

Introduction

According to Barna research, 42% of pastors in 2022 gave serious consideration to quitting full-time ministry.¹ Stress, loneliness and isolation were the two biggest factors, but there were many other factors cited. In 2020, more than 4,000 churches closed in America. Over that same time, over 20,000 pastors left the ministry, and 50% of current pastors say they would leave the ministry if they had another way of making a living.² An older statistic said that 1,500 pastors leave the ministry every month, but in 2020, the average was 1,667 pastors per month. Many of the pastors are discouraged and have lost heart.

The apostle Paul had far more difficult conditions than most pastors today. In chapter six he said that he had many afflictions, hardships, distresses, beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labors, sleeplessness, and hunger. In chapter eleven he adds a few more things, like being beaten times without number, stoned, shipwrecked, hungry and thirsty, often without food, and in cold and exposure. Most people in the ministry today have not faced such difficulties, yet Paul did not lose heart in his ministry. In our text today we find three reasons why he did not lose heart. First, he did not lose heart because of the ministry of the new covenant, which was full of glory. Second, he did not lose heart because the life of Jesus was being manifested in their lives. Third, he did not lose heart because of the eternal weight of glory that was being produced.

(2 Co 6:4-5) “but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, {5} in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger,”

(2 Co 11:23–27) “Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. {24} Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*. {25} Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. {26} *I have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; {27} *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.”

Why Paul Did Not Lose Heart

1. Because they had a ministry of the new covenant. (2 Cor 3:7-4:1)
2. Because the life of Jesus was being manifested in their lives. (2 Cor 4:2-12)
3. Because an eternal weight of glory was being produced. (2 Cor 4:13-18)

(2 Co 4:1–6) “Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, **we do not lose heart**, {2} but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. {3} And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, {4} in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. {5} For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus’ sake. {6} For God, who said,

¹ <https://www.barna.com/research/pastors-quitting-ministry/>

² <https://www2.cbn.com/news/us/new-barna-survey-finds-38-us-pastors-have-considered-leaving-ministry>

“Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”

(2 Co 4:7–12) “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; {8} *we are* afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; {9} persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; {10} always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. {11} For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. {12} So death works in us, but life in you.”

(2 Co 4:13–15) “But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, “I believed, therefore I spoke,” we also believe, therefore we also speak, {14} knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you. {15} For all things *are* for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.”

(2 Co 4:16–18) “**Therefore we do not lose heart**, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. {17} For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, {18} while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

1. **Because they had a ministry of the new covenant.** (2 Cor 3:7-4:1)

I was never a minister of the old covenant, so I don’t have as much appreciation for being a minister of the new covenant as Paul did. He experienced both ministries and therefore had a greater understanding and appreciation. Paul begins chapter four with, “therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart. Paul did not lose heart because he understood how much glory was in this ministry of the new covenant.

(2 Co 4:1) “Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart,”

When I joined the PGA Tour, the average tour professional hit the driver 250 yards. If you hit a really good three wood, you might hit it 230 yards. We hit our three-iron 200 yards and our seven-iron 150 yards. I had two hole-in-ones with three-irons, and both of them were just over 200 yards. The tour professionals today do not have as much appreciation for the equipment today that we do. They are used to hitting their drives over 300 yards. They hit their seven-irons about 200 yards and their wedges 150 yards. The new equipment today is so much better than the equipment that we used. You could say that the glory of the equipment today far surpasses the glory of the equipment that we used. Paul had a great appreciation of the ministry of the new covenant because he had also been a minister in the old covenant.

Paul was a Pharisee and the son of a Pharisee. He had studied under Gamaliel, the strictest of the Pharisees. He was a teacher of the law, and knew the glory of the old covenant. God revealed Himself to Paul, and he began experiencing the glory of the new covenant. In chapter three he wrote about the glory of these two covenants. He said, “But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was, how will the ministry of the Spirit fail

to be even more with glory. For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry abound in glory. For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses it. For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains in glory.” The ministry of the new covenant was a ministry of the Spirit, not the Law. The ministry of the new covenant was a ministry of righteousness, not condemnation. The ministry of the new covenant was not a fading glory, but a permanent glory. Paul had a great appreciation for this ministry of the new covenant.

