

THE MINISTRY: ITS SUSTAINING AND ENDURING SPIRIT 2 CORINTHIANS 04:07–18

Introduction

The diligent minister faces trial after trial. He experiences fatigue and weariness, strain and pressure, trouble and doubt, criticism and opposition, conflict and persecution — and the list could go on and on. The minister needs a strong spirit of endurance. He needs a very special power to sustain him. This passage deals with his enduring spirit, with the things that do sustain him. It is a desperately needed discussion.

- I. The presence of God sustains (v. 7).
- II. The power of God sustains (vv. 7-9).
- III. The spirit of dying daily sustains (vv. 10-12).
- IV. The spirit of faith sustains (v. 13).
- V. The hope of being resurrected sustains (v. 14).
- VI. The need of others and the glory of God sustain (v. 15).
- VII. The inner man being renewed day by day sustains (v. 16).
- VIII. The hope of eternal glory sustains (vv. 17-18).

I. 2 Corinthians 04:07 *The Indwelling Presence of God*

The presence of God sustains the minister. This is a precious, yet very striking verse. “This treasure” refers back to the former verse (v. 6). It is the presence of God Himself shining in the believer’s earthly vessel, in his heart, in his earthly body.

1. God’s presence is a treasure, a precious and priceless treasure.
2. God’s presence is placed into (enters) jars of clay. God enters our bodies, bodies that are like jars of clay made of pottery or glass. They are ever so weak and worthless, corruptible and perishable. Yet imagine — God’s presence is placed into such earthly bodies!
3. God’s purpose for entering our bodies is to show His power by overcoming all weaknesses, even death itself.

=> “This all-surpassing power” is a picture of the grandeur, glory and pre-eminence of His power. It is the excellency, the great and overcoming power of God.

The presence of God in our hearts and bodies is power.

- a. It is the power to convert and transform us into new creations.

2 Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

- b. It is the power to convert and transform us into new people.
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Eph 4:24 *And to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

Col 3:10 *And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

- c. It is the power to put His divine nature into us.

2 Pet 1:4 *Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.*

- d. It is the power to give us life, both abundant and eternal.

John 10:10 *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*

John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

The point is this: the treasure of God’s presence is in this jar of clay, this earthly body that is ever so weak and frail. God does so much for us, and it is all wrought by Him. Therefore, God and God alone gets all the credit, and He is thereby praised (cp. v. 15). As the verse says, the power is of God, not of us.

Thought 1. No man can dispute his mortality, for no man can convert and transform himself into an eternal being. Only the presence of God, this glorious treasure, can enter our lives and change us into eternal beings. The presence of God alone can sustain us.

Job 10:9 *Remember that you moulded me like clay. Will you now turn me to dust again?*

Psa 89:48 *What man can live and not see death, or save himself from the power of the grave?*

Eccl 3:20 *All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return.*

2 Cor 4:7 *But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.*

2 Cor 4:16 *Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.*

2 Cor 5:1 *Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.*

2 Cor 5:4 *For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.*

Thought 2. The glorious treasure of God’s presence lives within the believer — in the power of God’s Holy Spirit.

John 14:16-17 “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever — the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.”

John 14:23 Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”

Rom 8:9 You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

1 Cor 3:16 Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?

1 Cor 6:19-20 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own. You were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.

2 Tim 1:14 Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you — guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

1 John 2:27 As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit — just as it has taught you, remain in him.

II. 2 Corinthians 04:07-09 The Sustaining Power of God

The power of God sustains the minister. The minister (and believers) of God faces all kinds of trouble and difficult situations in life. However, he has one great resource: the presence and power of God within him. God never forsakes him; God saves and delivers him through every situation and trial, no matter how difficult.

1. The minister (or believer) may be troubled on every side, but God's power saves him from distress.

⇒ “Hard pressed” (thlibomenoi) means to be squeezed, oppressed, hedged in, pressured, troubled.

⇒ “Crushed” (stenochoroumenoi) means to be kept in a narrow, cramped place; to be distressed.

⇒ “On every side” means in every imaginable way and place and occasion.

The minister experiences all kinds of trouble and pressure. He sometimes feels as though he is pressured and troubled beyond what he can bear. It is as though a heavy weight is pressing in upon him and about to crush him. But then God steps in and saves him from being hard pressed and crushed. The presence and power of God sustains His dear minister.

