

## 2 TIMOTHY 2:10

### ONE HOLY PURPOSE

“I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”<sup>1</sup>

The Apostle has emphasised a concept that is not often welcomed today—hardship. Directing student ministries at a major pastoral school some years past, I often emphasised the need for the preacher boys to “pay their dues.” I daresay that the overwhelming majority of young men (and some not so young) who attended that school imagined that they would soon be pastoring megachurches. They knew they were great preachers, and it was only a matter of time until the saints recognised their superior abilities.

That the Apostle is continuing on the theme of hardship in service of the King becomes evident from the first word of the text—“Therefore!” When we read, we often give scant attention to prepositions such as the first word in this verse. However, he is drawing a logical conclusion from what he has just stated. In order to refresh our memories, look back to the opening verses of the letter. “You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

“Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound” [2 TIMOTHY 2:1-9]!

Paul has enjoined the pastor especially to prepare men for ministry, equipping them to serve. Fulfilling this responsibility will entail suffering; but suffering because of service to the Master is to be embraced, not spurned. Suffering itself is not particularly praise-worthy; however, suffering because one holds to the Faith merits the Saviour’s commendation. We have Jesus’ statement on this matter. “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you” [MATTHEW 5:10-12]. Mark well that the anticipated reward is “in heaven.” That reward is not, as many imagine, given at this time.

Throughout the preceding verses, Paul has insisted that the pastor must have the singular focus of fulfilling the appointment received from the Lord of Glory. The soldier aims to please the one who enlisted him. The athlete must compete according to the rules. The farmer must toil if he anticipates a share of the crop. However, in each instance success is recognised and rewarded only at the completion of the battle, or after the contest is concluded, or after the crop is harvested. Until the appointment is fulfilled, all must anticipate toil, deprivation and exhausting labour. Just so, in pastoral service, no man should expect praise and commendation.

---

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from **The Holy Bible: English Standard Version**. Wheaton: Good News Publishers, 2001. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

At his best, the pastor is only doing what he was appointed to do. The same truth holds for every follower of the Christ. This is a shocking thing for many people to deal with, but commendation for service rendered is not given in this life. Jesus appears to have stunned His disciples when he challenged them concerning this matter. These are the words of the Master. “Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and recline at table’? Will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink’? Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty’” [LUKE 17:7-10].

Thus, the Apostle writes, “*diá hoûtos*,” “Because of this!” Because I am appointed a servant of the Risen Son of God, because I am appointed to steadfast service in His Name, because I am appointed to fulfil my appointment faithfully, “I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” The assembly to which He appointed me is to receive my full attention at all times.

I have on occasion had young preachers complain because they didn’t have the larger field of service they felt they deserved. I often gently remonstrated with them as I insisted that He appoints—we do not hire out. Each of us must be reminded on occasion that God does not appoint to positions beyond our capability. He appoints as He sees fit, always seeking the benefit of His holy people. No appointment is to focus on commendation now. We who serve the King of kings are not to seek the applause of dying people; we are to look to the glory that awaits the conclusion of our service.

Writing saints who were suffering because of the Faith, Paul reminded them that those who persecuted them would suffer greatly at the return of our Master, and they would be commended. Listen to what the Apostle wrote. “God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.”

However, Paul is not finished; he immediately reminds these fellow believers that this will take place “When [Christ] comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.” The purpose of Jesus’ return is “to be glorified in His saints and to be marvelled at among all who have believed.” Judgement of the wicked seems almost incidental, a matter of tidying up.

Listen to the conclusion of the Apostle’s thoughts. He appends a prayer for those who suffer. “To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ” [2 THESSALONIANS 1:6-12].

The pastor must keep his eyes focused on what comes after his service. I suggest that all believers must ensure that they remain focused on what is promised at His coming. We are not to become so entangled with the affairs of this dying world that we forget why we were saved. Christ saved us so that He may be glorified in us! Let that thought sink in. Christ is returning to be glorified in His people! Even now, he is being glorified in us. Of all people, the pastor must remain focused on what comes after his service.

