

Sermon #2474¹ — *Miscellaneous Notes*

Title: **“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”**

Text: 2 Corinthians 4:17

Subject: *The Afflictions of God’s Saints*

Introduction:

Let’s open our Bibles to 2nd Corinthians 4 — 2nd Corinthians 4. We will begin our reading at verse 1 — 2nd Corinthians 4:1.

(2 Corinthians 4:1-2) “Therefore seeing **we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not**; (2) But **have renounced** the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but **by manifestation of the truth** commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”

(2 Corinthians 4:3-6) “But **if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost**: (4) In whom the **God of this world hath blinded the minds of**

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (5) For **we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord**; and **ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake**. (6) **For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.**”

(2 Corinthians 4:7) “But we have **this treasure in earthen vessels**, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”

(2 Corinthians 4:8-10) “*We are* troubled on every side¹, yet not distressed; *we are* perplexed,

¹ (2 Corinthians 11:23-28) “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. (24) Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one. (25) Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

but not in despair; (9) Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; (10) Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.”

(2 Corinthians 4:11-12) “For we which live are **alway delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake**, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. (12) So then death worketh in us, but life in you.”

(2 Corinthians 4:13-14) “We having the same

the deep; (26) *In* journeyings often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils by *mine own* countrymen, *in* perils by the heathen, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; (27) In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. (28) Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.”

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; (14) Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present *us* with you.”

(2 Corinthians 4:15) “For **all things are for your sakes**, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.”

(2 Corinthians 4:16) “For which cause we faint not; but **though our outward man perish**, yet **the inward man is renewed day by day**.”

(2 Corinthians 4:17) “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory.”

Did he say, “our light affliction”? — “*Our light affliction!*” How on earth could this man, inspired of God, describe the afflictions that break the hearts of

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

God’s people in this world, those afflictions that wring out our very souls, those afflictions that cause us to wake up in the middle of the night, crying out like David of old, — *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? Is thy mercy clean gone forever? Wilt thou cast off forever?”*

You may even have been hurt, if not offended, as we read those words. — *“Our light affliction!”* Is it a light thing to suffer loneliness and pain? — Is it a light thing to have children who crush your heart? — Is it a light thing to endure bereavement? — Is it a light thing to endure bodily sickness, financial hardship, domestic trouble, desolation of soul, or heaviness of heart? — Of course not!

Our God does not expect us to be stoics, without feeling. We are men and women, not stones! We have feelings. Sometimes we hurt. Sometimes we hurt horribly!

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

I know the joy of happiness and the comfort of love. And I know the pain of sorrow. I know what it is to be elated. And I know what it is to have such heaviness of heart that you think you just cannot go on.

Proposition: Yet, there is a very real sense in which all those things that cause us great pain and sorrow may be looked upon as “*our light affliction.*”

Let me talk to you for just a little while about these three strange words. — **“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION.”** I want to share with you some things that have been on my heart for some time, some things by which the Lord is (I believe) graciously teaching me to look upon my afflictions in this world as a light thing.

I hope not to speak in any way that might make it appear in the least that I do not feel your pain and sorrow, or (indescribably more importantly) that our

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

Redeemer does not feel your pain and sorrow. I simply want to give you some things by which I hope our God may be pleased to minister to your soul and comfort your heart for the glory of Christ.

GOD’S TESTIMONY

1st — **I know what this Book tells me about my afflictions in this world.** I am not interested in what sociologists, newspaper columnists, and psychologists have to say about them, or what your family “therapist,” has to say about these things. Their psycho-babble is totally irrelevant. — And I am certainly not interested in what the self-serving preachers of this day have to say. Their psycho-babble is even more irrelevant! — This is relevant. This is important. — **What is God’s testimony? What does my God tell me about the things I suffer in this world of sorrow?**

I know this. — **So long as we live in this world of sin, we will live in a world of sorrow.** — Here, we

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

must never expect to be free of suffering, adversity, and pain. It is written, “*We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*” (Acts 14:22).

I am redeemed, justified, and sanctified by the blood of Christ. I am saved, born again, and forgiven of all my sin by the grace of God. I am an heir of God and joint-heir with Jesus Christ, an heir of heaven’s eternal glory. But as long as I live in this world I will have to deal with pain, affliction, and heartache. My body is subject to sickness, disease, pain, decay, and death, just like anyone else’s. — God’s children, in the process of time, grow old, get sick, and die, just like all other men.

I know this, too. — **Whatever comes to pass in my life is the will of God.**

(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18) “Rejoice evermore. *17* Pray without ceasing. *18* In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

concerning you.”

Nothing in this universe happens by chance, or luck, or blind fate. All that comes to pass, be it good or bad, prosperous or adverse, both the great and the small, is ordained by my God and governed by my heavenly Father for my spiritual and eternal good (Romans 8:28; 11:36). I may not be able to see what God’s good purpose is in a given situation at the present time, but...