(2 Co 3:7–11) “But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading *as* it was, {8} how will the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory? {9} For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory. {10} For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses *it*. {11} For if that which fades away *was* with glory, much more that which remains *is* in glory.”

Paul did not focus on the difficulties he was facing; he had a heart of gratitude for this new covenant. He said, “as we received mercy, we do not lose heart.” The new covenant brought mercy and forgiveness, not judgment and condemnation. Some people minimize the importance and relevance of the Old Testament. I believe that a better understanding of the Old Testament gives us a better understanding and appreciation for the New Testament and new covenant. Because of Paul’s appreciation of the hope in the ministry of the new covenant, he used great boldness in his speech. Appreciating the ministry of the new covenant should produce gratitude, encouragement, and boldness. It should produce confidence and boldness in the things we say and teach. Instead of putting a veil over his face like Moses did, so that the sons of Israel were not looking intently at a fading glory, Paul was unveiled and was bold in declaring the message of the new covenant.

(2 Co 3:12–13) “Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in *our* speech, {13} and *are* not like Moses, *who* used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away.”

2. **Because the life of Jesus was being manifested in their lives.** (2 Cor 3:18, 4:2-15)

The second reason that Paul did not lose heart was because the life of Jesus was being manifested in their lives. In 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul said, “but we all with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. Paul, his coworkers, and the churches that he ministered in were being transformed into the image of Christ. In the very next verse, 1 Corinthians 4:1, he said, “Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart.” Paul not only was encouraged and did not lose heart because of the ministry of the new covenant; he did not lose heart because his life and the lives of others were being transformed.

(2 Co 3:18–4:1) “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. {4:1} Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart,”

Paul renounced the things hidden because of shame, and was not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God. Those were things of the old nature and life before Christ. This new ministry was a ministry of righteousness, and they were leaving the old things behind and new things were coming. He said that by the manifestation of truth they were commending themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. The renewing of your mind by truth is one of the primary ways that we are transformed. We have to be in the word of God and we must apply the word of God in our lives. The truth must manifest itself in our lives. The truth was manifested in their lives openly. They commended themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Paul and his coworkers lived blameless and sincere lives, and the transformation in their lives was a great source of encouragement to him.

(2 Co 4:1-2) "Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, {2} but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

When I planted the East Mountain Vineyard Church, one of the men on the leadership team told me that he had never grown so much in all his life. He greatly appreciated how I had poured into him. I have had a number of people tell me the same thing, that they have been growing in their knowledge and relationship with the Lord. When truth is manifested in peoples' lives, it is very encouraging to pastors. Seeing lives being changed kept Paul from losing heart.

Not everybody was being transformed through their ministry. Paul said that the gospel was veiled to those who are perishing. There are people that hear, but do not hear, the gospel message. Paul said the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. Our job is to preach the gospel; it is God's job to remove the veil and to reveal Himself to people. It is the work of the Holy Spirit that convicts men of sin, righteousness, and judgment. We should have a sincere desire to see people come to Christ, and we should do whatever we can to bring them to Christ, but we are not to lose heart if their minds are blinded and they do not see the light of the gospel.

(2 Cor 4:3-4) "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, {4} in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

I am very results oriented. I like to see results, growth, and progress being made. When I only look at numbers, I am tempted to be discouraged. My wife reminds me that God is looking for faithful people, and I am being faithful in what God has called me to do. Paul understood that the hearts of some were veiled, and they were blinded by Satan, the god of this world. Paul kept right on preaching the gospel and doing the things that God had called him to do, and he took encouragement in the fact that many lives were being transformed.

Paul made it clear that they were not preaching themselves, but Jesus. The false teachers, that were attacking Paul, were trying to promote themselves. For Paul, it was never about promoting himself. He preached Christ, and Christ alone. In 1 Corinthians 2, Paul wrote, "For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

(2 Cor 4:5) "For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake."

