

# **“RENEWED IN AFFLICTION”**

**Text:** II Corinthians 4:1, 8-18

**Subject:** “The Devil Is A Liar And You’re Going To Make It”

## **Introduction**

### **(II Corinthians has a remarkable setting)**

- Paul the apostle founded the church in Corinth.
- He ministered there for a year and a half. (Acts 18:1-18)
- After his departure, some problems arose.
- He sent Timothy to deal with them and wrote I Corinthians.
- Matters grew worse and Paul had to make a painful visit. (II Corinthians 2:1)
- There was still no resolve, so Paul wrote a severe letter that was delivered by Titus. (2:4-9 & 7:8-12)
- After much distress, Paul met Titus and heard the good news (prayers answered and problems solved).

### **(Paul then wrote the letter of II Corinthians. Why?)**

1. To encourage the church to forgive the member causing all the trouble.
  2. To encourage the church to give to the needs of the saints in Judea.
  3. To explain his authority as an apostle of the Lord.
  4. To encourage believers to not lose heart, to not faint and to never give up!
- In chapter 1, Paul said, “God comforts us in all of our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort others.”
  - In chapter 2, Paul said, “Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears.”
  - In chapter 3, Paul said, “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think of anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.”

### **(And in Chapter 4)**

- Paul gives us God’s Word on this subject:
  1. Should Christians expect affliction in this earthly life?
  2. What enables us not to faint or give up when we pass through affliction?
  3. How is it possible to be encouraged in a season of affliction?
  4. Why is it necessary to look at the things which are not seen?
  5. How is it possible to look at something you cannot see?
  6. How can God use your pain positively (for you) instead of negatively (against you)?
  7. What is the root cause of joy, when things around you seem like they’re falling apart?

**“The devil is a liar and you’re going to make it.”**

**Question:** How do I know you’re going to make it?

**Question:** Because God has given us revelation – that will protect us from ever fainting or giving up in any affliction.

## (Four Revelations That Defeat a Fainting Spirit.)

### I. Expect Afflictions In This Earthly Life

**Question:** Did Paul the apostle have afflictions in the perfect will of God?

**Question:** Was Paul tempted to faint and get sour?

**Answer:** Verses 8 & 9 describe Paul's encounter:

1. "We are troubled yet not distressed."

- The word "troubled" means to be pressed, squeezed, opposed, and pressured.

**Question:** Ever been pressured and squeezed?

2. "We are perplexed but not in despair."

- The word "perplexed" means to be at loss, to doubt, to question, to wonder which way to go, what to do, and unable to find an answer.

**Question:** Ever not know what to do?

3. "We are persecuted but not forsaken."

- The word "persecuted" means ridiculed, threatened, slandered and abused.

**Question:** Ever been abused by someone?

4. "We are cast down but not destroyed."

- The words "cast down" mean, to be smitten down, struck down or knocked down.

**Question:** Ever been knocked down unexpectedly?

**Question:** What were Paul's afflictions?

**Answer:** Troubled, perplexed, persecuted, cast down.

**Question:** What did Paul discover about God and himself in times like these?

**Answer:** Four revelations that matched his afflictions.

#1. Not distressed!

#3. Not forsaken!

#4. Not despairing!

#4. Not destroyed!

**Question:** Why didn't Paul faint in affliction?

**Answer:** Because he knew what God wants you to know.

1. In verse 10, the more we die to ourselves and self-justification - the more the life of Jesus comes through us.
2. In verse 11, the more we are willing to die to what we want - the more our afflictions will affect us in a positive way.
3. In verse 12, the more we serve the Lord and embrace the cross - the freer we become from the carnal, fleshly, sinful man!
  - Yes, we have afflictions in this earthly life.
  - Yes, there are times we are troubled, perplexed, persecuted and cast down.
  - But what the devil wants to use to discourage you, God will use to reveal Himself to you.

**Question:** And isn't that your goal in life?

**Answer:** To know God better and to make Him known!

**Question:** Why do some grow in affliction and others quit in affliction?

**Answer:** Because some humble themselves and get more grace (while others exalt themselves and get offended by their crosses).

**(Remember)**

*“The only part of me that can be offended is that part of me which has not died.”*

**(What defeats a fainting spirit?)**

## II. Evaluate Affliction In Light Of Its Fruit

**Question:** How did Paul overcome satan’s temptation to live angry, sour and bitter?

**Question:** What saved Paul from self destruction?

**Answer:** Verse 15; *“All of these things are for your benefit.”*

**Question:** What keeps Paul from fainting?

**Answer:** He knows something that God wants all of us to see. (What is it?)

- Paul understands that everything he went through – God was going to use to benefit someone else. (Repeat)

**(In other words)**

- What was painful to Paul was beneficial to someone else.