**A HOLY PRINCIPLE** — “I endure everything for the sake of the elect.” I confess that the word “everything” in this verse gives me pause. My initial reaction was, “Everything?” Perhaps a bit of explanation is in order. Enduring everything for the sake of the elect must not include abuse. Tragically, many of the professed saints appear to be of the opinion that they hire the pastor and thus expect him to do their work for them. We preachers have done a poor job of instructing the assemblies of the responsibilities of the pastor.

Paul writes in the Ephesian encyclical, “(He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love” [EPHESIANS 4:10-16].

Of course, the One who descended and Who also ascended is the Christ. Christ Jesus gave ascension gifts to the saints, including apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Jesus gave these gifted men to the churches for the specific purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry and for building up the Body. Note that the primary responsibilities of ministers do not include doing the work of the ministry, though they are responsible to fulfil their ministries. Their primary responsibility is to equip believers so that the saints can do the work of the ministry. In performing this task, these gifted men will build up the Body. The goal of their labours is building unity of the Faith and instructing in the knowledge of the Son of God so that the faithful can grow mature and strong. Ideally, a congregation will be equipped to stand firm against every error even if the pastor-teacher is removed.

Often, modern churches are run much like a sporting event. Throughout the week the saints live without thought of the Faith and give an hour of their time on Sunday to watch a performance. Cheerleaders (worship teams) perform and get the audience ready for the main event. The preacher is paid to put on a good performance that affirms the audience in their chosen lifestyles, assuring them that God loves them and has a plan for their lives. It’s not a bad show! Tragically, it is not what God appoints His servants to do.

Clearly, the Apostle is speaking of his willingness to endure deprivation, opposition from outsiders and even demands on his time. The word that is translated “I endure” is a compound word meaning “to remain under.” It came to speak of patient steadfastness that does not shrink from trouble. The modern idea of a pastor being a sort of Caspar Milquetoast is not substantiated through appeal to Scripture. The New Testament pastor is willing to stand firm against error for the sake of the flock over which he has been appointed. He is not always looking for a bigger position because he has been appointed rather than hired.

The verb is in the present tense. As I have pointed out at other times, the Greek tenses do not speak of time as do English tenses; the Greek tenses indicate the quality of an action. Because this is a present tense verb, it indicates to the original readers that the endurance called for was not short-term. Paul, and thus by extension all pastors, must be willing to endure the pressure that will not cease in this life. Paul’s example is meant to become the pattern for every Christian. Remember, at the time he was writing, Paul was imprisoned *because* of the Faith!

I must make note of an amazing truth—being chosen by God and suffering for God are inseparable. Paul says, “I endure everything,” referring no doubt to his imprisonment at the time he was writing. God sent Ananias to Paul after the enraged rabbi was blinded while en route to Damascus to imprison the faithful. When Ananias argued against going, the Lord commanded, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name” [ACTS 9:15, 16].

That is truly amazing in light of our approach to calling people to discipleship today! We attempt to shield people from knowing of the difficulties in serving God; yet, the Lord says that Paul would know from earliest days “how much he must suffer for the sake of [Christ’s] name.” Perhaps we should be more honest and call people to suffer together with Christ.

Years ago I read George Verwer’s book, “Come! Live! Die!”<sup>2</sup> It was an odd title, but it presented a message that startled me out of a lethargic view of the Christian life. God chose Saul of Tarsus, just as surely as He chose each follower of the Christ. What is truly amazing about His calling is that He did this choosing before the foundation of the world. This is taught when Paul writes, “He chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him” [EPHESIANS 1:4].

Let me make that application to each of you by reminding you of what was written to the Corinthian Christians. “God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God” [1 CORINTHIANS 1:27-29].

Let me step aside from this particular thought for a moment longer to remind you that no one can bring a charge against the one whom God elects. In the Letter to Roman Christians, Paul has written, “Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect” [ROMANS 8:33a]? The answer that is anticipated is “No one!” God justifies, and no man can remove that justification. When we are chosen in Christ, no one can cause us to be rejected.