“In heaven’s clearer light I’ll see,
All things worked out for good!”

- **Whatever my heavenly Father does, he does because of his infinite, mercy, love, and grace toward me, because of his great goodness, never because he is angry with me, never because he is punishing me!**

Our heavenly Father uses the rod of love to chasten and correct his erring child; but he never uses the rod

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

of his justice to punish us, to satisfy his wrath and anger because of our sins. — He punished our sins to the full satisfaction of his holy justice in Christ.

- **Whatever the Lord my God does to me and with me, whatever he allows to be done to me and with me is best.** — For Me. — For His Church. — For the Furtherance of the Gospel. — For his Glory.

It is enough for me to know that he who rules this world is my loving, ever-gracious, all-wise, and good heavenly Father. I do not need to know what he is doing, or why, only that he is the One doing it! Believing God, it is my soul’s great joy and comfort to trust his wisdom, power, love, and goodness. It is written, “*There shall no evil befall thee*” (Psalm 91:10). — “*There shall no evil happen to the just*” (Proverbs 21:10).

“Our times are in His hand,
Why should we doubt or fear?”

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

Our Father’s hand will never cause
His child a needless tear!”

I know this, too. — **The grace of God is sufficient to meet my every need.** — “*My grace is sufficient for thee. My strength is made perfect in weakness*” (2 Corinthians 12:9). — Paul asked God to remove his terribly painful thorn in the flesh three times. But it was best for Paul to endure the pain and carry the thorn in his flesh to the grave. Therefore, his heavenly Father refused to take it away. But he gave him something far better. — The knowledge and experience of his all-sufficient grace!

And I know this. — **No matter what my trial may be, the Lord, my God and Savior, is with me.** He has promised, “*I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*” (Hebrews 13:5).

(2 Timothy 4:9-18) “Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: *10* For **Demas** hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. *11* **Only Luke is with me.** Take **Mark**, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry. *12* And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus. *13* The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring *with thee*, and the books, *but* especially the parchments. *14* **Alexander** the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: *15* Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words. *16* At my first answer no man stood with me, but **all men forsook me**: *I pray God* that it may not be laid to their charge. *17* **Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me**; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. *18* And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve *me* unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

- I do not need perfect health. I need his perfect peace.
- I do not need prosperity and wealth. I need the riches of his grace.
- I do not need a life of ease. I need the comfort of his presence.

I also know that — **Our afflictions are only for a moment. They will soon be over!**

“Swift to its close ebbs out life’s little day.
Earth’s joys grow dim. Its glories slip away.
Change and decay in all around me I see. —
O Thou who changest not, abide with me!”

This is what the Book of God plainly tells us about our afflictions. — They will come. — They come according to the will of God for us. — They are designed by our heavenly Father for our good. — His grace is sufficient! — The Lord will be with us in all our troubles. — They are but for a moment.

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

WHAT WE DESERVE

2nd — **Our afflictions are light when compared with what we deserve.**

(Psalms 103:8-14) “The LORD *is* merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. 9 He will not always chide: neither will he keep *his anger* for ever. 10 **He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.** 11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, *so* great is his mercy toward them that fear him. 12 As far as the east is from the west, *so* far hath he removed our transgressions from us. 13 **Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.** 14 **For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.**”

- We could be cast off in reprobation. — God could have left us alone!

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

- We could be in heathen darkness.
- We could be in hell!

WHAT OTHERS SUFFER

3rd — **Our afflictions are light when compared to that which others have suffered before us.**

“I once complained that I had no shoes,
‘Till I met a man who had no feet.”

- Men and women all over the world suffer the same things we do. (“*Affliction*” singular. – Not “*Afflictions*” plural.) — Why should I be any different?
- Most people in this world suffer much, much more than I do. — Why should I complain?
- God’s people in this world have always been a suffering people. — Shall I expect to live in ease? — The Apostles. — The Martyrs. — Bunyan.

“Must I be carried to the skies

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?”

WHAT CHRIST SUFFERED

4th — **Our afflictions are light when compared to that which our Lord Jesus Christ suffered for us.**

(Hebrews 12:3-4) “For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. (4) Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.”

(Isaiah 53:6-11) ⁽⁶⁾ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁽⁷⁾ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. ⁽⁸⁾

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. ⁽⁹⁾ And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth. ⁽¹⁰⁾ Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. ⁽¹¹⁾ He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

(Psalm 22:1-3) My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? (2) O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. (3) But

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

(Psalm 22:6) But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.

(Psalm 22:14-16) I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. (15) My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. (16) For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

(Psalm 40:12) For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

(Psalm 69:1-9) Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. (2) I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. (3) I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. (4) They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away. (5) O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee. (6) Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel. (7) Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face. (8) I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children. (9) For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

(Psalm 69:14) Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.

