinthians 6:4](#)

[2 Corinthians 6:10](#)

[2 Corinthians 6:11](#)

[2 Corinthians 6:11-18](#)

[2 Corinthians 6:11-7:1](#)

[2 Corinthians 6:2](#)

[2 Corinthians 6:2](#)

[2 Corinthians 6:2](#)

[2 Corinthians 6:2](#)

[2 Corinthians 6:14](#)

[2 Corinthians 6:14](#)

2 Corinthians 6:1-10

For the love of Christ constrains us (2 Corinthians 5:14).

When Hudson Taylor directed the China Inland Mission, he often interviewed candidates for the mission field. On one occasion, he met with a group of applicants to determine their motives for service. "And why do you wish to go as a foreign missionary?" he asked one. "I want to go because Christ has commanded us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," the candidate replied. Another said, "I want to go because millions are perishing without Christ." Others gave different answers. Then Hudson Taylor said, "All of these motives, however good, will fail you in times of testings, trials, tribulations, and possible death. There is but one motive that will sustain you in trial and testing; namely, the love of Christ."

A missionary in Africa, when asked if he really liked what he was doing, responded, "Do I like this work? No. My wife and I do not like dirt. We have reasonably refined sensibilities. We do not like crawling into vile huts through goat refuse... But is a man to do nothing for Christ he does not like? God pity him, if not. Liking or disliking has nothing to do with it. We have orders to 'Go,' and we go. Love con-strains us."

We may not be serving the Lord under dangerous or unpleasant conditions, but the work He has called us to do has its own unique difficulties. In times of trials and testing, only the love of Christ can strengthen us to go on. —R. W. De Haan

Serving Christ under law is a duty; under love it's a delight.

2 Corinthians 6:2

Burning Candle

A Saxon king who put down a rebellion in the distant province of his kingdom, then placed a burning candle in the archway of the castle and announced that all who had rebelled would be spared if they put down their arms and took an oath of loyalty to the king. Clemency and mercy were offered, but the offer was limited to the life of the candle.

2 Corinthians 6:3-10

An Obstacle Inventory

Let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way. —Romans 14:13

Fault-finding is a popular pastime, and unfortunately a lot of us find it's easy to join the fun. Concentrating on the warts of others is a great way to feel better about ourselves. And that's just the problem. Avoiding the faults that need to be fixed in our own lives not only stunts our spiritual growth but also obstructs God's work through us. God's effectiveness through our lives is enhanced or hindered by the way we live.

It's no wonder, then, that Paul made a concerted effort to "put no obstacle in anyone's way" (2 Cor. 6:3 ESV). For him there was nothing more important than his usefulness for Christ in the lives of others. Anything that got in the way of that was dispensable.

If you want to be authentic and useful for God, take an obstacle inventory. Sometimes obstacles are things that in and of themselves may be legitimate, yet in certain contexts may be inappropriate. But sin is clearly obstructive to others. Gossip, slander, boasting, bitterness, greed, abuse, anger, selfishness, and revenge all close the hearts of those around us to the message of God through us.

So, replace your faults with the winsome ways of Jesus. That will enable others to see your "no-fault" Savior more clearly.— by Joe Stowell

Wherever I am, whatever I do,

O God, please help me to live

In a way that makes me credible

As your representative. —Egner

Followers of Jesus are most effective when attitudes and actions are aligned with His.

2 Corinthians 6:3-10

THE patient kindness of Jesus amazes me. He often stopped what He was doing—as important as His work was—to focus His

attention on blind people or children or the outcasts of life. We should do the same, even when it's difficult.

In Moody Monthly, Jerry Jenkins recalled an incident he observed when he attended the premiere Chicago showing of Francis Schaeffer's film *How Should We Then Live?* Dr. Schaeffer was taking questions from the audience. A young man with halting, hard-to-understand speech, obviously a victim of cerebral palsy, asked a question. It took forever.

Schaeffer responded, "I'm sorry. Would you please repeat your last three words?" The man complied. "Now the last word." The man repeated it. Then the great Christian philosopher answered the question with patience and courtesy.

The young man had a second question. They began the process again. Some people in the audience were obviously restless and irritated. Not Dr. Schaeffer. He again listened intently and answered fully.

Sometimes I'm not kind enough to be as patient as he was, but I want to be. And if we want to demonstrate what we claim to believe, we will show true kindness.—D C Egener

2 Corinthians 6:4

President McKinley

But in all things commending ourselves by kindness, by love unfeigned. 2 Corinthians 6:4, 6

When William McKinley was President of the United States, he had to make a decision about the appointment of an ambassador to a foreign country. Two candidates were equally qualified, so McKinley was still a Congressman, he had observed an inconsiderate action by one of the men. He recalled boarding a streetcar at the rush hour and getting the last vacant seat. Soon an elderly woman got on, carrying a heavy clothesbasket. No one got up to offer her a seat, so she walked the length of the car and stood in the aisle, hardly able to keep her balance as the vehicle swayed from side to side. One of the men McKinley was later to consider for ambassador was sitting next to where the woman was standing. Instead of getting up and helping her, he deliberately shifted his newspaper so it would look like he hadn't seen her. When McKinley noticed this, he walked down the aisle, graciously took her basket, and offered her his seat. The man was unaware that anyone was watching, but that one little act of selfishness would later deprive him of perhaps the crowning honor of his lifetime. - H.G.B.

2 Corinthians 6:8 .

F B Meyer

Our Daily Homily

As deceivers, and yet true.

This is the first clause in one of the most wonderful series of paradoxes in all literature. Let us class together these different conceptions of the apostle, as held by those who judged him by his outward and inward life respectively.

Judged from the view point of this age he was a deceiver, intent on some purpose of his own, misleading and hoodwinking his converts. In the annals of this world he was utterly unknown, and there was no attempt to chronicle his doings or record his words. His life seemed to the gay and worldly a prolonged death, whilst to his close associates and friends it was a perpetual chastening. Very sorrowful, very poor, very destitute — such was his appearance as seen from the outside. And many must have turned from it and felt thankful that the lines had fallen to them in pleasanter places.

Judged from the view point of eternity he was known to be true, and building the temple of truth. By every new dying to the world around, his inner life was being recruited, deepened, and purified. His sufferings were chastening and pruning him, that he might bear more fruit. Amid his outward griefs he was ever drinking at the wells of purest joy; amid his poverty he was enriching the world with the most precious wealth; amid his utter destitution he was handling the imperishable riches of eternity.

The monks of Chartreux, when they first erected their monastery, made all their windows look in on the small inner court, but had none commanding the sublime mountains and glaciers around. So, too, many lives are always contemplating the trifles of earth's court-yard! Oh that such would take into their view the unseen and eternal!

2 Corinthians 6:14

Mark Twain

Mark Twain married a Christian lady. She at first didn't want to marry, but later did. He at first went through the motions of religion with her, but later said he couldn't keep up the hypocrisy. In time, she came to the place where she no longer believed in a personal God. During a time of deep grief, Twain said to his wife, "If your Christian faith will comfort you, go back to it." She replied, "I have

none.”

2 Corinthians 6:17

Influence

In his commentary on Isaiah, H. A. Ironside tells of some boys who caught two chirping baby linnets. They decided to teach these birds to sing by placing them in a small cage and hanging it next to the cage of a pet canary. The canary, of course, sang beautifully, so the boys thought if the linnets were close to it they too would become good songbirds. Several weeks went by with no apparent results. Then one day the youngsters were startled by a strange sound coming from the canary's cage. "Listen," said one of them, "the canary is cheeping like a linnet."

A similar danger awaits the Christian who fellowships with ungodly people in the world. He will become like them. But worse than that, he will incur the disfavor of the Heavenly Father, whose will it is that His children separate themselves from sin and evil.