2. The minister (or believer) may be perplexed, but God's power saves him from despair.

=> "Perplexed" (aporoumenoi) means to be at a loss, to be doubting, not knowing, questioning, wondering which way to go, what to do, what to say. It means being perplexed and unable to find an answer.

=> "Despair" (exaporoumenoi) means to be hopeless, to have no confidence or assurance, to be without any sense of security.

The minister is often perplexed, not understanding why this or that happened, what should be done or said, how the situation should be handled, and on and on. Sometimes situations become so puzzling that he is almost stymied and the threat of despair faces him. There is the danger that his confidence and assurance will be shaken. But again, the presence and power of God steps in and saves the minister from despair. God gives him hope and stirs his confidence and shows him the way out. God never allows him to be overcome by despair.

Rom 15:4 *For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*

3. The minister (or believer) may be persecuted, but he is not forsaken or abandoned. Ministers are sometimes opposed, and sometimes the opposition is hot and severe. The persecution may be behind his back or to his face. It may take such forms as...

- ridicule
- confrontation
- isolation
- abuse
- martyrdom
- slander
- jokes
- neglect
- criticism
- imprisonment
- withdrawal
- being ignored
- mockery
- being censored
- threats

However, God never forsakes, abandons or deserts his dear servant. God never leaves him alone. The companionship of God, His presence and power is always with His dear servant.

4. The minister (or believer) may be cast down, but he is never destroyed.

=> "Struck down" (kataballomenoi) means to be smitten down or knocked down.

=> "Destroyed" (apollumenoi) means to perish, to die, to strike out.

The minister may be struck down, but he is never allowed to strike out; he may be knocked down, but he is never knocked out. As William Barclay says:

"The supreme characteristic of the Christian is not that he does not fall, but that every time he falls he rises again. It is not that he is never beaten, but he is never ultimately defeated. He may lose a battle, but he knows that in the end he can never lose the campaign" (The Letters to the Corinthians, p. 223).

Mat 28:20 *...And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

John 14:16-18 *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever — the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”*

John 14:27 *“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*

2 Cor 4:16 *Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.*

Eph 3:16 *I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being.*

Phil 4:6-7 *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Col 1:11 *Being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience and joyfully,*

2 Tim 4:18 *The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Heb 13:5 *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”*

Gen. 28:15 *“I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”*

Exo 33:14 *The Lord replied, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”*

Deu 33:27 *The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. He will drive out your enemy before you, saying, ‘Destroy him!’*

Psa 18:35 *You give me your shield of victory, and your right hand sustains me; you stoop down to make me great.*

Psa 41:12 *In my integrity you uphold me and set me in your presence forever.*

Isa 40:31 *But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.*

Isa 41:10 *So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

Isa 43:2 *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.*

Isa 46:4 *Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.*

III. *2 Corinthians 04:10–12 Self-Denial; The Spirit of Dying Daily*

The spirit of dying daily sustains the minister. Note three points.

1. The minister is to bear in his own body the death of the Lord Jesus, and he is to do it all the time — continually — as he walks about day by day. Simply put, Paul...
 - carried about the death of the Lord Jesus.
 - took up the cross of Christ (see Lk. 9:23).
 - died to self, that is, to his own desires and wishes.
 - denied himself in order to live for Christ.

Paul died to self. “Death” means the sense in which Jesus was *dying every day*. When Jesus came to earth, He came to secure a perfect righteousness for man. To do this, He had to live a sinless life; He had to struggle against sin every day. He had to die to self, to deny His own desires and live for God. He had to struggle against the daily temptations which men face, and He had to conquer them all. Spiritually, the Lord Jesus was always dying to self, that is...

- always subjecting His body: its passions and urges.
- always denying His will in order to do God’s will.
- always struggling to conquer the pressures of temptation.
- always wrestling against the forces of evil and never giving in to them.

Physically, the Lord Jesus was always dying to self. He was always expending enormous energy to share the truth. As RVG Tasker says, he experienced continuous hunger and thirst, and subjected his body to exhausting days and sleepless nights for the sake of others. He faced continuous opposition from political and religious leaders in order to share and preach the truth (*The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*. Tyndale Bible Commentaries. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1958, p.73f).

A true minister of the gospel is to *die daily*, he is to die to the point that the actual passing from this life into eternity is but the final stage of suffering and death for him.