It is amazing that the Apostle to the Gentiles is compelled to defend his service to the churches. Yet, writing the Corinthian Christians the Apostle is forced to defend his service. “Are [those who were disturbing the churches] servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings and often near death. Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. 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; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant” [2 CORINTHIANS 11:23-29]?

Every pastor that follows hard after the Master can relate to what the Apostle has written. The principle presented is not that the pastor is to be a sort of glorified wimp; the principle is that the pastor must refuse to quit when the going gets tough—and the going will get tough. The pastor is always to move toward the goal of building the saints. Paul wrote, and every true pastor will echo his words, “I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ” [2 CORINTHIANS 11:2].

---

<sup>2</sup> George Verwer, “Come! Live! Die!”, (Tyndale House, Carol Stream, IL 1972)

The New Testament pastor understands that he must always answer to the Head of the congregation—Christ Jesus. The New Testament pastor knows that he must give an accounting for each person under his charge. Knowledge of this responsibility accounts for the admonition given in the Letter to Hebrew Christians, “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account” [HEBREWS 13:17a]. Let me stress this point—the New Testament pastor shall give an accounting to God for his service. And he must give an accounting for the impact of his service on each individual under his oversight. There shall be no excuse before God if the shepherd of souls has failed to declare the truth, holding those who hear to the high standard of the Word.

Make no mistake—the Apostle’s focus in this verse is the pastor of the congregation. However, the concept presented is applicable to each twice-born individual. It is precisely because this principle is ignored among the churches that people believe they can join a church and when they are offended they can simply drift away into the sunset. Too many modern Christians justify treating the holy Bride of Christ as a common trollop; and they do so because they hold an exalted opinion of themselves! Tragically, believers are often guilty of showing less respect for this holy body than would be shown for a service organisation or a fraternal order. That this situation should exist is a condemnation of modern church life. Holding such attitudes reveals that we have become thoroughly infected with the spirit of the age. Let us guard our hearts that we do not slip into such dreadful error.

The principle that guides our service in the Faith is stated in several places in Paul’s letters. I’ve already referenced the Ephesian encyclical. The passage referenced spoke specifically of pastoral responsibilities. More pertinent to understanding the importance of each individual member to the life of the Body is the instruction given to the Corinthian congregation. In **1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-13**, Paul has written, “There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.

“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.”

All the gifts distributed by the Spirit, and thus the gifted individuals given by Christ, are entrusted to the congregation for one purpose—to reflect the Person of the Master in the midst of a world blinded by sin and hostile toward the True and Living God. We are responsible to build one another. The pastoral responsibility is important, but it is no less important that you fulfil the ministry you received at the new birth. Paul makes this clear when he writes soon after this, “Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church” [1 CORINTHIANS 14:1-4].

**A HOLY MOTIVATION** — “I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ.” There is purpose in the determination to endure the unthinkable. We seek the salvation of the elect. Here is the conundrum, if we knew who the elect were, we could ignore some and focus on those whom God has chosen. However, we cannot know whom God has chosen. Therefore, we declare the message of life to all, knowing that some will be saved.

Let me speak with certainty borne out of the testimony of the Word. Whenever I stand to proclaim the message of life, I am confident that some who hear have been appointed to life. There is no anxiety that the message will prove meaningless; rather, I am able to speak boldly because I know of a certainty that listening are some who will believe. Moreover, I am confident that fellow believers will be encouraged and strengthened in this holy Faith. My words have no power, but the Spirit of God working through His Word is turning some to life each time I speak. Similarly, when you speak to others concerning this holy Faith, your testimony has little power; however, the Spirit of God works powerfully through you to convict concerning sin, righteousness and judgement. God works powerfully through His people!