As Christians, we shouldn't be isolated from the world. We have to live in it, but we do not have to be "of it." Our Lord said to the Father, "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil" (John 17:15). Only a separated Christian can bear witness to a sinful world. - P.R.V.

2Corinthians 6:17

Separation from the world means dedication to God not isolation from the ungodly.

A man I know won't let his children attend any school functions. He insists that his wife have nothing to do with their non-Christian neighbors. He has adopted a hands-off-the-world policy for his family, but he is a selfish and ruthless businessman. He hasn't kept worldliness out of his own heart.

Another man puts little emphasis on external separation. He mingles with drug addicts, prostitutes, and drunks who want deliverance. He and his wife invite them over for meals and listen to their problems. They rub shoulders with unbelievers, but they are separated from the world in mind and heart.

The children of Israel lived in isolation. In Goshen they were separated from the Egyptians, but they still adopted many heathen beliefs and practices (Ezekiel 20:8). Even in the wilderness, out of contact with heathen nations, they rejected God's laws and desecrated His Sabbaths (Ezekiel 20:13).

Separation from the world is really an attitude of the heart. It is thinking and living by God's standards yet staying in contact with sinners. Godly separation means that we are insulated from the world, not isolated from it.—H V Lugt

2 Corinthians 7

2 Corinthians 7

[2 Corinthians 7](#)

[2 Corinthians 7:1](#)

[2 Corinthians 7:1](#)

[2 Corinthians 7:2-7](#)

[2 Corinthians 7:9-12](#)

[2 Corinthians 7:9](#)

[2 Corinthians 7:10](#)

2 Corinthians 7:1.

F B Meyer

Our Daily Homily

Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement. (r.v.)

The closing paragraph of the previous chapter tells us what this defilement stands for; and in the enumeration note the increasing bonds of approximation which each word indicates. An unequal yoke in ill-matched intercourse with unbelievers leads to **fellowship**,

and this to **communion**, and this again to **concord**, and this to **partnership**; whilst the culmination of the entire series is **agreement**, and the yielding up of the body for the possession and indwelling of idols (cp 1Co 10:14, 1Jn 5:21). Let us beware of the beginning of this awful approximation. It is impossible to stand still; and they who think lightly of marrying an unbeliever may in the end hear words like those which watchers heard spoken in the doomed temple on the night before it fell into the hands of Titus (**Ed**: Roman General before whom Jerusalem and the Temple fell in 70AD).

There was, as it were, the rushing of wings, and voices were heard saying, Let us depart.

There is not only defilement of the **flesh**, but of the **spirit**. It is not enough to avoid the gross sins of the outward life. Those of the inner temple and disposition are equally abhorrent to the holiness of God (cp Mt 5:27-28, 29, 30-notes). We must **come out** and **be separate** from the latter as well as the former, or we shall never realize what God means when He promises to receive us, and to be a Father to us (cp Jesus' words in John 14:21)

The word **cleanse** (katharizo) is very decisive in the Greek. It calls for sudden, decisive action; and if you answer that sin is too closely interwoven with your nature to be thus summarily disposed of, remember that God demands our will only. Directly we are perfectly willing and eager, He steps in and does all the rest (cp Ro 8:13-note, Col 3:5-note). At unknown depths the Spirit of God is at work within us (cp Phil 2:12-note; Phil 2:13-note; Ezek 36:27) to let us work out what He works in, that we may be welcomed to God's heart. (Cross references added)

2 Corinthians 7:10

Two Kinds of Repentance

Two kinds of repentance are possible in human experience. One is "the sorrow of the world," a feeling induced by the fear of getting caught. Many people recognize the unpleasant consequences of their sin and are persuaded that they are guilty. This results in a superficial sorrow that may lead to a temporary reformation but not to a genuine turning to Christ for forgiveness. Godly sorrow, on the other hand, is accompanied by conviction of sin, the work of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:37). This stems from the realization of offending a holy God. It leads to genuine repentance.

An unknown author wrote, "There is a radical distinction between natural regret and God-given repentance. The flesh can feel remorse, acknowledge its evil deeds, and be ashamed of itself. However, this sort of disgust with past actions can be quickly shrugged off, and the individual can soon go back to his old wicked ways. None of the marks of true repentance described in 2 Corinthians 7:11 are found in his behavior. Out of a list of 10 men in the Bible who said, "I have sinned," we believe only five actually repented. They were David (2 Sam. 12:13), Nehemiah (Neh. 1:6), Job (Job 42:5,6), Micah (Micah 7:9), and the prodigal son (Luke 15:18)." - H.G.B.

2 Corinthians 7:15

"he remembereth the obedience of you all... 2 Corinthians 7:15

Two preachers, who for some reason never got along very well, met on the street one day. The one said, "I heard you speak the other night, and recognized that sermon as one you preached fourteen years ago." The other, somewhat chagrined by this in-tended dig, retaliated, "I heard you speak just three weeks ago, and I can't remember a word you said!" There's a lesson which can be drawn from this incident: our lives should be like good sermons, conveying a "message" worth remembering, that we in turn may motivate others to godly living. When your life's course has been run, what will folks recall about you? Will your influence have been good or bad?

I read recently about a woman who, when she was dying, complained, "I'm just afraid that when I'm gone nobody will re-member me." Her devoted husband took steps at once to have a horticulturist develop a flower to be named for her. As lovely as that bloom might be, the "fragrance of remembrance" produced by the beautiful flower of a godly life is much more to be de-sired! It not only blesses others, but its sweet perfume ascends to the very throne of Heaven itself. It's all right to have a flower named for you, but how much better a tribute it is if you are remembered as a devoted Christian — a person who loved the Lord and His Word, and who exemplified the Savior in every action.

For what will you be remembered? How tragic to be a Diotrephes, of whom John wrote: "I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious word" (3 John 10). How much more blessed the memories Paul had concerning Timothy, for in writing to him he said, "I am ... mindful of thy tears" and "call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee ..." (2Ti 1:5).

Is your life "preaching" the kind of a "sermon" which will long be remembered? Or will folks say, "I can't recall a word he `said!'"

So live that when you come to die even the undertaker will be sorry!—S. C.

2 Corinthians 8

2 Corinthians 8

[2 Corinthians 8:1-5](#)

[2 Corinthians 8:1-15](#)

[2 Corinthians 8:1-15](#)

[2 Corinthians 8:1-7](#)

[2 Corinthians 8:1-9](#)

[2 Corinthians 8:1-15](#)

[2 Corinthians 8:1-15](#)

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[2 Corinthians 8:7](#)

[2 Corinthians 8:7-15](#)

[2 Corinthians 8:9](#)

[2 Corinthians 8:9](#)

[2 Corinthians 8:12](#)

2 Corinthians 8:1-7

AUSTRIAN violinist Fritz Kreisler (1875—1962) was one of the greatest of all time. He thrilled audiences around the world with his skillful playing. Although he could have commanded the highest fees, he refused to do so and never became rich.

Kreisler once said, "I never look upon the money I earn as my own. It is public money. It is only a fund entrusted to my care for proper disbursement." Speaking for his wife as well as for himself, he said, "I feel morally guilty if I order a costly meal, for it deprives someone else of a slice of bread—some child perhaps of a bottle of milk... In all these years of my so-called success in music, we have not built a home for ourselves. Between it and us stand all the homeless in the world!"