(1 Co 2:2) “For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”

When Paul met with the Ephesian elders at Miletus, he warned them that “savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them.” Paul knew first hand that this would happen. It happened at Corinth, and in other places. These false teachers were trying to promote themselves, and get people to follow after them. They did whatever they had to do to discredit Paul or other leaders. One important sign of a true minister of God is that he preaches Jesus Christ, and is not trying to promote himself.

(Ac 20:29–30) “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; {30} and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.”

Paul never forgot that he was saved out of darkness. He never forgot that it was by God’s grace that he was saved. He quotes Genesis 1:3, where God said that light would shine out of darkness, and then applies that to his salvation. He said that the same God who brought light into the world shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. God manifested His light and life in Paul’s life, and this kept him from being disheartened, particularly in the face of difficulties.

(2 Cor 4:6) “For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”

Paul said that they had this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves. A vessel is something that holds something, like a water pot, that holds water. Our lives are vessels and God created us to have fellowship and relationship with Him. He chose us to be temples of the Holy Spirit. He chose to fill earthen vessels with His Holy Spirit. We have this treasure in our earthen vessels. God chose earthen vessels so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves. The life of Jesus was being manifested in their lives and it kept him from losing heart.

(2 Co 4:7) “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;”

Next, Paul wrote about the afflictions that he went through. He said, “we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. Paul did not let the afflictions and suffering that he endured cause him to lose heart because through these things the life of Jesus was being manifested in his life.

(2 Cor 4:8-10) “*we are* afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; {9} persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; {10} always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.”

Why is it that some afflictions cause some to lose heart? I believe that Paul was concerned about the kingdom of God and the life of Jesus being manifested in his life. Some people are more

concerned about their own comfort and welfare than advancing the kingdom of God. Athletes train hard and endure pain and suffering. They know that they must build strength and endurance in order to win the prize. They are willing to endure the pain because their eye is on the prize, not their present discomfort. As believers, we have to have our eye on the prize. Paul had his eyes on the prize. He knew that in these sufferings the life of Jesus was being manifested in his body, and the kingdom of God was being advanced.

He said, “for we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death works in us, but life in you.” Paul knew that the suffering that he endured was bringing life to other people. His focus was on the life of Jesus being manifested in his life, and the lives of those he ministered to.

(2 Cor 4:11-12) “For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. {12} So death works in us, but life in you.”

Paul said that he had the same spirit of faith that the psalmist in Psalm 116:10 had, who said, “I believed, therefore I spoke.” Paul also believed and therefore, he spoke. The psalmist wrote about going through distresses and sorrows and having the cords of death encompassing him. Because he believed, he called upon the name of the Lord, “O Lord, I beseech You, save my life!” The Lord rescued the psalmist from death, and he declared, “I shall walk before the Lord in the land of the living. I believed when I said, I am greatly afflicted.” Paul identifies with the psalmist. He has been afflicted with many distresses and sorrows, and he has also called out to the Lord, and has been delivered from death. He also declares that as God raised the Lord Jesus, He will also raise him and other believers. We will all walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

(2 Co 4:13–14) “But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, “I believed, therefore I spoke,” we also believe, therefore we also speak, {14} knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you.”

(Ps 116:1–10) “I love the Lord, because He hears My voice *and* my supplications. {2} Because He has inclined His ear to me, Therefore I shall call *upon Him* as long as I live. {3} The cords of death encompassed me And the terrors of Sheol came upon me; I found distress and sorrow. {4} Then I called upon the name of the Lord: “O Lord, I beseech You, save my life!” {5} Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; Yes, our God is compassionate. {6} The Lord preserves the simple; I was brought low, and He saved me. {7} Return to your rest, O my soul, For the Lord has dealt bountifully with you. {8} For You have rescued my soul from death, My eyes from tears, My feet from stumbling. {9} I shall walk before the Lord In the land of the living. {10} I believed when I said, “I am greatly afflicted.”