People sometimes criticise the doctrine of election. The common complaint is that holding to this doctrine will enervate evangelistic commitment. Take note, however, that Paul’s missionary zeal was not lessened by his understanding of election; rather holding to the doctrine of election energised the Apostle’s missionary and evangelistic commitment. In this verse we note that the Apostle was willing to endure all manner of suffering so that the elect could also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. The purpose of the Apostle’s suffering was “so that” (*hina*) the grace of God could reach those whom the Lord had appointed to life. Unlike some extreme Calvinists or hyper-dispensationalists, Paul did not throw up his hands in the face of difficulty while saying, “If God has chosen them, He will find a way to get the Gospel to them.”

God has chosen us and appointed us to serve as workers together with Him in delivering the message of life. Throughout the Word the teaching that we work together with God appears again and again. Paul was addressing the work that he and Apollos conducted when he wrote, “What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. For we are God’s fellow workers” [1 CORINTHIANS 3:5-9].

“We are God’s fellow workers,” *synergoi*. What a privilege! Those appointed to preach are God’s co-workers. The Lord graciously invites those whom He appoints to share in the labour He performs. No one should imagine that this privilege is conferred on preachers alone. Rather, each Christian is counted as God’s fellow worker, one working together with God.

In the second letter to the Christians of Corinth, Paul is presenting a powerful statement of how God provided salvation through the sacrifice of His Son. Listen to his powerful apologia. “We regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Exciting as that is, now take note of what follows as he applies this truth in the opening verse of the next chapter. “Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain” [2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-6:1]. If you accept that these verses are encouragement to tell others of the life that is secured through Christ’s sacrifice, then it must likewise be accepted that the opening verse of the sixth chapter applies to each Christian! When we accept this truth that Christ provided His life as a sacrifice because of our sinful condition, then it must likewise be true that when we tell others of His grace and the righteousness that comes through faith in Him we are working together with God.

Permit me to point to one other passage of the Word. I am well aware that many commentators are uncertain whether the last twelve verses of Mark are authentic or not. However, the verses are found in many of the ancient manuscripts, so translators have continued to include them with cautionary notes in the margins. Nevertheless, they are not antithetical to the teaching of the Word. Therefore, we should employ them as we would the remainder of Scripture. Having said that, take note of the final two verses of Mark’s Gospel. Jesus gives the Great Commission to the disciples. Then we read, “The Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them” [MARK 16:19, 20].

“They went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them.” What a powerful encouragement for believers! The Lord Himself worked with them as they preached. Do you doubt that the same Lord will work with His people now as they proclaim His Name? Speaking in this manner, I feel like Elisha standing on the bank of the Jordan crying out, “Where is the LORD, the God of Elijah” [See 2 KINGS 2:14]? Christians in this day should be crying out, “Where is the Lord, the God of Peter?” “Where is the Lord, the God of John?” I am certain that the same Lord that was with the first disciples is with His people today.

We must not permit ourselves to slip into the error of so many who after they have received life in the Beloved Son live as though having this grace they need not share it. The Apostle clearly believed that he was responsible to spread the Good News in order to ensure that “the elect ... also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”

Here is a truth we must never forget—ultimately, all we possess is “in Christ Jesus.” That phrase, “in Christ Jesus,” is neglected by too many of our fellow believers; we must not permit ourselves to become so neglectful. In the English Standard Version of the Bible, this precise phrase is used fifty times in the letters Paul penned; and seven of the nine times the phrase occurs in these Pastoral Letters is here in 2 Timothy.<sup>3</sup>

Whatever the Apostle owned in this world would shortly become unusable and of no value to him. He would have no need of the books he would request. He would have no need of the cloak that had been left at Troas. He would have no further need of any of those things that men may count as precious in this life. As the end of his time in this world drew near, Paul was increasingly focused on what he possessed “in Christ Jesus.” What he possessed in Christ Jesus was what others must also have opportunity to embrace.

You hear me week-by-week issue the biblical invitation, “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved” [ROMANS 10:9, 10]. What follows is easily forgotten: “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching” [ROMANS 10:14]?