What a challenge! We call ourselves disciples of the One who voluntarily left the glory of heaven to become homeless (Mt 8:20), yet few of us show as much concern for the homeless as did Fritz Kreisler. If we are unwilling to give people the bread they need for physical survival, can we claim the right to offer the Bread of Life, which they need for spiritual survival? Can we even claim to have tasted it ourselves? —Vernon Grounds

2Corinthians 8:1-9

BEFORE introducing Charles Colson, the host of a popular news interview program played a tape of a telephone conversation between two Christians who had fallen into sin. It was an attempt to embarrass Colson and make ineffective anything he would say. Realizing this, Colson responded with fervor: "There have been some dreadful mistakes, but why judge all Christians by the few who abuse their positions? There are 350,000 churches across America where people's spiritual needs are being met. Thousands of missionaries are living in conditions you and I couldn't. Thousands of volunteers are working in prisons, soup kitchens, and rescue missions. That's the church in action."

Even the first-century church had its flaws. In the Corinthian congregation, for example, a man was living immorally with his stepmother (1Corinthians 5:1). There was envy and strife among the members (1Cor 3:3). But the church also had its devout believers whose lives were consistent. Some gave generously out of their poverty to help the less fortunate (2Corinthians 8:1ff).

Unbelievers would rather target the failures of Christians than acknowledge their good and faithful service. By living above reproach, we can make sure they have no ammunition to use against us. It's the most effective way to silence critics.—H V Lugt

2 Corinthians 8:1-9

The Offering Plate

Ed Dobson, my former pastor, often said that he disliked preaching about financial giving to the church. He said his previous job required fundraising, so he didn't like putting any unnecessary pressure on people. But when he was teaching through 2 Corinthians, and he came to chapters 8 and 9, he couldn't avoid the topic of giving. What I remember most about his sermon was the illustration

he used. He placed an offering plate on the floor, stepped into it, and stood there as he talked about the importance of giving our whole selves to the Lord, not just our wallets.

Those two chapters in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians give us a number of attitudes and actions that we are to display in our giving to the Lord:

- Give yourself to the Lord first (2Cor 8:5).
- Give, remembering the example of the Lord Jesus (8:9).
- Give according to your means (2Cor 8:11-12).
- Give enthusiastically because of God's love (2Cor 9:2).
- Give generously, not grudgingly or because of outside pressure (2Cor 9:5-7).

Next time the offering plate comes around at church, imagine yourself stepping into it. It will help you to excel in the grace of giving (2Cor 8:7).— by Anne Cetas

Thank You, Lord Jesus, for giving Yourself for me on

the cross. Because of Your love, I give all of me—

my heart, my time, my funds, my will—to You.

I love You.

When we give ourselves completely to the Lord, all lesser giving becomes easier.

2Corinthians 8

Which One is the Lord's?

During calving season a farmer came home quite excited and announced, "One of our cows had two calves. I think we should give one to the Lord." After discussion, the family wanted to know which calf was going to be the Lord's. The farmer said, "When the time comes to sell them, I'll know which one is the Lord's." A few days later the farmer came back to the house looking dejected and announced, "The Lord's calf just died."

2Corinthians 8:7

F B Meyer

Our Daily Homily

See that ye abound in this grace also.

The grace of liberality is as much a gift of God as faith, or utterance, or knowledge, or love. This is implied in our text, and distinctly stated in 2 Corinthians 8:1, where the apostle says that he desires to make known the grace of God, which had been given to the churches of Macedonia, so that they were able in their deep poverty to abound in riches of liberality. In 1 Corinthians 8:9, we learn that this grace first dwelt in our blessed Lord, who, though He was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich. If yours is a grudging, niggard nature, be sure to appropriate the royal nature of the Lord Jesus; that it may fill and possess you.

Probably there is no greater test of our true religion than our behaviour in giving. How few, comparatively, give in proportion to their income! How few give systematically! How few have learnt the joy and luxury of giving, so that they abound therein!

This arises partly because they do not realize that they are stewards of God's property, and that He expects them to devote all they own to Him, keeping back only a necessary percentage for themselves and their families, as a steward might who was forming an estate for his absent master. And partly it arises from mistrust of God, and the fear that some day there may be a sudden falling off of supplies. Oh that each reader would consider that all is God's, and begin by always giving a certain proportion of every pound, so as to be sure of not robbing God of his own. Pray day and night that you may abound in this grace also; and then, in faith that God is answering your prayer, begin to do violence to your churlish, niggard nature. What though it protest — Give!

2 Corinthians 8:7

Henry Ford

The American industrialist, Henry Ford, was once asked to donate money for the construction of a new medical facility. The billionaire pledged to donate \$5,000. The next day in the newspaper, the headline read, "Henry Ford contributes \$50,000 to the local hospital." The irate Ford was on the phone immediately to complain to the fund-raiser that he had been misunderstood. The fund-raiser replied that they would print a retraction in the paper the following day to read, "Henry Ford reduces his donation by \$45,000." Realizing the poor publicity that would result, the industrialist agreed to the \$50,000 contribution in return for the following: That above the entrance to the hospital was to be carved the biblical inscription: "I came among you and you took me in."

2 Corinthians 8:9

Bologna Sandwich

Imagine a man who goes to a church picnic, and only brings a dry bologna sandwich. He sits alone and begins to eat his sad excuse of a sandwich, when a grandmother and her family come up and sit by him. They take out of their picnic basket mouth-watering fried chicken, home-made whole-wheat bread, potato salad, and a couple of huge, juicy apple pies. As they are getting ready to sit down to their scrumptious feast, the grandmother leans over in his direction and says, "Why don't we just put yours and ours all together?" That's what God does—he takes our poor rags and gives us his riches.

2Corinthians 8:10-11

In article in the newspaper told of a man in Vicenza, Italy, who got last-minute jitters on the day of his wedding and wanted to back out. Just a couple hours before the ceremony, he got an idea. Hurrying to a nearby town, he entered a house, faked a robbery, and left a trail of clues. He even let the owner of the house get a good look at him. Later, as he made his way to the church where the wedding was scheduled, police arrested him and charged him with attempted robbery. The article was headlined, "Idea to Stop Wedding Is Really a Steal."

It may be that right now you are being confronted with a similar situation. Perhaps you set out to do the will of God and to follow Him faithfully, only to find the path harder than you had anticipated. Or maybe you are wondering how you can avoid a commitment, detour around a difficult task, or obey only partially a direct teaching of God's Word. I'd encourage you to continue what you started. Joy will fill your heart and the Father will be pleased when you keep your commitments. —P R. Van Gorder

THE BEST WAY TO KEEP GOOD INTENTIONS FROM DYING IS TO EXECUTE THEM.

2 Corinthians 8:12.

F B Meyer

Our Daily Walk

ABOUNDING IN THIS GRACE ALSO

"If there be a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."-- 2Corinthians 8:12

IF ST. PAUL were living to-day he would surely be in great request to preach the special sermons for the gathering of funds to maintain religious and charitable work. Judging by this chapter, he must have been inimitable in extracting gifts for all purposes from God's people. He stirs the Corinthians up by reminding them of the liberality of the churches in Macedonia, notwithstanding their deep poverty. He reminds them that as they abound in so many gifts and graces, they must see to it that they are not lacking "in this grace also" (2Cor 8:7). He quotes the example of our blessed Lord, and reminds them that they owe everything to His condescension. He suggests that the one thing God wants is willingness to give, and that He accepts the desire of the poor man to give all with as much delight as the vast possessions of the millionaire (Mark 12:41, 42, 43, 44).

What a wonderful text is the ninth verse! George Herbert, in one of his poems, depicts our Lord stripping Himself as He descended from the Throne to the manger-bed of Bethlehem. He put off His tiara, and its jewels became the milky way; He laid aside His sceptre, and it became the lightning flash; He put off His girdle, and it became the rainbow; He doffed the robes of His royalty, and they became the sunset clouds! But how wonderful it is to think that the Lord of Glory became so poor that He had no where to lay His head, that He was often without food and always dependent upon charity.

