

Title: HOW TO KEEP GOING, 2 CORINTHIANS 4:13 – 5:1  
(Chatham, NJ; 06/10/12, AM) [Pt – Exegetical]

Theme: When troubles and afflictions of any sort overwhelm us, we have recourse to our belief in the resurrection and our hope for eternal glory.

Purpose: To encourage one another by adopting Paul's method for overcoming adversity as expressed in 2 Corinthians 4.

Introduction:

1. We reach a point in our lives when we begin to experience the frailty of our existence; Paul says we are jars of clay (7).
2. This, however, demonstrates that the power is God's not ours.
3. Paul speaks of his experiences as an apostle: we are afflicted, perplexed, persecuted, and struck down (8-9).
4. Such are the experiences of all who have confessed the Gospel and sought to live according to its righteous demands, 2 Tim. 3:12.
5. This sinful world has produced suffering and affliction, but this great apostle provides us with what we need to not only survive but to conquer.

I. A Creed: "I Believe" 2 Corinthians 4:13 & Ps. 116:10

A. The psalmist's lament

1. He, too, has suffered evil – verses 3, 8, 11
2. Yet he has experienced deliverance by God – 1, 5-6, 8
3. More importantly he puts a positive spin on death – 15
4. Paul could not have adopted a more appropriate quote in verse 10 considering the experience of the psalmist and his own

B. Belief sustains us

1. As the psalmist is sustained by his belief in the mercy of God, so we are sustained by the belief in the resurrection
2. Without it our faith is meaningless, 1 Corinthians 15:17 – 19
3. But with it "death is swallowed up in victory" 1 Cor. 15:54
4. Paul knows that God will raise us and bring us "into his presence" 2 Cor. 4:15
5. This belief sustains him through all his afflictions

II. An Emotional Disposition: "Not lose heart" verse 16

A. We realize our inner transformation: "our inner nature is being renewed day by day" (16)

1. Leo Tolstoy, the Russian novelist, described the change that he experienced (*For All the Saints*, vol. IV, p. 55)
2. Remember who Paul is talking to, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11
3. They had experienced the life-giving and life-altering change of the Gospel
4. Paul could remember the change in his own life, 1 Tim. 1:13
5. Likewise we must remember what God has done in us and for us

B. We project our future hope: "an eternal weight of glory" (17)

1. Already reminded that they will come into God's presence, 14
2. Afflictions are "momentary" and "slight"
3. Cannot compare to what we'll receive
4. He leaves a lot to the imagination which is a good thing
5. Let your imagination get the best of you in this case
6. What we gain compared to what we invest stretches beyond what we imagine

III. A Standard Operating Procedure; A Modus Operandi: "We Look" (18); Three contrasts demonstrate what we see every day.

- A. Momentary affliction/eternal glory
  1. We already seen this above
  2. But how can you weigh glory?
  3. Essentially you can't; what we receive is "beyond all measure (comparison)"
  4. No scale can tell us what it will weigh
  5. See your afflictions as light – like a flea compared to an elephant, a minnow to a whale, a hill to Mt. Everest
  
- B. Things seen/things unseen
  1. Scientific naturalism suggests that only that which can be touched, examined, etc. is all that there is
  2. People tried to assert in the 60s that God is Dead; now they want to believe that religion is dead
  3. Intuitively we know better
  4. No matter how hard the forces of irreligion try to expunge religion from society they continually fail
  5. We instinctively believe that there is something more
  6. We take the things unseen as the real things
  
- C. Transient/eternal
  1. Things seen = transient, temporal, won't last
  2. Things unseen = eternal
  3. We have eternity in our hearts, Ecc. 3:11
  4. The Christian looks at this world as passing away
  5. It will be replaced by a new heaven and new earth
  6. This is our hope and to this we focus our gaze

Conclusion:

1. Paul resolves the experience of afflictions and trials with a singular focus on Christ.
2. His belief in the resurrection provides him with an emotional disposition that keeps him from losing heart which in turn is guided by a vision that sees the eternal.
3. Not all conflicts in this life may be resolved to our liking.
4. However, throughout all of them the unseen hand of God guides us.
5. That same hope is for all who accept the Gospel.