---

<sup>3</sup> 2 TIMOTHY 1:1, 9, 13; 2:1, 10; 3:12, 13

If we were able to see with eyes of faith, we would see that God works through our trials. Others had been or were being saved through the Apostle's ministry; and this knowledge was part of his reward. Thus, he viewed the churches in Macedonia as his "crown" and as his "joy" [see **PHILIPPIANS 4:1** and **1 THESSALONIANS 2:19**]. Paul was made stronger still in his service in the thought that his labours and his sufferings were, in the providence of God, beneficial to others. Think of how this is revealed repeatedly in his letters.

Here are a few examples of his thinking. To the Corinthians, Paul would write, "I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls" [**2 CORINTHIANS 12:15a**]. In the Ephesian letter he spoke of himself as "a prisoner for Christ Jesus on behalf of [the] Gentiles" [**EPHESIANS 3:1**]. And he would plead with readers in the Ephesian missive "not to lose heart over what [he was] suffering for [them]" [**EPHESIANS 3:13**]. In the Letter to Philippian Christians the Apostle rejoiced, "Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all" [**PHILIPPIANS 2:17**]. Finally, writing the Colossian Christians, Paul confidently asserts, "I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body, that is, the church [**COLOSSIANS 1:24**]. Christian endurance is active, not passive. Pain is felt as pain, but it is recognised as having a moral and spiritual purpose."<sup>4</sup>

Dear people, the flesh may be traumatised, but the spirit can never be bound. Our Christian privilege allows us to see whatever suffering we may be called to experience in light of the resurrection. When authorities and powers destined to pass away with this world attempt to censor the power of this message of life, the Word bleeds through the stamp of the censor. Governments and religious opponents may hinder, but they can never obliterate the Spirit's work in our hearts. Chrysostom stated of this text, "Just as it is not possible to bind a sunbeam, or to shut it up within the house, so neither the preaching of the word; and what was much more, the teacher was bound, and yet the word flew abroad; he inhabited the prison, and yet his doctrine endowed with wings ran forth everywhere throughout the world!"<sup>5</sup>

Let me ask a hard question that only you can answer; let me ask that question from different perspectives. Don't see this as some mere rhetorical exercise; it is meant to be a serious inquiry. Did you join this church? Or were you appointed to serve in this place? Did you pick a task that you would fulfil within the brotherhood of believers? Or did you receive a gift from the Holy Spirit which you are responsible to employ to the praise of His glory? What we choose as a service among the saints will shortly become tedious, crumbling to dust even as we attempt to grasp it securely in our hands. What He assigns will satisfy and sustain us until the day He calls us home. What He has assigned will bring joy, peace and fulfilment. Thus, the question to you is, "What motivates you in your service before the Lord?"

**A HOLY CONCLUSION** — "I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." Ultimately, we serve for God's glory. And this is real glory! What is especially wonderful about God's glory is that He has chosen to share His glory with us. Already, though the world cannot see it, the glory of the Living God is being revealed in His holy people.

---

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Newport J. D. White, **The First and Second Epistles to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus**, in **The Expositor's Greek New Testament: Commentary**, vol. 4 (George H. Doran Company, New York n.d.) 163

<sup>5</sup> John Chrysostom, **The Homilies of S. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Statues, or to the People of Antioch**, A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church, John Henry Parker; J. G. F. and J. Rivington (eds.), (Oxford, London 1842), 275



Encourage your heart in the knowledge of all that God is doing with your suffering, your trials and the opposition you are called to endure because of the Faith. Paul spoke of the manner in which we as Christians can exult. “Through [Christ Jesus] we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God” [ROMANS 5:2]. To be certain, we claim no glory in our own right, nor have we any right to appropriate God’s glory! The Apostle has spoken of our natural condition when he writes, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” [ROMANS 3:23]. We are sinners, though we are saved by grace.

Nevertheless, despite our broken, sinful condition we who are redeemed are destined for glory—God’s eternal glory that He shares with His beloved people. We are taught in the Word, “The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us” [ROMANS 8:18]. Based on this truth, the Apostle will write in the Second Letter to the Corinthian Christians, “We do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 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” [2 CORINTHIANS 4:16-18].