But because He was poor, we are made rich; because He was homeless He has opened to us the "many mansions"; because He was stripped of all we may wear the white robes, and sit with Him in heavenly places. He calls to each one of us to minister to Himself in caring for the least of His brethren. We can only really help people when we impoverish ourselves, but in the end we are not losers. God will be in no man's debt. What we keep we lose; what we give is like scattered seed that comes back in bountiful harvests. Lay your heart against the heart of Christ, until you become filled with His love and spirit, and are content to call nothing your own. Be the steward of everything you possess for His glory and the help of others.

PRAYER - O God, we have nothing worth our giving, or Thy receiving; our best was given to us by Thee. Graciously accept us and all that we have. Whatever Thou hast given, enable us to count it a stewardship for others. AMEN.

2 Corinthians 8:21

Providing honorable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men (2 Corinthians 8:21).

The first governor-general of Australia, Lord Hopetoun, inherited a brass-bound leather ledger that became one of his most cherished possessions. John Hope, one of his forebears, had owned it three centuries earlier and had used the ledger in his business in Edinburgh. When Lord Hopetoun received it, he noticed the prayer inscribed on the front page: "O Lord, keep me and this book honest." John Hope knew that he needed God's help to maintain his integrity.

Honesty is essential for the Christian. Shading the truth, withholding the facts, juggling figures, or misrepresenting something are dishonest activities that displease God. For this reason, and to demonstrate the new nature that comes through salvation, Christians should strive to live uprightly before God and man. The use of our time on the job, for example, must be above reproach. We should give an honest day's work to our employer. To do less will destroy our verbal witness and brand us as dishonest.

Speaking of a mutual Christian friend, an acquaintance of mine said, "He's true blue, all wool, and a yard wide," indicating that our friend was genuine, truthful, and trustworthy.

We too must strive to be honest in motive as well as in action and acknowledge our need of the Lord's help to do so by praying, "Lord, keep me honest." —P R Van Gorder.

Honesty is the first chapter of the book of wisdom.

2 Corinthians 8:1-15

WHEN General Robert E. Lee returned to private life after the Civil War, he contributed liberally to his church and to worthy causes, including a fund for children who became orphans during the war.

What motivated such giving? The answer, I believe, can be found in Lee's simple testimony, as recorded by J. William Jones, a confederate chaplain, in his book *Christ in the Camp*. During the war, when someone told the general that many were praying for him, Lee's face flushed and his eyes moistened.

"I warmly appreciate it," he responded.

"And I can only say that I am nothing but a poor sinner, trusting in Christ alone for salvation."

Some people give to relieve their guilt; some give to gain God's favor; and some give to gain influence or control.

But all of those are wrong motives. The highest motive for giving is our love for Jesus, best expressed by Lee's words, "I am nothing but a poor sinner, trusting in Christ alone for salvation."

Spontaneous, cheerful giving of our money to the poor and to the cause of spreading the message of Christ is evidence that we have truly experienced His priceless salvation.—D J DeHaan

2 Corinthians 9

2 Corinthians 9

[2 Corinthians 9](#)

[2 Corinthians 9:1-7](#)

[2 Corinthians 9:6](#)

[2 Corinthians 9:6-15](#)

[2 Corinthians 9:6-15](#)

[2 Corinthians 9:6-15](#)

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[2 Corinthians 9:6-15](#)

[2 Corinthians 9:7](#)

[2 Corinthians 9:8](#)

[2 Corinthians 9:15](#)

[2 Corinthians 9:15](#)

[2 Corinthians 9:15](#)

[2 Corinthians 9:15](#)

[2 Corinthians 9:15](#)

2 Corinthians 9:5

It has been said that one of the Roman emperors gave an expensive present to a friend. But when the ruler offered the gift, the friend said,

"This is too much for me to receive."

The emperor replied, "But it is not too much for me to give."

When we think about all our sinfulness and rebellion, God's "indescribable gift" (2Cor. 9:15) of forgiveness through Jesus Christ seems too much for us poor sinners to receive. God is so rich in mercy, though, that it is not too much for Him to give.

Who can estimate the preciousness of God's gift of salvation through His Son the Lord Jesus? All we can do now and throughout eternity is to fall down in adoration before the Lord, praising Him for a salvation so wondrous and so free! —H G Bosch

PRAISE IS THE LANGUAGE OF A HEART SET FREE.

2Corinthians 9:7

READ: 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

THE Christians in a Haitian church service were all smiles as they put their coins in the offering plate. When I remarked about this, I learned that these country people, most of whom lived in small huts, were delighted to have something to share with others. This concept of freely sharing had become part of the fabric of their lives since they became believers.

One of the Haitian believers said, "We have a saying: 'If I have something today, I'll share it with others. Then tomorrow, when I have nothing, they may be able to share with me.'" They gave cheerfully, knowing that God would take care of their needs.

The believers in Macedonia, who were poor, amazed Paul by the amount they gave for the needy saints in Jerusalem (2Corinthians 8:1-15). And they did it because they wanted to; they actually begged Paul to allow them a chance to give (v. 4).

The apostle told the Corinthian Christians that if they followed the example of the Macedonians a circle of blessing would result. The givers would be blessed, the people receiving their gift would be blessed, God would be praised, and the receivers would start praying for the givers (2Corinthians 9:6-15).

We too can be part of the circle of blessing. And we will be if we are cheerful givers!—H V Lugt

Lord, stir up kindness, love, and generosity in my heart. May it spill over into the lives of everyone I meet.

2Corinthians 9:7,8.

F B Meyer

Our Daily Walk

THE WISE USE OF MONEY

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."-- 2Co 9:7-8

WE MUST not look on money as our own, for on every coin you may discern the letters: DG., By the Grace of God. Therefore money is God's gift to us. "Both riches and honour come of Thee. David was right when he said, after his people and he had made a

noble gift to God's work: "Of Thine own have we given Thee."

But you say: "I earn my money by the sweat of my brow." Granted; but "thou shalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth." It is God who enables us to keep our situations; who delivers us from paralysing disease, maintains the balance of reason, and renews our daily strength. Is it not our constant profession that we have devoted to Christ all that we are and have, and surely this consecration, if it means anything, means that concerning all that belongs to us we would say to our Lord: "What wouldst Thou have me to do?"

It is our duty to provide for our own (1Ti 5:8). It is also right to hold a certain amount as capital, for the increase of business and the employment of labour. When a man uses his capital rightly, taking no more than a legitimate profit for his time, experience, and responsibility, and allowing his employees to share with him in the overplus, he is doing more real good in the world than if he gave away his property by distributing a pound each to a vast number of beggars. We are to be stewards of the Lord Jesus. This is His own comparison (Mt 25:14).

In order to guard against the love of money, we should be careful to give a stated proportion to the cause of Christ. It may seem needless to insert this caution for those who should use all for Christ. But our hearts are so fickle that we sometimes imagine that we are giving away a larger share of our income than is the case, unless we are accurate in adjusting the balance between Christ and ourselves. It is not possible for one to assign for another the proper proportion, but whatever we fax, it should be rigorously deducted when we receive our income or wages. In the first place, give your own selves to Christ, and then all else will fall into line (2Cor 8:5).

PRAYER- Help me, dear Lord, to walk in the footsteps of Thy holy life. Teach me how to gain by giving, and to find by losing, according to Thy word. AMEN.

2 Corinthians 9:7

Birthday Giveaway

When I reminded my husband that his 39th birthday was just around the corner, he declared that he didn't want any presents. Yeah, right, I thought, and I continued to press him for gift ideas. That's when he told me he wanted to give away the money we would have spent on his birthday.