(Psalm 69:19) Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are all before thee.

(2 Corinthians 5:21) For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

When I know the agony of body and soul, the torments of heart, the bloody sweat which my Savior endured for me, how can I complain about my “*light affliction*”?

“See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e’er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?”

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small:
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all!”

I ought to be able, by the grace of God, to endure my “*light affliction*” with patience for the honor of my blessed Redeemer who suffered so much for me.

THE GRACE RECEIVED

5th — **Our afflictions are light when compared to the countless blessings of grace our God has bestowed upon us** (1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 1:3-14; 1 John 3:1-3).

“Count your many blessings,
Name them one by one,
And it will surprise you
What the Lord has done!

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

- Eternal, Covenant Blessings — Election! — Adoption! — Predestination!
- Daily, Providential Blessings.
- Glorious, Gospel Blessings — Redemption! — Faith! — Forgiveness! — Preservation! — Trials (Philippians 1:29).

THE GLORY AWAITING

6th — **Our afflictions are light when compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.** — This is exactly what Paul had in mind, when he called our affliction in this world, “*our light affliction.*” **Oh, how light my afflictions are, when compared to that which I shall enjoy when the Lord calls me home!**

In fact, the Holy Spirit here tells us that our afflictions are themselves instruments by which our great God is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

(2 Corinthians 4:17-18) “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; (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 Peter 1:3-9) “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, (5) Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (6) Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: (7) That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: (8) Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: (9) Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls.”

“Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come.
‘Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far;
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me.
His Word my hope secures.
He will my Strength and Portion be,
As long as life endures.

And when this heart and flesh shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace!”

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

(Romans 8:16-18) “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: *17* And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together. *18* 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.”

- I am looking for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.
- When I enter into that City, bright and fair, I shall enter into and possess all the bliss of heaven’s eternal glory!
- I shall then have a new body!
- I shall then have a new life!
- Then, O blessed hope, O blessed day, all sin, all sorrow, all pain, all affliction shall cease forever!

(Isaiah 25:8-9) “He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken *it*. (9) And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this *is* our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this *is* the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

(Revelation 7:14-17) “And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (15) Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. (16) They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. (17) For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

(Revelation 21:1-4) “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. (2) And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (3) And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God. (4) And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

How beautiful heaven must be!

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

“We read of a place that’s called heaven.
It’s made for the pure and the free.
These truths in God’s Word He hath given. —
How beautiful heaven must be!

In heaven no drooping nor pining,
No wishing for elsewhere to be.
God’s light is forever there shining —
How beautiful heaven must be!

Pure waters of life there are flowing;
And all who will drink may be free.
Rare jewels of splendor are glowing —
How beautiful heaven must be!

The angels so sweetly are singing
Up there by the beautiful sea.
Sweet chords from their gold harps are ringing. —
How beautiful must be!

How beautiful heaven must be!
Sweet home of the happy and free,

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

Fair heaven of rest for the weary,
How beautiful heaven must be!”

APPLICATION

Let me wrap this message up with two texts which I hope you will hear, and use for your souls’ good in the midst of trouble, heartache, and sorrow.

(Hebrews 4:16) “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

(1 Peter 5:6-7) “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: (7) Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”

1. Cast all your care upon him who rules the world for you.
2. Cast all your care upon him who died in your stead.

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

3. Cast all your care upon him who intercedes for you at the throne of God.
4. Cast all your care upon him who is touched with the feeling of your infirmities.
5. Cast all your care upon him who “*careth for you!*”

 Tempted and tried we're oft made to wonder
 Why it should be thus all the day long.
 Yet, blessed Father, loving and gracious,
 We know You're wise and never do wrong.
 Farther along we'll know more about it.
 Farther along we'll understand why;
Cheer up, God's children. — Glory awaits us!
 We'll understand it all by and by.

When death has come and taken our loved ones,
 Leaving our homes so lonely and drear;
 Then do we cry, “O help me dear Savior,
 You know my sorrow, You know my fear.”
 Often I wonder why I must journey
 Over a road so rugged and steep.
Why all the darkness? Why all the heartache?

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

Why must Your chosen so often weep?

“Faithful ‘til death,” said our loving Master,
A few more days to labor and wait;
Toils of the road will then be as nothing,
As we sweep through the beautiful gates.

When we see Jesus coming in glory;
To take us to His home in the sky;
In heaven’s glory, bowing before Him,
We’ll understand it all by and by.
Farther along we’ll know more about it.
Farther along we’ll understand why;
Cheer up, God’s children. — Glory awaits us!
We’ll understand it all by and by.

Amen.

“OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION”

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- ¹ Danville — Tuesday Evening — October 7, 2014
Danville — Bible Class — May 12, 2019
Hurricane RD Grace Church, Ashland, KY — (10/10/14)

Readings: *Rex Bartley and Larry Brown*