Paul is not thinking of his own comfort and welfare; he is concerned with the life of Jesus being manifested in the lives of others. He said, “for all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.” This was a very different attitude than the ones that had accused Paul and were trying to discredit his ministry. They were doing all things to promote themselves. Paul was willing to endure suffering, afflictions, sorrows, and hardships for the sake of the Corinthians and others. Paul wanted God’s grace to spread so more people would cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God. Paul had an unselfish and eternal perspective on affliction.

(2 Cor 4:15) “For all things *are* for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.”

3. **Because an eternal weight of glory was being produced.** (2 Cor 4:16-18)

Paul was not disheartened because of the glory of the ministry of the new covenant. The new covenant had a surpassing glory to the old covenant, and he was grateful to be a minister of this gospel message. He was grateful to preach righteousness, not condemnation. He was grateful to preach life and forgiveness. Second, Paul did not lose heart because the life of Jesus was being manifested in his life, and in the lives of others. The afflictions and suffering in the flesh were causing the life of Jesus to be manifested, and it was producing life in others. Third, Paul was not disheartened because an eternal weight of glory was being produced.

He wrote, “Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

(2 Co 4:16–18) “Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. {17} For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, {18} while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

The Greek word for glory is *doxa* (Strong’s G1391), which means glory, dignity, honor, or praise. Of the 168 times it is used, it is translated as glory 145 times. We get our English word, *doxology* from it, and it means a short hymn of praises to God. Paul said that light affliction was producing for them an eternal weight of glory.

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word is *kabod* (Strong’s H3519). The root word is *kabad* (Strong’s H3513), which means weighty or heavy. It can be used in a negative or positive way. A heaviness in work would signify a severity in work conditions. Heaviness could also signify a hardening of the heart, dullness, or insensitivity. On the positive usage, Abraham was said to be very heavy in Genesis 13:2, and it was not talking about his physical weight. The context makes it clear that he was heavy in livestock, silver and in gold. Abraham was wealthy. The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament says, “From this figurative usage it is an easy step to the concept of a “weighty” person in society, someone who is honorable, impressive, worthy of respect.”

(Ge 13:2) “Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold.”

In Isaiah 60:1, the word is translated as glory. God’s glory is described as a weighty glory. Paul is capturing the Jewish understanding of glory when he says that light afflictions were producing in them an eternal weight of glory. This is a heavy, rich, or abundant glory. It is not referring to something heavy or burdensome, but some that is rich and abundant in glory.

(Is 60:1) “Arise, shine; for your light has come, And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.”

Paul contrasts the momentary with the eternal. The afflictions and suffering that we may experience in this life are momentary. They may seem like they are lasting a long time, but in the bigger scope of eternity, they are momentary. Paul had his sights on eternity, not on the momentary. Many people today get discouraged because their time frame is temporal. God tells us that we should have an eternal perspective. In the area of finances, He tells us not to lay up treasures here on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. Instead, we are to store up treasures in heaven. We need to have an eternal perspective. Jesus said that where our treasure is, there our heart will be also. We need our hearts set on eternal things.

(2 Co 4:17) “For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,”

(Mt 6:19–21) “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. {20} “But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; {21} for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Paul makes a distinction about the temporal and eternal. He said the things that are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. What were the things that Paul was looking at that were not seen? He was looking at an eternal weight of glory being produced in his life and the lives of others. He was looking for Christ to be manifested in his life. Paul was looking for Christ to be manifested in the lives of other people.

(2 Cor 4:18) “while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

In Colossians 3:2-3, Paul exhorts us to set our mind on things above, and not on the things that are on earth. Believers have died to the flesh and their lives are hidden with Christ in God. We must set our minds on the things above, eternal things, not on the things of the earth, which are temporal. When we set our minds on things above, we have life and peace.

(Col 3:2–3) “Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. {3} For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.”