The Bible calls us to give willingly—not grudgingly or of necessity—to support God's work and to help people (2 Cor. 9:7). This kind of freewill giving often results in joy for the giver. When King David donated his personal stash of gold and silver to help build the temple, many Israelite officials followed his example. After they contributed bronze, iron, gemstones, and precious metal, "the people rejoiced, for they had offered willingly" (1 Chron. 29:9).

As part of the celebration, David praised God, saying, "Of Your own we have given You" (v.14). His point was that God owns everything. Remembering this allows us to give eagerly, because we are just returning our resources to their rightful owner—God Himself.

The next time you contribute cash, services, or belongings to support the cause of Christ, examine your attitude. Are you giving freely and willingly? God loves a cheerful giver.— by Jennifer Benson Schuldt

Lord, You love the cheerful giver,

Who with open heart and hand

Blesses freely, as a river

That refreshes all the land. —Murray

How we give is more important than how much we give.

2Corinthians 9:7

A pastor wanted to see if a farmer in his congregation was willing to support the Lord's work. So one day he challenged him with some direct questions.

"If you had two farms," he asked, "would you be willing to give one to God?"

"Why, certainly!" replied the man. "I only wish I were in a position to do so."

The minister then asked,

"If you had \$10,000, would you give \$5,000 to the Lord?"

Without hesitation the man responded,

"How I'd love to have that kind of money! I'd enjoy giving generously like that."

Then the preacher asked:

"If you had two pigs, would you give one to the church?"

The farmer hesitated for a moment and then blurted out,

"That' not fair. You know I've got two pigs!"

2 Corinthians 9:7 tells us not to give "grudgingly or of necessity" As the Lord has prospered us, let's return a portion to Him —wisely, purposefully, and gladly. God loves a cheerful giver! —R W De Haan

THE HIGHEST KIND OF GIVING COMES FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE HEART.

2Corinthians 9:8.

F B Meyer

Our Daily Walk

January 25

GRACE ABOUNDING! - "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."-- 2Co 9:8.

ABUNDANCE IS characteristic of God! Go forth on a spring morning, and look on the flowers with which He has carpeted the woodlands.

Daisies and buttercups, primroses and cowslips in myriads, bear witness to the prodigality of His thought and power--His thought to fashion, His power to produce. But this profuse carpeting of the earth's nakedness is equaled in the heavens! There, depth opens beyond depth, lighted and inlaid with constellations, and the wonders of the sky answer to those of the earth. How multitudinous is God's creation!

But what shall we say of His Grace? His Joy is unspeakable, His Peace passeth understanding, His Love is beyond knowledge! Get great thoughts of God, who holds the ocean depths as a drop in the hollow of his hand, and weighs the mountains as grains of dust in His scales. Lie upon that bank of flowers, and consider their multitude; sweep the skies with a telescope and see if you can tell the stars; number the sand-grains upon the shore, and count the shells strewn along the strand; and when you have considered the gifts of His hand, ascend to the wealth of His heart. Study the infinite map of God's nature; compare it with the need of your little life, and then remember that the Father loves you infinitely, so much so that for your salvation and mine He gave His Only-Begotten Son. He has set His love upon you, and will certainly deliver you! He will set you on high because you have known His Name. All the resources of eternity and infinity are at His disposal, and He can make all grace abound toward you, that always having all sufficiency in all things, you may abound to every good work.

Iris a very wonderful text! Count the number of universals in it. All Grace Always! All Sufficiency! All things! God abounding to us that we may abound. The word translated abound might be rendered literally "to flow or pour over." "My cup runneth over." Our Lord said: "I am come that they might have life, and have it overflowing"; "Where sin overflows, grace much more overflows" (John 10:10; Ro 5:20).

Let us remember that God does not pour in unless we pour out. If we are filled with the Presence and Grace of Christ in our hearts, we must give ourselves out to others.

PRAYER- Give me grace, O Lord, to see the beauty lying at my feet in the commonplaces of life; and to feel that Thou art as near, and that life is as wonderful today, as when men beheld Thee in the days of Thy flesh. AMEN.

2 Corinthians 9:10.

F B Meyer

Our Daily Homily

He that supplieth seed to the sower and bread for food. (r.v.)

In every harvest there is a twofold object. First, the supply of seed for the next autumn's sowing, and then of food for those that sow or reap; so in the spiritual sphere God will not fail either sowers or reapers.

All sowers must eat. — However much wheat has passed through the sower's hands, he is not fed thereby. At night he returns hungry to his home. So we, who are engaged in the work of God, cannot live on what we do for the world around. After the most fruitful day of service, we need to take our Bibles and feed our famished souls by meditation and prayer. We must not mistake the glow and exhilaration of the sanctuary for nourishment. They are rather a stimulant. Therefore we may expect God to increase the fruits of our righteousness. Shall Boaz cause handfuls on purpose to fall for Ruth, and shall not God supply our need? Will the Father not provide bread to those who are engaged in tilling his fields?

All eaters should sow. — It would never do for the farmer to live on all the produce of his fields. He must sow a certain proportion of his grain. And nothing is more foreign to the genius of true religion than to be always nursing and ministering to oneself; eating the fine wheat of the Gospel, but not sowing it in other hearts; consuming the consolations of the Divine Spirit, but not endeavoring to pass them on to others. Oh ye who have eaten bountifully, sow bountifully; else ye shall suffer the results of spiritual repletion and indigestion. And note this precious assurance, that God will supply seed for daily and weekly sowing for the congregation and the class; and that He will multiply it when sown.

2Corinthians 9:15

In the early 19th century, a war-weary world was anxiously watching the march of Napoleon. But during that time, obscure, seemingly insignificant events were occurring that would help to shape the future.

In 1809, between the battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo, William E. Gladstone was born in Liverpool; Alfred, Lord Tennyson in Summersby, England; Oliver Wendell Holmes in Boston; Felix Mendelssohn in Hamburg, Germany; and Abraham Lincoln in Hodgenville, Kentucky. Now, 200 years later, is there the slightest doubt about the greater contribution to history—those battles or those babies?

So it was with the birth of Jesus. The Bethlehem crowd was all concerned about a census and the power of Rome. They had no inkling that the infinite infant Son of God was asleep in their little town. Only a few shepherds hurried to see Him who was born in a stable. And as they left, they glorified God. —D. J. DeHaan

GOD'S GIFT TO A DYING WORLD IS THE LIFE-GIVING SAVIOR.

2 Corinthians 10

2 Corinthians 10

[2 Corinthians 10](#)

[2 Corinthians 10:1-5](#)

[2 Corinthians 10:5](#)

[2 Corinthians 10:5](#)

[2 Corinthians 10:12](#)

[2 Corinthians 10:12-18](#)

[2 Corinthians 10:17](#)

[2 Corinthians 10:17](#)

[2 Corinthians 10:17](#)

2 Corinthians 10:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Concerned about his personal life, Ed went to his pastor for help. After listening to the young man's mild list of supposed sins, the wise preacher felt that he had not been completely honest. "Are you sure that's all?" the preacher asked. "Yes, pastor," Ed said. "Are you positive you haven't been entertaining any impure thoughts lately?" the pastor continued. "Oh, no," Ed replied, "but they've sure been entertaining me."

Temptation may be defined as a desire for sinful pleasure. If it didn't offer pleasure, it would be easy to resist. Perhaps that's why we understand the truth behind the cartoon in which a man says, "I don't mind fleeing temptation—as long as I can leave a forwarding

address." And, if we're honest, we admit that sin often takes place first in our mind. For many people, illicit sexual thoughts provide pleasure.

