

## Why We Never Give Up

### Pt. 2

Nov. 28, 2010

As Christians we are never to give up regardless of what we face.

This is our second and final lesson this morning as we continue to answer the question (why we never give up).

Throughout scripture we are encouraged to never give up.

**2 Corinthians 4:8-10 (TLB)** <sup>8</sup> We are pressed on every side by troubles, but not crushed and broken. We are perplexed because we don't know why things happen as they do, but we don't give up and quit. <sup>9</sup> We are hunted down, but God never abandons us. We get knocked down, but we get up again and keep going. <sup>10</sup> These bodies of ours are constantly facing death just as Jesus did; so it is clear to all that it is only the living Christ within [who keeps us safe].

Now go with me to the 16<sup>th</sup> verse. This is our text for this week.

**2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NKJV)** <sup>16</sup> Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, <sup>18</sup> while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal. –

**2 Corinthians 4:16** Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day"

I would like to read the interview with Woody Allen from the New York Times.

Recently the legendary actor/director/author Woody Allen [gave an interview to the New York Times](#) in which he talked about his own faith at the age of 74. He makes it clear that he doesn't believe in God:

**Q.** What seems more plausible to you, that we've existed in past lives, or that there is a God?

**A.** Neither seems plausible to me. I have a grim, scientific assessment of it. I just feel, what you see is what you get.

Then there is this question:

**Q.** How do you feel about the aging process?

**A.** Well, I'm against it. [Laughs] I think it has nothing to recommend it. You don't gain any wisdom as the years go by. You fall apart, is what happens. People try and put a nice varnish on it, and say, well, you mellow. You come to understand life and accept things. But you'd trade all of that for being 35 again. I've experienced that thing where you wake up in the middle of the night and you start to think about your own mortality and envision it, and it gives you a little shiver.

Last week we discovered

1. **2 Corinthians 4:16 (NKJV)** <sup>16</sup> Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day.

What a wonderful promise from God's Word. We are being renewed spiritually each day.

## II. We See Glory at the End of Suffering.

“For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all” (v. 17).

When we are going through great suffering, it rarely seems either “light” or “momentary” to us. Rather it seems that our troubles will never end and that we will be crushed completely. So how is it that Paul can confidently say these things? If this life is all there is, then Woody Allen is right in his grim assessment. “What you see is what you get.” *But on the other hand, perhaps he spoke truth deeper than he knew.* Since this life is all that Woody Allen can see, his viewpoint leads only to darkness and existential despair.

Christians “see something that others don’t see.” We “see” beyond this life to a life to come. We understand that no matter what we endure now, there awaits for us an “eternal glory” that far outweighs what happens to us in this life. When S. Lewis Johnson preached on this passage, he quoted the words of Dan Crawford, a missionary in Africa, about the death of a fellow missionary. Mr. Crawford described the departed saint as

“a white, fragile-looking traveler with a Pauline gleam in his eye. So the fragrant saint died at his post. He had only died into glory as the stars die at sunrise.”

I like every part of that. On one hand we are all “fragile-looking travelers” as we pass our time on earth. The line between life and death is microscopically thin for all of us.

So what does our Christian faith say about death? It tells us that the believer in Christ “dies into glory” (what a wonderful picture). The stars die at sunrise

because the mighty sun rises over the eastern horizon. Even so we die in this life and rise with Christ our King.

In November 1941 C. S. Lewis preached a sermon on this passage called [The Weight of Glory](#). Some think it is the best thing he ever wrote. At one point he tries to imagine this “eternal weight of glory” that outweighs all our present trials. He puts the matter this way:

**We are to shine as the sun; we are to be given the Morning Star.**

While we are here we are to shine **Matthew 5:15-16 (NKJV)** <sup>15</sup> Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. <sup>16</sup> Let your light so shine before men, that **they may see your good works** and **glorify your Father** in heaven.

There’s no excuse for not being fruitful regardless of your circumstance.

**And then he says:**

The door on which we have been knocking all our lives will open at last.

*This is indeed what Paul means even if we admit that we don’t really understand it. And how could we, standing as we are on this side of the door that leads on to eternal glory.*

We should be clear about one point. **We see these things and know them by faith.** During the worst trials of life, it will not seem that there is any purpose at all. for the worst things that happen, the terrible betrayals, the breakup of a marriage, the long years of chronic pain, the sadness of seeing our children struggle in their own marriages, none of that seems to have any purpose. **And as long as we gaze upon our trials, they will serve only to perplex us more and more.**

“Whatever was true is true.”

*My trials, grievous though they may seem to me, cannot abolish whatever is true about God and the universe.*

Truth is truth, regardless of my personal feelings about it. Jesus is Lord whether I believe it or not. He is Lord even if I deny that he is Lord. **Truth does not depend upon my personal belief for its existence.**

$2 + 2 = 4$  is true regardless of how I feel about it. *The same is true of all spiritual reality.* Even when I may be sinking down, down, down, when I feel that all is lost, whatever was true is still true and will always be true. That illustration is fitting because Paul encourages us to do our own moral and spiritual calculation.

