

Transformed Daily Devotional

Day 29:

Welcome to week 5 of this Transformed Devotional. My hope is that by now you have gotten yourself into the habit of having a daily quiet time. Our daily time in the Word is foundational to our lifelong journey of faith. In fact, that is the very point of today's devotion. We are going to dive back into II Corinthians.

> **Let's open our bible and read II Corinthians 4 (Read it again!)**

Now I know that we read this chapter last week but there are multiple verses that we are going to take a look at. Our transformation has two phases as I have mentioned before in this devotional. First there is the transformation from our Salvation. This is the change that happens when we give our lives over to the Lord. The second phase of this transformation is called Sanctification. This process will take each of us a lifetime. From the day of our salvation to the day we die our role is to continue to grow and become more like Christ.

The truth of life is that every day we wake up and get out of bed, we are one day closer to our last. Each day we have is one less day on this side of glory. Our physical bodies are slowly wasting away, each day until life can no longer be sustained. The beauty of our relationship with the Lord is that it is a spiritual one. Each day is a new day and spiritual renewal is available; every day for the rest of our lives.

2 Corinthians 4:16 (ESV)

"So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day."

This verse should bring you hope not despair. I know when we think about the brevity of life we can get a little discouraged but life is more than the physical. We have the ability to meet with the Lord on a daily basis and find the renewal we desperately need. Even when we are in the darkest of times in our life we can meet with Jesus and receive a renewal of heart for the day ahead.

Lets make the most of every day we have. Lets not waste or even spend our days but lets invest our days wisely. Take what Psalm 90 says to heart.

Psalm 90:12 (ESV)

"So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom."

Day 30:

> Let's open our bible and read II Corinthians 4 (Read it again for the 3rd time!)

You might be wonder why we are heading into this chapter for a third time! The last two verses hold a powerful truth that we must apply to our lives. Understanding this truth will help give you perspective to all the tough stuff you will go through in this life.

2 Corinthians 4:16-17 (ESV)

“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.”

We spend so much of our time focused on the temporal and earthly side of life. We are blind to the fact that most of us are solely concerned about our personal comfort. Can I say something that might be hard to read? Our personal, fleshly comfort is nothing compared to the eternal hope and glory that awaits us!

You and I have been working our way through this 2nd letter to the Corinthian church, chapter and verse at a time but that is not how it was originally intended. When you receive a letter from a loved one do you break it down into chapters and verses and spend a week to read it? No! You would read the letter from start to finish. That was the same thing that would happen when a church would receive a letter from Paul. They would sit down and read the entire thing. In fact chapters and verses were not added to Scripture for centuries. When you read a letter from start to finish you get the general theme and direction of the author. Paul has a distinct theme in 2 Corinthians. We are to be focused on the eternal not the temporal.

In verse 17 Paul writes about light and momentary afflictions. Affliction is a word that Paul used in the opening chapter of this letter. As the letter was read undoubtedly this line would have stuck in the listeners' mind. “Light and momentary.” In fact, near the end of this letter the apostle Paul begins to describe the afflictions that he has gone through.

2 Corinthians 11:21-33 (ESV)

“But whatever anyone else dares to boast of—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast of that. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they offspring of Abraham? So am I. Are they 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; ²⁶ 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? If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me, but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.”

Do any of those afflictions sound light and momentary? Is being stoned to the point of death light and momentary? Is getting beaten with a rod 40 times minus one, which happened a total of 5 times, light and momentary? Is getting shipwrecked and lost at sea three times light and momentary? The simple answer is no!

Anything and everything we have, are or will go through in this life is light and momentary compared to the greatness of heaven. The glory that awaits His followers’ makes the hardest and darkest of times seem insignificant. If you can grasp that truth then you can tackle this life with an entirely new perspective. You will have hard things in your life but they don’t have to seem like a death sentence. We have hope! Paul tried to convey this idea in his first letter to Corinth.

1 Corinthians 2:9 (ESV)

“But, as it is written, ‘What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him.’”

Eternity is far greater than anything you have seen, heard or could possibly imagine. Allow that truth to shape your life!

Day 31:

> Let's open our bible and read II Corinthians 5

We are going to take a couple days in chapter 5 of II Corinthians. Today I want to focus on the first ten verses. Paul continues about eternity by talking about our heavenly bodies. Did you know that we will receive a new body in heaven? This body we currently have is just a temporary one but we will receive an eternal body without blemish, disease, sickness or death once we enter His glory. If you want to read more on this idea then read 1 Corinthians 15. I had you read through that chapter when we looked at the resurrection from the Gospel of John.

Moving on, you have heard the phrase, "seeing is believing", right? Wrong! Our faith demands that we would believe in the invisible God who has been made known to us by His Son, Jesus. This takes faith and we are supposed to live by that faith. Hebrews 11 is known as the Hall of Fame of Faith. We see different characters from the Old Testament praised for their actions that were all done by faith. Hebrews 11:1 and 11:6 give us some insight in what faith is and why it is so important.