Temptation is not sin. For it to develop into sin, we have to welcome it, dwell on it, and enjoy it. For example, the temptation to get back at someone who has hurt us is wrong only when we begin to think about ways to harm that person and get revenge. Paul said that every thought must be brought "into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2Cor 10:5).

When we allow wrong thoughts into our minds, we must confess them as sin, ask God to help us, and then fill our minds with good and pure thoughts. When we submit to God and resist the devil, we can say no to tempting thoughts. —D. C. Egner

Character is shaped by what the mind takes in.

2 Corinthians 10:5

Forbidden Thoughts

"Christ counts evil thoughts as traitors not only to us, but also to Him. Like the psalmist, you may say, 'I hate vain thoughts; not only because of the curse they bring to my heart, but for the grief they give to my King.' Their intrusion is forbidden by the double barrier of our own choice and the keeping power of Jesus.

"Let the peace of God keep the door of your heart and mind, scrutinizing each intruder and turning back the unfit. Let the Holy Spirit bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

"Let the faithful Savior have the keeping of the soul entrusted to Him, that He may watch every menacing thought which lurks in the shadow or steals up the glen. He is well able to keep what is committed to Him. He will not fail the supplicant whose lips are familiar with the prayer: 'Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love You and worthily magnify Your holy name.'" F. B. Meyer,

2 Corinthians 10:1-6

COURSES in English composition teach us to avoid the use of the pronoun I as much as possible when we write. After all, it's neither good style nor good manners to make ourselves the center of attention.

But there are times when the softening of the pronoun I can be bad spiritual grammar. For example, it's easy and vague to say, "Our church suffers from apathy. We need a new devotion to the Lord." It's tougher to confess, "I suffer from apathy. I need greater devotion to the Lord."

The next time you're talking with friends about living for Christ, avoid using we or us when you point out how Christians can be more effective in serving Christ.

Too often we—oops! I mean I—have said, "We should be doing something more creative in our youth department." What a difference it would make if instead I had the courage to say "I've been too critical of our youth leaders. I should help lighten their load so they'll have more time to plan creative activities."

Starting a sentence with I may not be a good way to begin an essay, but it's a good way to begin a confession.—H W Robinson

2 Corinthians 10:12

FEAR GOD - But they, measuring ... and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise (2 Corinthians 10:12).

A little boy announced to his mother, "I'm like Goliath. I'm nine feet tall." "What makes you say that?" asked his mother. The tyke replied, "Well, I made a little ruler and measured myself with it, and I am nine feet tall!"

Although the child's measurements were accurate, his ruler was defective. He was like many people who fail to see their need of salvation because they measure themselves by a faulty standard. By looking at their peers and comparing their own behavior with others who have done worse than they have, they conclude that they are not so bad after all. But such pride is demolished when people compare themselves with a perfect standard of righteousness.

When the prophet Isaiah saw the Lord in all His glory, he ex-claimed, "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts". (Isaiah 6:5). And according to Romans 3:23 , we all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. These two verses reveal how we measure up spiritually in God's sight.

Those who have never given their lives to Christ, and who recognize how far short of God's standard they fall, can place their trust in Christ and enjoy the true righteousness found in Him. When we measure our morality against that of other sinners, we are "not wise." We are using the wrong standard of measurement. —R. W. DeHaan

If we could merit our own salvation, Christ would not have died to provide it.

2 Corinthians 10:5.

F B Meyer

Our Daily Homily

Bringing every thought into ... the obedience of Christ.

The apostle is planning a campaign; his words glow with the fire of military enthusiasm: but, as one has eloquently said, the weapons of his warfare are not carnal; the standard under which he fights is a more sacred sign than that of Caesar; the territory he invades is more difficult of conquest than any which kept the conquerors of the world at bay. He sees rising before him the lofty fortresses of hostile error; they must be reduced or razed. Every mountain fastness to which the enemy can retreat must be scaled and destroyed; and every thought of the soul, which is hostile to the authority of the Divine Truth, must become a prisoner of war in the camp of Christ.

Be sure to distinguish between the proper use of the intellect by the man who recognizes its necessary limitations and uses it in the humble and reverent inquiry after truth, and that undue exaltation of the intellect, which sets itself on high as the ultimate judge of truth, or which roams wildly, unheeding the Divine control. There are vain thoughts, sensual thoughts, cynical and self-reliant thoughts, sceptical thoughts, proud thoughts, wandering and wayward thoughts; but the apostle says that, however strongly they fortify themselves against Christ, they should and must be brought into captivity. Paul once thought he ought to do many things contrary to Jesus, but became his humble disciple.

The intellect has its province, but faith has hers; and while the intellect tends to exalt man, faith humbles him and leads him captive in the chains of love. We must come with absolute obedience to Christ, that every veil may be torn away, and whatever blurs the clear surface of the mirroring intellect may be removed.

2 Corinthians 10:12

Growth Chart

The growth chart had slipped from the playroom wall because the tape on its corners had become dry and brittle. Five-year-old Jordan hung it up again, meticulously working to get it straight. Then he stood his sister against the wall to measure her height.

"Mommy! Mommy! Anneke is forty inches tall!" he shouted as he burst into the kitchen. "I measured her."

His mom replied, "That's impossible, Sweetheart. She's only 3 years old. Let's go see."

They walked back into the playroom, where the mother's suspicions were confirmed. Despite his efforts to hang the chart straight, Jordan had failed to set it at the proper height. It was several inches low.

We easily make Jordan's mistake in gauging our spiritual growth or importance. Compared to a shortened scale, we may appear better than we are. Only when we stand against the Cross, that "great leveler or men" as A. T. Robertson called it, can we not think of ourselves "more highly than we ought to think." Christ, himself, must be our standard. Robert H. Heijermans,

2 Corinthians 11

2 Corinthians 11

[2 Corinthians 11:1-5](#)

[2 Corinthians 11:1-15](#)

[2 Corinthians 11:1-15](#)

[2 Corinthians 11:3](#)

[2 Corinthians 11:3](#)

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[2 Corinthians 11:23-28](#)

[2 Corinthians 11:24-12:10](#)

2 Corinthians 11:14

During the Franco-German War of 1870-71, two unexploded shells were found near a house. The homeowner cleaned them up and put them on display near his fireplace. A few weeks later he showed these interesting objects to a visitor. His friend, an expert in munitions, suddenly had a horrible thought. "What if they're still loaded?" After quickly examining the shells, he exclaimed, "Get them away from the fire immediately! They're as deadly as the day they were made!" Without realizing it, the homeowner had been living in grave peril.

Likewise, many people unknowingly live in constant jeopardy of something far worse—a Christless eternity in hell. Failing to recognize the consequences of unbelief, they are in danger of sealing their doom at any moment. The risk of rejecting Christ and living in unbelief cannot be exaggerated, for what we do with Him and His offer of salvation determines where we will spend eternity.
- H. G. Bosch

2 Corinthians 11:7

Can you imagine Jesus or Peter or Paul promising to pray for people in return for money? Do you suppose they told their audiences that they'd intercede from them on the condition that a contribution be made to their "ministries"? Certainly not! Paul, for example, could say to the Corinthians, "I have preached to you the gospel of God freely." He had in mind the proclamation of the Word, but the principle of serving with pure motives applies to any spiritual endeavor.

How different from the preacher described in the following news item: "You can now buy blessings on the installment plan. An evangelist and faith healer who often lectures in this area is now offering 12 monthly blessings for \$84. Under his plan, those wanting [him] to pray for them can fill out a coupon and mail \$7 each month for 1 year to post office boxes in the United States and Canada. 'Write us every month and tell us what you need from God' says [the evangelist's] promotional material. [He] promises to pray for those who pay and hints that his prayers have brought others financial rewards. With the first installment comes a blessings certificate to 'hang on your wall.' With the second comes an 'anointed billfold' that he has prayed over for prosperity. There is no money-back guarantee." - R. W. DeHaan.

