

HEAVEN WILL BE WORTH IT ALL

The apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians said, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment..." (II Cor. 4:17). Later in that same epistle, Paul wrote, "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep..." (II Cor. 11:23-25). Having suffered and endured all these punishments, Paul still said, "our light affliction" (II Cor. 4:17).

How could any man consider such difficulties, trials, hardships, persecutions and pain to be "light affliction"? How many reading this brief writing has been beaten with a whip across the back forty times save one, just one time, much less five? How many reading this have been beaten even one time with rods? How many have been stoned? All of these punishments were placed upon Paul, not for any wrong that he had done, but for the work of the Lord. So again, how could any man endure such affliction and still consider it "light affliction"?

The answer to this question is found in that same verse. The complete verse reads: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Cor. 4:17). The scope of his punishment was great when compared to the every day life of most people. However, when compared to the eternal bliss of a heavenly home, it pales in comparison. When considering the temporal nature of the suffering as compared to the eternal nature of the blessing, the suffering is not worthy to be compared. Paul told the Romans, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18). After having endured such treatment at the hands of unbelievers for a number of years, Paul told Timothy in his last letter to him, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (II Tim. 4:6-8).

Great or small, our persecutions, trials and hardships are just a light affliction compared to eternal life.

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ON THE JUST AND THE UNJUST

A recent post on facebook read, "Noah called, he's going to pick me up in ten minutes". Needless to say, this comes as a result of all the rain we have had and continue to have. However, it reminded me that (1) God will never destroy the earth by flood again (Gen. 9:12-17), (2) the great value of the rain we have in bringing forth a productive harvest (Acts 14:17; Heb. 6:7) and that, "...he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matt. 5:46).

This last one noted brings to mind the truth that some things will occur for all, no matter what they say or do. There are of course, some things that will happen as a result of something we have done. For instance. Paul said, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Tim. 3:12). The promise of rain is not such as this. Live godly in Christ Jesus and the rains will come. Live a wicked and unrighteous life and the rains will come.

Just as the rain, temptation will come on the just and the unjust. Paul told the Corinthian brethren, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man..." (I Cor. 10:13). We all face temptations. That is a fact. The wicked face temptations and the righteous face temptations. They fall on the just and on the unjust. Thankfully, Paul went on to say, "...but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13).

Another thing that comes as the rain is the calling of the Lord. Jesus said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). The apostle John wrote, "...And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). Paul wrote, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Tit. 2:11). It the calling of the Lord by way of the gospel of Christ. Paul said, "Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thess. 2:14). The call falls on the just and the unjust.

We will close with one last "on the just and on the unjust". Paul said, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10). Judgment will fall on the just and on the unjust!