Take all the suffering of this life,  
All the pain,  
All the heartache,  
All the rejection,  
All the misunderstanding,  
All the evil we encounter,  
All the hatred directed at us,  
All the malice we endure,  
All the sadness,  
All the tears,  
All the sleepless nights,  
All the fear,  
All the doubt,  
All the worry,  
All the confusion,

All the perplexity,  
All the sickness,  
All the broken dreams,

And then add it all up, total it up to whatever fantastic sum it may come to, and then add to that the sadness of every funeral you've attended for the death of someone you loved, think about all that death has taken from you, meditate on it, make that sum as large as you can, and place it on one side of the ledger.(scales)

**Now place on the other side these things . . .**

The Word of God,  
The promises of God,  
The love of God,  
The power of God,  
The plan of God,  
The wisdom of God,  
The kindness of God,  
The sovereignty of God,  
The grace of God,

And then add to that the death of the Son of God with its infinite transforming power toward us who believe, and then add to that the resurrection of the Son of God who came forth from the tomb undefeated, alive from the dead, holding the keys of death and Hades in his hand, who is now declared the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Factor all that in, and then add to it the indwelling Holy Spirit who is the down payment on all the promises of God and the guarantee of our salvation. Now put that sum on the other side of the ledger.

You do the figuring. Which is greater? Your sorrows or the vast and immeasurable promises of God, made in his Word, guaranteed by the Spirit, and purchased for us in the death and resurrection of our Lord?

Or we can let Paul do the figuring for us. *He already knows the answer.* We will soon receive an “**eternal glory**” that “**far outweighs them all.**”

The various translations say it in different ways, but I prefer the King James Version when it uses the phrase “far more exceeding.”

Not just exceeding,  
Not just more exceeding.  
But far more exceeding.

I like that. Life on this earth can be so painful and so baffling that I’m pumped by the thought that the glory that is coming is “**far more exceeding**” and “**far outweighs**” whatever we have been through.

And that’s the second reason we never give up.

### III. We Fix Our Eyes on Eternal Reality.

“So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (v. 18).

We tend to see what we want to see.  
And we tend not to see what we’re not looking for.

A friend of mine can be in a new city 15 minutes and tell you where all the stars bucks are I may never see it, why?

Even though I had driven by that Starbucks a hundred times, it had never registered in my brain. I never saw it because I wasn't looking for it.

We tend to see what we want to see.

We tend not to see what we're not looking for.

*The same is true in the spiritual realm.* Paul uses a word that means "to gaze intently upon." It means that we make a conscious choice to believe that some things are true that we cannot see at this moment. I often think about this principle when I speak at a funeral service for someone I have known and loved. It's hard to bury a body in the ground, knowing that you won't see that person tomorrow or the next day or the day after that. In the words of playwright Noel Coward, we live in a death-sentenced generation.

*It's easy for all of us to be overwhelmed by the power of death.* When that happens to us, we end up thinking and talking like Woody Allen instead of like Christian believers. So we must train our minds to focus on things that may not be easily seen.

**What is seen is temporary.** I'm glad about that because it means that death is temporary. *It doesn't feel that way right now.* Death reigns on planet earth because sin reigns. But life has been let loose through the victorious resurrection of the Son of God.

**By faith we "see" the unseen.**

**The people of the world think we're nuts because they can't "see" what we see. And the only reason we can "see" anything is because God in his grace has opened our eyes to "see" eternal reality.**

I once was lost but now am found,  
Was blind but now I see.

So we sing on, right through our tears.  
We don't deny our tears or pretend the pain isn't real.  
But we sing on anyway.

We see in the distance the great City of God.  
We see in the distance all the saints of God.  
We see a light shining through the darkness that surrounds us.

So we sing on, we preach on, we pray on, and we keep on believing. God has given us eyes to "see" the unseen and so we will never give up.

His Kingdom Is Forever

God's truth abideth still.

His kingdom is forever.

Do you believe that?

When Martyn Lloyd-Jones preached on this text, he said the greatest need of the church today is for Christians to live as though these things are true. The world waits and watches for believers to live by the "un-worldly" standards of this amazing text. When we live like this, when we "see" the invisible and make it the rule and ground of our life, the world will know that what we have is more than theory, that it can't be explained away as mere religious enthusiasm. The world will know that what we believe comes from some other place they can't understand, can't see, and can never duplicate.

God's truth abides.

His kingdom is forever.

That's why we will never give up.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-58** (NKJV) <sup>50</sup> Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. <sup>51</sup> Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- <sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. <sup>53</sup> For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. <sup>54</sup> So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "*Death is swallowed up in victory.*" <sup>55</sup> "*O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?*" <sup>56</sup> The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. <sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>58</sup> Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** (NKJV) <sup>13</sup> But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. <sup>15</sup> For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive

*and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**John 14:1-6 (NKJV)** <sup>1</sup> "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. <sup>2</sup> In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. <sup>4</sup> And where I go you know, and the way you know." <sup>5</sup> Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" <sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.