How do you see your present service to the Lord? Are you just hanging on? Perhaps you know that you are saved, but you really are just trying to make it through another day. What impact does your life have on others? Perhaps you pray, but you really aren’t convinced that your prayers make much difference. Perhaps as you read the Bible you mark those portions of the Word that have proven precious to you at various times. Nevertheless, you don’t feel as though much has been accomplished, because you are just trying to survive. I urge you to lift your eyes from this moment to see with eyes of faith what God is doing. Paul said, and I want you to say as he said, “I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”

“After the fall of Communism, the missionary organization CoMission sent a team to Stavropol. (The city’s history was not known to them at that time.) When the team experienced difficulty getting Bibles shipped from Moscow, someone mentioned a warehouse outside of town where confiscated Bibles had been stored since Stalin’s day. After prayer, one member got up the courage to go to the warehouse and ask the officials if the Bibles were still there. They were! They then asked if the Bibles could be removed and distributed again to the people of Stavropol. The answer was yes. A truck was obtained, and several Russian people helped load the Bibles.

“One of the helpers was a young man—a skeptical, hostile, agnostic collegian who had come only for the day’s wages. As they were loading Bibles, the young man disappeared. They found him in a corner of the warehouse, weeping. He had slipped away, hoping to quietly take a Bible for himself. What he found shook him to the core. The inside page of the Bible he picked up had the handwritten signature of his own grandmother! It had been her personal Bible. He had stolen the very Bible that had belonged to his grandmother—a woman persecuted for her faith all her life. His grandmother had no doubt prayed for him and for her city.”<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Andria Wolfe, “An Answered Prayer from Stalin’s Times,” The Chariot, (The CoMission Newsletter), 1st Quarter, 1994, Vol. 2, Issue 1, p. 1, cited in R. Kent Hughes and Bryan Chapell, **1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: To Guard the Deposit, Preaching the Word** (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2000), 204

That grandmother had been persecuted—she knew what it was to suffer. Perhaps her suffering was beyond anything she thought she could endure. It is doubtful that she could have known that the mere act of reading the Bible would one day touch the life of her grandson. The unknown writer of the Letter to Hebrew Christians instructs us, “The bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name” [HEBREWS 13:11-15].

Mother, does the glory of Christ weigh on your heart? Have you a child that is in need of this great salvation? Does that child see the eternal weight of glory on your brow? Dad, does your family, more precious to you than riches or fame, witness the glory of the Risen Saviour shining through your daily walk? Have you a child, or even a dear friend, that has yet to confess Christ the Master? My prayer is that we might witness a congregation denoted for devotion to seeking God’s glory, both now and in eternity.

“John Wesley traveled by foot or horseback some 250,000 miles, preaching more than 40,000 sermons and he wrote, translated or edited more than 200 books. He lived simply and gave away most of whatever income he received. Yet he was continually ridiculed and pelted with stones by ungodly mobs and was ostracized by fellow clergymen in the Church of England. When maligned, he answered, ‘I leave my reputation where I left my soul, in the hands of God.’ He never lost his joy of service or his love for the Lord and for men, both saved and unsaved. One biographer commented, ‘To Wesley was granted the task which even an archangel might have envied.’

“George Whitefield, a close friend and fellow worker with John and Charles Wesley during his early ministry, spent thirty-four years preaching the gospel in the British Isles and in America. He made thirteen transatlantic voyages, which were still perilous in those days, and preached at least 18,000 sermons on the two continents. The noted poet and hymn-writer William Cowper—who wrote ‘Oh! For a Closer Walk with God’ and ‘There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood’—penned the following tribute to Whitefield:

‘He loved the world that hated him.  
The tear that dropped upon his Bible was sincere.  
Assailed by scandal and the tongue of strife,  
His only answer was a blameless life.’”<sup>7</sup>

Wesley and Whitfield, truly men of God, heeded Peter’s counsel to all Christians, to keep “a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God’s will, than for doing evil” [1 PETER 3:16, 17]. May we do so as well. Amen.

---

<sup>7</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., **2 Timothy, MacArthur New Testament Commentary** (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 61