(Ro 8:6) “For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,”

Paul said he was not looking at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. He was not looking at his house and wealth, which could be seen and counted. He was not looking at temporal things, but on eternal things. He was looking at lives being transformed. He was looking for the character of Christ to be formed in people. He was looking at spreading the gospel to more people, which would result in the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.

(2 Cor 4:15) “For all things *are* for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.”

In Philippians 3, Paul gives us a snapshot of what his heart was set on. He said, “More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith,” Paul set his heart on knowing Christ. He counted his successes and the things of the world as rubbish so that he could gain Christ. Paul set his heart and mind on the Lord. Hebrews 12:2 instructs us to fix our eyes on the author and perfecter of our faith, and Paul certainly had his eyes fixed on Jesus.

(Php 3:8–9) “More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, {9} and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith,”

(Heb 12:2) “fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Conclusion and Applications

Paul went through a lot of afflictions and suffering in his ministry. At the time of his salvation, the Lord told Ananias that Paul was a chosen instrument of His, and that he would bear His name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel, and that he would suffer much for His name’s sake. That turned out to be very true; Paul suffered a lot for the name of Christ. But Paul did not lose heart despite of all the hardships. Paul did not lose heart because of the ministry of the new covenant. He knew the glory of the ministry of the old covenant, and he saw the surpassing glory of the ministry of the new covenant. Second, he did not lose heart because the life of Jesus was being manifested in his life and the lives of others. Third, Paul did not lose heart because of the eternal weight of glory that was being produced. Paul set his mind on eternal things, not on the temporal things of the world.

(Ac 9:15–16) “But the Lord said to him (*Ananias*), “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; {16} for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name’s sake.”

What about you this morning? Are you losing heart? Are you discouraged? Let me encourage you to learn from the apostle Paul, who did not lose heart. Take time to reflect on the gospel message of the new covenant. It is a message of righteousness, not condemnation. Instead of focusing on the problem, which is sin, it gives the solution, which is forgiveness through Christ. The gospel is a message of hope. The gospel is a message that changes lives.

Is your life being transformed? Are you spending time with the Lord? Are you spending time in prayer? Are you spending time in the Word of God, looking intently at the mirror? Are you spending time in worship? Are you spending time meditating on the word of God? Are you applying God’s word in your life? Are you growing in your relationship with the Lord? Are you helping those around you grow in Christ? Are the lives of those around you being transformed? Paul was not merely looking out for himself, but he was working hard to see the lives of others transformed.

What are the things that you are focused on? Are you focused on the things that are seen, or on the things that are not seen? Are you focused on the things of this earth, or on things above? Are you focused on temporal things or eternal things?

How do you look at the trials and afflictions in your life? Do you see suffering as something that is producing in you the glory of the Lord? Do you focus on the discomforts or do you look at the end result of what God is doing in your life? Jesus endured the cross because of the joy set before Him. Are you enduring because of the joy set before you, knowing that God is producing in you an eternal weight of glory?

God wants you to be encouraged. Take a few minutes to reflect on what the Spirit of God is saying to you. Write down two or three things this morning that you can apply in your life.

Concluding Prayer

Father God, thank You for this passage, and for the encouragement it brings to all of us. Thank You for Paul's example and his perspective about life. Help us to be focused on eternal things, not temporal things. Help us to see what You are doing in our lives. We pray that our lives will be continually transformed. May the things that we go through produce an eternal weight of glory in our lives. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Why Paul Did Not Lose Heart (2 Cor 4:1-18)

Introduction (2 Co 6:4-5, 11:23-27, 4:1-18)

1. **Because they had a ministry of the new covenant.** (2 Cor 3:7-4:1)
2. **Because the life of Jesus was being manifested in their lives.** (2 Cor 3:18, 4:2-15, 1 Co 2:2, Act 20:29-30, Ps 116:1-10)
3. **Because an eternal weight of glory was being produced.** (2 Cor 4:16-18, Ge 13:2, Is 60:1, Mt 6:19-21, Col 3:2-3, Rom 8:6, Php 3:8-9, Heb 12:2)

Conclusion and Applications (Ac 9:15-16)