2 Corinthians 11:14

Unexploded Shells

During the Franco-German War of 1870-71, two unexploded shells were found near a house. The homeowner cleaned them up and put them on display near his fireplace. A few weeks later he showed these interesting objects to a visitor. His friend, an expert in munitions, suddenly had a horrible thought. "What if they're still loaded?" After quickly examining the shells, he exclaimed, "Get them away from the fire immediately! They're as deadly as the day they were made!" Without realizing it, the homeowner had been living in grave peril.

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- H.G.B.

2 Corinthians 11:26

F B Meyer

Our Daily Homily

In perils.

This enumeration was made before the imprisonment at Caesarea and the voyage to Rome. How little do we know of Paul's life, after all! Every victory was hardly fought for and dearly won.

These sufferings attest the truth of Christianity. — Whenever a doubt crosses your mind with respect to the Resurrection, or any other Gospel fact, say to yourself, Paul knew everything that could be said against it. He was in the secrets of the Sanhedrim; and if he believed it, we certainly may. And he had nothing to gain by his witness. It was to his great loss, and the shattering of his position in Israel, that he became a Christian.

These sufferings approve the genuineness of Paul's character. — This age is athirst for biography; it loves to read the story of its great men; but sometimes we ask whether they are just as real and good and pure as we have been led to hope. There is one life at least about which no such inquiry can be raised. The severest tests may be applied to this diamond, but it shines only the brighter — a very Koh-i-noor, "A mountain of light."

These sufferings approve the power of the Holy Spirit. — Such love had He inspired toward the Blessed Lord in the heart of the apostle, that he counted the loss of all things gain, and the uncounted sorrows of his lot as light and but for a moment, if only he might win Christ, and know Him, and be found in Him. You cannot explain a life like this apart from the mighty power and indwelling of the Holy Spirit. What a puzzle the Christian presents to the world! I remember how a poor child of fashion and sin kept asking me once, "What do you Christians get?" It was quite impossible to explain.

2 Corinthians 12

2 Corinthians 12

[2 Corinthians 12:1-9](#)

[2 Corinthians 12:1-10](#)

[2 Corinthians 12:1-10](#)

[2 Corinthians 12:1-10](#)

[2 Corinthians 12:1-10](#)

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[2 Corinthians 12:7-10](#)

[2 Corinthians 12:7-10](#)

[2 Corinthians 12:7-8](#)

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[2 Corinthians 12:10](#)

[2 Corinthians 12:11-21](#)

[2 Corinthians 12:15](#)

2 Corinthians 11:22–12:10

Bring It On!

Three times I was beaten ... ; three times I was shipwrecked; ... in perils ... , in weariness and toil, ... in hunger and thirst. —2 Corinthians 11:25-27

A TV program on the History Channel featured the world's most extreme airports. The one that caught my attention is no longer open, but it is one I had flown into. I agree that Hong Kong's Kai Tak Airport was definitely a thrill ride for passengers and surely a challenge for pilots. If you came in from one direction, you had to fly over skyscrapers and then hope the plane stopped before it plunged into the sea. If you came in the other way, it seemed as if you were going to smack into a mountain.

I found it surprising that a pilot who used to take planeloads of people into Kai Tak said, "I miss flying into that airport." But I think I know what he meant. As a pilot, he relished the challenge. He had a confidence based on his ability and his reliance on those who guided him into the airport.

Too often, we run from challenges. Yet the people we love to read about in the Bible are impressive because they battled challenges. Consider Paul. With the confidence of God's help, he faced troubles head-on—and conquered them. Christ's promise to Paul and to us is: "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). Like Paul's example, in the confidence of God's care we can say to the next challenge: Bring it on!

I do not ask for easy paths

Along life's winding roads,

But for the promised grace and strength

To carry all its loads. —Meadows

If God sends you on stony paths, He will provide you with strong shoes.

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Thank God for Thorns

An unknown poet has written:

Once I heard a song of sweetness as it cleft the morning air,
Sounding in its blest completeness like a tender, pleading prayer;
And I sought to find the singer whence the wondrous song was born;
Till I found a bird, sore wounded, pinioned by an ugly thorn.
I have seen a soul of sadness while its wings with pain were furled,
Giving hope and cheer and gladness that should bless the weeping world;
Soon I learned a life of sweetness was of pain and sorrow born,
For that stricken soul was singing with its heart against a thorn!
You are told of One who loves you, of a Savior crucified,
You are told of nails that pinioned, and a spear that pierced His side;

You are told of cruel scourging, of a Savior bearing scorn,
And He died for your salvation with His brow against the thorn.
You are not above the Master! Will you breathe a sweet refrain?
Then His grace will be sufficient when your heart is pierced with pain;
Will you live to bless His loved ones though your life be bruised and torn,
Like a bird that sang so sweetly with its heart against a thorn?

If you have thorns in your life, thank God for the roses of grace that inevitably go with them. -H G Bosch

2 Corinthians 12:9

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, known as “the prince of preachers,” felt he delivered his sermon so poorly one Sunday that he was ashamed of himself. As he walked away from his church, the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, he wondered how any good could come from that message. When he arrived home, he dropped to his knees and prayed, “Lord God, You can do something with nothing. Bless that poor sermon.”

In the months that followed, 41 people said that they had decided to trust Christ as Saviour because of that “weak” message. The following Sunday, to make up for his previous “failure,” Spurgeon had prepared a “great” sermon—but no one responded.

Spurgeon’s experience underscores two important lessons for all who serve the Lord. First, we need the blessing of God on our efforts. Solomon said in Psalm 127:1, “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.” And second, our weakness is an occasion for the working of God’s power. The apostle Paul said, “I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (2Cor 12:10).

2Corinthians 12:9.

June 5

F B Meyer

Our Daily Walk

GLORYING IN INFIRMITIES! - "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."-- 2Co 12:9.

THE APOSTLE seems to have enjoyed wonderful revelations of God. Not once or twice, but often he beheld things that eye hath not seen, and heard words that ear cannot receive, and God felt it was necessary for him to have a make-weight lest he should be exalted beyond measure (2Co 12:7).

What the thorn or stake in the flesh was it is impossible to say with certainty. He may have suffered from some distressing form of ophthalmia. We infer this from the eagerness of the Galatian converts to give him their eyes (Gal 4:13, 14, 15, 16, 17), and from his dependence on an amanuensis. His pain made him very conscious of weakness, and very sensitive of infirmity, and kept him near to the majority of those to whom he ministered, who did not live on the mountain heights, but in the valleys, where demons possess and worry the afflicted. Be willing that your visions of Paradise should be transient, and turn your back on the mountain summit, where the glory shines, as our Lord did, in order to minister to souls in anguish (2Co 12:4; Mt 17:14, 15, 16, 17, 18).

On three separate occasions the Apostle besought the Lord for deliverance from his infirmity, and finally received the assurance that though the thorn could not be removed, yet sufficient grace would be given to enable him to do his life-work, and he was more than content. On the one hand, there was the buffeting of this messenger of Satan; but on the other, there were the gains of meekness, humility, and of greater grace than would have been possible if he had not needed it so sorely--and he gladly accepted an infirmity for which there were such abundant compensations.

Do not sit down baffled by your difficulties and infirmities, but rum from them to claim Christ's abundant grace and strength, that at the end of life you may have done all that was set you to do, and more, because the greatness of your need made you lean more heavily on His infinite resources. "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength."

PRAYER- Help us, O Lord, to look on the bright side of things; not on the dark cloud, but on Thy rainbow of covenant mercy; not on the stormy waters, but on the face of Jesus; not on what Thou hast taken, or withheld, but on what Thou hast left. Enable us to realise Thine all-sufficiency. AMEN.