**(In other words)**

- Your sufferings are never wasted. (Why not?)
- Because God promises to use them to minister through you to someone else.

**Question:** Do you know why you go through what you go through?

**(Two reasons)**

1. Because God has you in mind to sanctify your inner man. (And)
2. Because God has someone else in mind down the road that’s coming your way.

**(Hebrews 12:11)**

*“No chastening for the present is joyous, it’s painful while going through it, but afterwards there will be a harvest of fruit for those who are trained in this way.”*

**Question:** How many of us can honestly say: “My fruitfulness is more important than my feelings?”

**Question:** Why do “feeling driven” Christians never grow up?

**Answer:** Because as soon as someone hurts their feelings they run away to escape what hurt them.

**Question:** Why is this such a waste of time?

**Answer:** Because there is something more important than how I feel – and that is who I am.

**(What defeats a fainting spirit?)**

## III. Endure Affliction by Receiving God’s Grace

(v. 15) *“All things are for your benefit.”* (Yes, but how do we endure?)

“Through abundant Grace!”

**Question:** What is this abundant grace in verse 15?

**Answer:** John Calvin calls this “Overflowing abounding grace from God.”

**Question:** How does Paul keep from fainting?

**Answer:** He keeps himself in the place where he can keep receiving more grace from God.

**Question:** Why is this so important?

**Answer:** Philippians 2:13, “*Because it is God which works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.*”

**(In other words)**

1. God gives us the desire to do His will.
2. God then gives us the strength to carry out that desire.

**Question:** What is this overflowing grace that is available to you?

**Answer:** It is impartation of life from God.

**Question:** Why do all of us need it?

**Answer:** We need it to maintain our joy and strength when the going gets tough!

**Question:** Is it that necessary?

**Answer:** Verse 16; the outward man is perishing. Why? Because it’s aging, wearing out, decaying, deteriorating, and weak at best. (That’s the bad news.)

**Question:** What’s the good news?

**Answer:** Verse 16; “*Yet the inward man is renewed day by day.*”

**(In other words)**

- If you want to keep from fainting because of outward stuff in your life (and we all deal with stuff),
- Let God impart strength to your inward (spiritual) man “day by day” or daily.
- Sunday won’t do it!
- Sunday and Wednesday won’t do it!
- Day by day (v. 16) means – one day at a time, draw from God the grace you need and spiritual renewal takes place!

**Question:** What’s your reward?

**Answer:** (Verse 16; “*We faint not*” (Or)

- We won’t live exhausted.
- We won’t live feeble.
- We won’t live discouraged.
- We won’t live weakened.
- We won’t live faint-hearted.

**(Why not?)**

- Because “day by day” we cooperate with God and renew our spiritual man!
- Day by day God adds life and strength to us as we align ourselves before Him.

**(What defeats a fainting spirit?)**

**IV. In Affliction, Exercise Long Term Vision (Vs. 17 & 18)**

**Question:** How do we exercise long term vision?

**Answer:** By understanding verses 17 & 18:

1. Every affliction is temporary (not eternal).  
(v. 17) *"Affliction is but for a moment."*
2. Every affliction can work for you (instead of against you).  
(v. 17) *"Worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."*
3. Every affliction is light (compared to eternity).  
(v. 17) *"Our light affliction."*
4. Every affliction pales in light of the unseen world to come.  
(v. 18) *"Look not at the things we see, but look at what we don't see."*
  - Connect your life to the world to come. Why?
  - Because seeing the unseen world:
    1. Lightens the load,
    2. Relieves the pressure,
    3. Comforts the sorrow,
    4. Adds meaning to life's suffering.
  - And defeats every fainting temptation of the evil one!

**Question:** In Hebrews 11, how did the men and women of faith keep from fainting?

**Answer:** They "saw the invisible" by faith!

**Question:** By faith, can't you see Jesus today?

**Question:** By faith, can't you see heaven being prepared right now?

**Question:** By faith, can't you see your loved ones there?

**Question:** By faith, can't you see your brand new glorified body in the resurrection?

**Question:** By faith, can't you hear Jesus say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the Joy of the Lord?"

On October 29, 1941, during the time of war, Winston Churchill spoke these famous words at Harrow School in Great Britain:

"Never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never - in nothing, great or small, large or petty - never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense. Never yield to force; never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy."

Amen!  
Bill Kirk