2. The minister is to die to self so that Christ might be seen in his body. Paul denied himself so that the presence of Christ could be seen conquering the flesh, his sinful nature, the temptations and trials of life. When Paul disciplined his body and kept it under control — when he put his urges and desires to death — when he denied his will and did God’s will — he demonstrated that Jesus Christ lived within his body. The life of Jesus was manifested and shown to be in his body.
3. The minister is to die to self so that others might receive life. When a minister dies to self, really denies himself so that Christ can live in his body and conquer the flesh (sinful nature) and trials of life, others see the power of Christ. They too long for such power. They are led to turn to Christ in order to receive the same conquering life

and power. They are led to seek life in Christ, life that is abundant in this world and eternal in the next world.

Luke 9:23-24 *Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it."*

Rom 6:2 *By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?*

Rom 6:11 *In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*

Rom 8:13 *For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.*

Gal 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

Gal 5:24 *Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.*

Phil 3:8 *What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ.*

Col 3:3 *For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.*

IV. 2 Corinthians 04:13 The Minister's Spirit of Faith

The spirit of faith sustains the minister. When nothing else sustains the minister, his faith will sustain him. The minister may be tempted to give up: the trouble and pressure against him may be so great that he is tempted to leave the ministry, to never share the gospel again. However as stated, when nothing else sustains the minister, his faith will sustain him. His faith will not allow him to become discouraged to such a point that he would leave the ministry and fall into the depths of despair. The minister's faith is the same great faith that the Psalmist David had (Psa 116:10). And in the words of Charles Hodge:

"The Psalmist was greatly afflicted; the sorrows of death compassed him, the pains of hell got hold of him, but he did not despair. He called on the Lord, and he helped him. He delivered his soul from death, his eyes from tears, and his feet from falling. David's faith did not fail. He believed, and therefore, in the midst of his afflictions, he proclaimed his confidence and recounted the goodness of the Lord. Paul's experience was the same. He also was sorely tried. He also retained his confidence, and continued to rely on the promises of God" (An Exposition of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, p. 97).

By faith the minister believes the promises of God: he stays in the ministry and continues to speak just as David and Paul did. The minister believes with all his heart...

- that the presence of God will sustain him.
- that the power of God will sustain him.
- that the spirit of dying daily will sustain him.

John 6:28-29 *Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”*

Rom 10:17-20 *Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.*

Eph 6:16 *In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.*

Heb 11:1 *Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*

Heb 11:6 *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

James 1:5-6 *If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.*

1 John 3:23 *And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.*

1 John 5:4 *For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.*

V. 2 Corinthians 04:14 The Sustaining Hope of Resurrection

The hope of being resurrected sustains the minister. The minister carries around in his body the “death of Jesus” (denies himself and dies daily) for one great reason: he knows that he is to die some day.

Above all else, the one thing the minister wants is to be with Jesus; therefore, that glorious day of resurrection, the day of full redemption, is ever before his eyes. The minister suffers and bears all — he continues to preach and teach, to serve and meet the needs of people — all because he knows that the day of resurrection is coming. Just as God raised up the Lord Jesus, so God is going to raise him up to be with all those to whom he has ministered.

How does the minister know this? Because God raised up the Lord Jesus. When God raised up Christ, He demonstrated that it was His will to raise the dead, and that He had the power to raise the dead.

John 5:25 *“I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.”*

John 5:28-29 *“Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out — those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.”*

John 6:40 *“For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

John 11:25 *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.”*

Acts 24:15 *And I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.*

Rom 8:11 *And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.*

1 Cor 6:14 *By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.*

1 Cor 15:19-22 *If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.*

2 Cor 4:14 *Because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence.*

1 Th 4:16-18 *For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.*

VI. 2 Corinthians 04:15 The Need of Others and the Glory of God

The need of others and the glory of God sustain the minister. Note the words “all this.” The minister of God bears all this for two reasons: for the sake of the people and for the glory of God. The minister carries and suffers all...

- so that people can experience the abundant grace of God. As he ministers to people, they learn more and more about God. They experience more and more of God’s wonderful grace and blessings.
- The result is a marvellous happening: the people joy and rejoice in God. They walk around offering up praise and thanksgiving to God, and God is *thereby* glorified.

The minister refuses to be defeated, because people need the grace of God and because God needs to be glorified. And the only way people will glorify God is for them to experience the grace and blessings of God.

Thought 1. The purpose of the minister is twofold.