2 Corinthians 12:10

We don't often thank God for our trials, heartaches, and difficulties. Although we are willing to praise Him for His goodness, we sometimes fail to realize that even adverse circumstances are blessings in disguise.

Scottish preacher George Matheson had that problem. He realized that he was not as ready to praise God when things went wrong as he was when they went right. However, after he began to lose his eyesight, he changed his thinking. He struggled for some months with this weary burden until he reached the point where he could pray, "My God, I have never thanked You for my thorn. I have thanked You a thousand times for my roses, but not once for my thorn. I have been looking forward to a world where I shall get compensated for my cross, but I have never thought of my cross as itself a present glory. Teach me the value of my thorn."

When we count our blessings, we should include the weaknesses, the hardships, the burdens, and the trials we face. If we do, we might find that God has used our difficulties more than the "good" things to help us grow spiritually. Why is that? Because it is in those difficult places that we discover the sufficiency of His grace. In our trials, we turn to God. As we depend on Him, we find that His strength is made perfect in our weakness (2Cor 12:9). Take a moment and think about the way God has led you. When you praise God for your blessings, do you remember to thank Him for the thorns? P R Van Gorder.

2 Corinthians 12:10.

F B Meyer

Our Daily Homily

When I am weak, then am I strong.

We need not discuss the nature of Paul's thorn in the flesh. It is enough that he calls it "a stake," as though he had been impaled. It must have, therefore, been very painful. It must also have been physical, because he could not have prayed thrice for the removal of a moral taint, and been refused. It came from Satan, permitted by God, as in the case of Job, to buffet his servant. It is not unlikely that he suffered from weak eyes, or some distressing form of ophthalmia; hence the eagerness of the Galatian converts to give him their eyes (see Galatians 4:15).

God does not take away our thorns, but He communicates sufficient grace. He always answers prayer, though not as we expect. Let the music of these tender words soar unto thee, poor sufferer! "My grace is sufficient even for thee." Sufficient when friends forsake, and foes pursue; sufficient to make thee strong against an infuriated crowd and a tyrannical judge; sufficient for excessive physical exertion and spiritual conflict; sufficient to enable thee to do as much work, and even more, than if health and vigour were not impaired, because the very weakness of our nature is the chosen condition under which God will manifest the strength of his.

Do not sit down before that mistaken marriage, that uncongenial business, that physical weakness, as though thy life must be a failure; but take in large reinforcements of that Divine grace which is given to the weak and to those who have no might. It is clear that Paul had reached such a condition, that it was a matter of deep congratulation to him to be deficient in much that men hold dear, and to have what most men dread. He rejoiced in all that diminished creature-might and strengthened his hold on God.

2 Corinthians 12:15

Conversion

Before my husband and I travel, we go to the bank and trade in our US dollars for the currency of the country we'll be visiting. We do this so we can pay for expenses while we're away from home.

When we become Christians, another kind of exchange takes place. Our lives are like currency that we convert from one medium to another. We trade our old life for a new one so that we can begin "spending" ourselves in a different kingdom. Instead of spending ourselves for the causes of this world, we are able to start spending ourselves for the cause of Christ.

The apostle Paul is a good example of this difference. After his dramatic conversion on the way to Damascus (Acts 9), he began spending his life in a dramatically different way. Instead of pursuing Christians to imprison and kill them, he began pursuing non-Christians to convert them. Then he spent the rest of his life for their welfare. He wrote to the church at Corinth, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls" (2 Cor. 12:15). Everything he did was for the edification of his spiritual children (vv.14,19).

Conversion is far more than just changing our final destination. It's changing the way we spend each day of our lives.— by Julie Ackerman Link

Lord, help me to spend myself on what will last,

not on what will fade away one day.

I give my life to You that I might spend and be spent

for others and Your will. Amen.

Conversion takes only a moment—transformation takes a lifetime.

2 Corinthians 13

2 Corinthians 13:1-10

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith (2 Corinthians 13:5).

In these days when everyone is so good at role-playing, it's sometimes difficult to tell the difference between the impostor and the real thing. Even within the church, some behave as if they can satisfy God by skillfully acting out the part of a Christian.

They are like the goat who wanted more than anything else in the world to be a lion. He told himself that if he could learn to walk like a lion, talk like a lion, and go where lions go, he would be a lion. So he practiced stalking through the jungle and tried to swish his stubby little tail majestically. Then he tried to turn his pitiful little bleat into the deep, awesome roar of the king of beasts. He worked and worked on it. Finally convinced that he looked and sounded like a lion, he said, "Now, all I have to do to be a lion is to go where lions go." So he marched into lion territory one day about lunchtime.

Sometimes people who have learned to walk, talk, and act like Christians, think they really are. By outward appearances, they are. But if they have never personally placed their trust in Jesus Christ, they are phonies. They lack that "genuine faith," which alone brings true salvation (2Ti 1:5).

When we rely on church attendance, pious language, or good behavior to get us into heaven, we deceive ourselves. Only by trusting the Lord Jesus as Savior can we avoid the rude awakening on the day of judgment that faced the misguided goat when he walked into lion territory. —D. C. Egnor

We should work harder to be what we ought to be than to hide what we are.

2Corinthians 13:7-14

MUSICIAN Ken Medema was born blind, but his parents determined to treat him as a normal child. They taught him to play games, ride a bike, and water-ski. They weren't denying his condition; they were affirming his worth as a person. Growing up with that kind of love, Ken developed an inner wholeness that almost made him forget his disability.

One day on campus, he accidentally bumped into another blind student who said, "Hey, watch it. Don't you know I'm blind?" Instead of mentioning his own handicap, Ken apologized, "I'm sorry, I didn't see you."

As Christians, we too bump into tough situations in which our weaknesses are revealed. Unlike Ken, however, often we react immaturely and use our weaknesses as an excuse. "After all, I'm not perfect," we argue.

The Corinthian believers had much spiritual growing to do (1Corinthians 1:11; 1Cor 3:1). Therefore, as Paul closed his second letter to them, he wrote, "Become complete." He used a word that also means "adjust, mend, repair." It's our responsibility to make the needed adjustments. God's part is to keep on affirming His love for us regardless of our sin. And that He does, for Paul assured us that the God of love will be with us.—D J DeHaan

2Corinthians 13:14.

F B Meyer

Our Daily Homily

The Communion of the Holy Ghost.

How often these words are uttered without any real appreciation of their depth of meaning! The word communion signifies having in common. It is used of our fellowship with one another (1 Corinthians 10:16) and with God (1Jn 1:3). The bond of such fellowship is always through the Holy Spirit. As the ocean unites all lands, and is the medium through which they are able to exchange commodities, so does the blessed Spirit unite the Persons of the Blessed Trinity to each other, and us to them, and secures that oneness for which our Savior prayed.

How wonderful it is to have the privilege of this Divine fellowship! That we need never be alone again; that we can at any moment turn to Him for advice and direction; that we may draw on his resources for the supply of every need; that it is impossible to exhaust

or even tax his willingness to counsel and succour; that there is no kind of service or suffering into which He is not prepared to enter with us! Surely, if we would but give ourselves time to realize this marvellous fact, there would be no room for the despondency which at times threatens to deprive us of heart and hope.

Of course, we must be very careful of the tender sensibilities and holy disposition of our divine Confederate. We cannot ruthlessly grieve Him by our harshness or impurity at one moment, and turn to Him for his succor and direction at the next. Such divine union as lies within our reach certainly demands on our part watchfulness, a tender conscience, a yielded and pliant will, a heart which has no other love, no affection nor idol inconsistent with the Spirit's fellowship.

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