Hebrews 11:1 (ESV)

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

Right there we have the definition of faith. The assurance of things hoped for is eternity, its heaven. We have that hope of salvation and that is an essential part of our faith. The conviction of things not seen, that is living our everyday life by faith and not by sight. Hebrews 11 goes on...

Hebrews 11:6 (ESV)

"And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him."

Now here is why faith is important. Without it, without faith, it is impossible for us to please God. The Lord cares nothing of our "good works", in fact our "good works" are just filthy rags compared to Him. When we can live out our daily routine in faith, that God is who He says He is and we trust His Word for us then we can truly please Him. All it takes is faith. Coming back to II Corinthians 5 the apostle Paul talks about this theme.

2 Corinthians 5:9 (ESV)

"So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him."

Lets take aim to live by faith and please the Lord of Heaven and Earth. It is a task worthy of every effort we have.

Day 32:

> Let's open our bible and read II Corinthians 5 (Read it again!)

Today we are going to focus in on the second half of this chapter. In this portion of Scripture we find one of the core principles of the Christian Faith. Here we find the great exchange. Christ exchanged our sin and gave us His righteousness. All of our sin was put upon His shoulders on the cross. Isaiah 53 talks about this.

Isaiah 53:1-12 (NIV)

“Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light [of life] and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

We not only impart our sin upon Him but He grants to us His righteousness. The goodness of God is now seen in us. This is not because of anything we have done but solely upon the grace of God.

Because of this beautiful exchange we are now called by God to be world changers. This ministry of reconciliation has been transfer to us. We are to be the light and salt of the world. We are to be the embodied example of Christ to this lost and dying world. The apostle Paul uses the term ambassador in this passage. We are God's ambassadors of the Gospel, of the Good News!

A transformed life, as talked about in verse 17, should be visible for all to see. Our lives should be a reflection of what has taken place in our hearts and is a testimony to those that do not know Jesus. The more we meet with Him and get to know and live out His Word then the greater our influence can be. Lets stop sitting on the sidelines and get in the game. Lets start to take serious the opportunities we have to share our faith. I want to leave you with these words from Colossians 4. I hope they encourage you to change someone's world, someone's life.

Colossians 4:5-6 (NIV)

“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”

Day 33:

> Let's open our bible and read II Corinthians 6

In this passage we come across the idea of being unequally yoked. This phrasing paints a picture of two animals yoked together for work. If you put a donkey and an ox in a yoke together then you would never be able to get anything done. Each animal would be going different directions and different speeds. In the same way believers shouldn't be yoked with unbelievers. This “yoke” is talking about partnerships that will drag us down in our faith. I call this the law of gravity to our students. The unbeliever will inevitable pull down the believer not the other way around.

I can't tell you how many students I have had in the ministry decide to date someone who doesn't know the Lord. This “missionary” style of dating never works. The believer almost always sacrifices the standards laid out by Scripture in order to maintain their relationship. Any partnership that will compromise your biblical convictions is strongly cautioned in this passage. Paul equates this to light having no partnership with darkness and Christ having no partnership with Satan. In the same way we need to check the partnerships we have in our life.

Now this doesn't mean we don't have relationships with those that don't know Christ. Without those vital relationships then how would evangelism ever happen? Our Christian character and morals shine a light to the lost and we can never compromise them. There is too much at stake. Your walk with the Lord is far more valuable than dating that cute but unbelieving guy or gal. Your faith is far more valuable than that business partnership that could compromise your character.

I know what some of you are thinking. That will never happen to me. I'm strong in my faith, nobody can detour me from it. If those thoughts are crossing your heart and mind then I want you to memorize this next verse. We are all one decision away from falling. We are all one selfish decision away from destroying what the Lord has built in our lives.

1 Corinthians 10:12 (ESV)

"Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall."

Day 34:

> Let's open our bible and read II Corinthians 7

We encounter the apostle Paul talking about a godly grief in the portion of Scripture. We must understand the difference. There is earthy, fleshly guilt and then there is godly, holy conviction and grief. When we sin, many of us may face a fleshly guilt. Because of the cross, we are never guilty. To live each day with this feeling of guilt is not how God designed it. On the other hand, when we sin we should experience a godly grief and conviction. We know we screwed up and we never want to do it again. Our godly grief challenges us to move on from our sin and grow. Guilt will just weigh us down in our walk.

All of us will sin and continue to sin in this life. The question is what will you do next time. Will you continue to let that sin dominate and enslave you or will you pick yourself up, confess your sin and move on. Look at what John said about confessing our sin.

1 John 1:9 (NIV)

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

Next time you sin, confess it to the Lord. Own your sin and move on. Don't wallow in it, don't let it drag you down. Learn from it and grow.

Day 35:

> Open your bible and read Psalm 139

I know this is a detour from II Corinthians. We will jump back in there tomorrow. Psalm 139 is a beautiful passage of Scripture that describes how God has uniquely created each of us. The last two verses of this chapter are powerful and I encourage each of you to put them to memory. I pray these verses each morning before my quiet time.

That's all for the commentary. Get to church; be under the teaching of the word. Stay at it.