- 1) He is to meet the needs of people. Fulfilling his ministry will sustain him with a great sense of satisfaction.

John 21:16 *Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."*

Acts 20:25 *"Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again."*

Rom 15:1 *We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.*

1 Cor 15:58 *Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.*

Gal 6:2 *Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.*

Gal 6:10 *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.*

1 Th 5:14 *And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone.*

- 2) He is to lead people to praise and glorify God.

Mat 5:16 *"In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."*

John. 15:8 *"This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."*

Rom 15:6 *So that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 Cor 6:20 *You were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.*

1 Pet 2:9 *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

VII. 2 Corinthians 04:16 Daily Renewal of the Inner Man

The inner man being renewed day by day sustains the minister. Note three significant points.

1. The minister does not lose heart (see v. 1). He does not give up or quit; he does not lose heart or become discouraged; he does not allow anything to defeat him: not people, circumstances, events, fatigue, exhaustion or even persecution and severe opposition. Nothing, absolutely nothing can drive him from the ministry nor keep him from preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Keep in mind the things that give him the strength to continue preaching: the presence and power of God (vv. 7-9); the spirit of his faith (v. 13); the hope of the resurrection (v. 14); and the needs of people and the glory of God (v. 15).

2. The minister's outward man perishes every day.

=> The "outward man" is the jar of clay (v. 7), the *human body* (v. 10), the *mortal* body (v. 11), and the *earthly* tent (5:1).

=> The words *wasting away* (diaphtheiretai) mean to age, wear out, deteriorate, decay, corrupt and die.

Paul says that his "outward man" or body was wearing out and wasting away every day. It was in the process of perishing and dying.

3. The minister's "inner man" is renewed day by day. The inner man is...

- the spirit of man that has been "born again" or created anew by the Spirit of God (Jn. 3:3, 5-6).
- the spirit of man that was dead in transgressions and sins until it was made alive by Christ (Eph. 2:2, 4-5).
- the "new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17) and the "new self" (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10).
- the highest and deepest part of a man's being where the Holy Spirit dwells.
- the "hidden person of the heart" (1 Pet. 3:4).

The minister is renewed day by day when he draws near God for strength and growth, for relief and deliverance from trials, pressure and trouble. But remember: it is the presence and power of God within his body that renews him. (See notes, 2 Cor. 4:7; 4:7-9.)

Mat 11:28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

Luke 11:13 "If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

John 14:1-2 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you."

Rom 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

2 Cor 4:17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

2 Cor 12:9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

1 Pet 4:12-13 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

Rev 2:10 Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Rev 21:4 “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

Psa 34:19 A righteous man may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all.

Psa 41:3 The LORD will sustain him on his sickbed and restore him from his bed of illness.

Psa 50:15 And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honour me.

Psa 138:7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes, with your right hand you save me.

Isa 40:31 But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Isa 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isa 43:1-3 ... “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

VIII. 2 Corinthians 04:17–18 The Hope of Eternal Glory

The hope of glory sustains the minister. Note two significant points.

1. The minister’s afflictions are light when compared to the glory he shall receive in heaven. Note the phrase “an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.” This picture should always be kept in mind by every minister. The picture is that of a set of scales sitting before the minister. He balances his afflictions on one end and the eternal glory he is to receive on the other end. The afflictions may be heavy and severe, but when he places the eternal glory he is to receive on the scales, the afflictions become light. It is as though they weigh nothing. (See note, *Reward*, Lk. 16:10-12 for a complete list of rewards.)
2. The minister’s eyes are not focused on the physical and temporal, but on the spiritual and eternal. The word “fix” (*scopeo*) means to focus one’s eyes and attention on a set

goal or end. The goal, of course, is spending eternity with God in the new heavens and earth. The minister does not look at the things which are seen (the physical and corruptible), but at things which are not seen (the spiritual and incorruptible).

The reason is strikingly clear: the things which are seen are temporal (brief, temporary, fading, passing, fleeting, transient); but the things which are not seen are eternal (lasting, endless, forever, permanent, immortal, glorious).

Mat 25:23 *“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’”*

Mat 13:43 *“Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”*

Rom 8:17-18 *Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*

2 Cor 4:17 *For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*

Phil 3:21 *Who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.*

2 Tim 2:12 *If we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us.*

Col 3:4 *When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

Heb 11:26 *He [Moses] regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.*

Rev 22:5 *There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever. ■*