



# *The Christian Life Institute*

Wednesday, April 1

Thank you for joining us today, as we continue our series, at the Christian Life Institute, presented through 15-minute encouraging messages three times per week, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 12:45 Central time, on practical ways to grow forward in Christ in uncertainty, unpredictability, and upheaval.

This message is entitled: Let us not Lose Heart.

In 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 Paul writes:

“So, we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, <sup>18</sup> as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”

And in Romans 8:28 we read: “and we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”

Over the last several weeks we have been faced with uncertainty, unpredictability, and upheaval. As we shared in the Friday message, we have a choice as to how we will choose to live during these unfamiliar times. On Wednesday, last week, we encouraged one another to find the opportunities in the midst of the unusual.

Today, our encouragement is to not lose heart. As humans it is not uncommon or unusual to be discouraged – to lose heart – to become weary. It is also common to man to become quickly conditioned into ways of being, thinking, and behaving. Paul’s message to the church in Corinth is our message for today. Whatever we are experiencing in the diversity of our situations we have a commonality – the ability to look past what is seen (the circumstances, the externalities, as we refer to them therapeutically and spiritually) to what is not seen – to walk by faith.

This journey – this lifestyle, Who is Christ, requires that we walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). Faith is defined in Hebrews 11:1 but let us read 1-3 “now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. <sup>2</sup>For by it the people of old received their commendation. <sup>3</sup>By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.” Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4: 18 “<sup>18</sup>as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.” In Hebrews 11:3 we just read “By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.”

These verses from 2 Corinthians, Romans, and Hebrews remind us of God’s sovereignty, which we were reminded of in last Monday and Wednesday’s message. God has a plan and purpose – He is intentional in all of His ways. God is not haphazard, sloppy, indecisive, unsure, trepidatious, ambivalent, wavering – God is on point all of the time. God is not surprised at what we have termed, from our human perspective the “uncertainty, unpredictability, and upheaval.” Jesus is not unaware o four afflictions. He understands our humanity, our pain, hurts, disappointments. **He does not demand anything of us that was no demanded of Him.** This is an essential point. God is not out to hurt us – condemn us – destroy us. God desires to heal us and grow us – to have us walk in freedom and in His glorious Light.

***Jesus knew Temptation:*** “He was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan” (Mark 1:13).

***Jesus knew Poverty:*** “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head” (Matthew 8:20).

***Jesus knew Frustration:*** “He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables.... ‘Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father’s house into a market!’” (John 2:15-16).

***Jesus knew Weariness:*** “Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well” (John 4:6).

***Jesus knew Disappointment:*** “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem...how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks,...but you were not willing” (Luke 13:34).

***Jesus knew Rejection:*** “From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him” (John 6:66).

***Jesus knew Sorrow:*** “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death” (Matthew 26:38).

***Jesus knew Ridicule:*** “Again and again they struck him...and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid [mocking] homage to him” (Mark 15:19).

***Jesus knew Loneliness:*** “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46).

So then Let us not Lose Heart. Let us implement Isaiah 40:31 “but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.” Paul is addressing the church in Corinth during a vulnerable time in his own life as he was hurting for the struggles the church was facing and desperately wanted them to stand united, as members of one another, and one body. In this letter Paul reminds the church in Corinth that he had faced numerous afflictions (in 2 Corinthians 11:25, we read “three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea”).

Paul, as Jesus, as you and I have experienced afflictions (perhaps of a differing and varying degree). We all of have a story which includes pain and loss. I lost a husband to cancer and personally walked through cancer. We all have the opportunity through our ‘afflictions’ as Paul refers to them in 2 Corinthians 4:17 to look up to Jesus (align vertically) rather than be tossed to and from by the externalities – the afflictions.

Paul was encouraging and exhorting the church at Corinth as he is you and I today to remember – be mindful – that whatever the ‘afflictions’ they are momentary in light of God’s eternal purposes and is pointing us to the things unseen – the faith that we have in Christ and the secure, unshakeable Hope we

have in Him, rather than the ‘afflictions of this life. Paul understood, through His own painful experiences, that life is fleeting, and we have a choice as to our perspective – He is asking us to choose an eternal perspective.

God is at work as we are reminded in Romans 8:28 and our ‘good’ is our spiritual well-being. God’s desire is that you and I become more like Christ. In the verse following, in Romans 8:29 we read “for those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son” – God desires to conform and transform us into the image of His Son. It is the sanctifying work in us through the ‘afflictions’ in our life that grow us forward to be more like Christ and God is fully invested in the completion of His perfect work in you and me as Paul reminds us in Philippians 1:6 “and I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”

In closing, Francois Fenelon, a French Roman Catholic archbishop, theologian, poet and writer in his book *A Guide to True Peace*, writes “the Lord polishes the soul which he draws to himself, with the rough file of temptation. By means of temptation and tribulation he humbles, subjects and exercises it . . . he purifies and strips the heart in order that all its operations may be pure and of inestimable value” (p. 41). We are of inestimable value to the Lord and His desires is our refinement – our purification for our God.

John Piper shared in a message, “Paul called his lifelong beatings and shipwreck and sleepless nights and agony for the church, he called it *momentary* (verse 17)? He called it light, and he called it momentary. Twenty, thirty years of relentless imprisonments and persecution, and he calls it momentary and he calls it light. This text says: Our light, momentary affliction is *preparing* for us an eternal weight of glory. I will venture this: every millisecond of your pain from the fallen nature or fallen man, every millisecond of your misery, in the path of obedience, is producing a peculiar glory you will get because of that.”

John Calvin wrote “ss our flesh always shrinks back from its own destruction, whatever reward may be presented to our view, and as we are influenced much more by present feeling than by the hope of heavenly blessings, Paul on that account admonishes us, that the afflictions and vexations of the pious have little or nothing of bitterness, if compared with the boundless blessings of everlasting glory. He had said, that the decay of the *outward man* ought to

occasion us no grief, inasmuch as the renovation of the *inward man* springs out of it.<sup>[1]</sup>

God loves you and me more than we can imagine and whatever we are facing He is with us and He is at work in the midst. Max Lucado writes (paraphrased) Jesus loves you as you are but He does not want you to stay that way – He wants you to be more like Him.

In this season, and life which is a journey of seasons, we as Christ-followers, have opportunities to, through His strength and His power reflect Him to a broken and hurting world – so, let us not Lose Heart. As a wise Christ-following friend shared with me let us meet our ‘afflictions’ head-on, with courage, with love for others, with our eyes on the Lord – our eyes on the prize of our high-calling – Christ, Jesus the Lord – as citizens of Heaven, motivated by the One True Lord who “humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:8).

Let us agree together to:

“Walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7)

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Thank you for joining us for Live Streaming on YouTube. Please join us again on Friday, April 3 at 12:45 CST.

Please visit our website at [www.christianlifeinstitute.com](http://www.christianlifeinstitute.com) and join our mailing list, consider contributing to support these resources, and please pray for us.

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[1] John Calvin and John Pringle, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, vol. 2 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 212.