



## Sermon, Sunday August 21, 2022 “Our Outer Nature and Inner Nature”

**SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 4:16-18** <sup>16</sup> So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For our slight, momentary affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, <sup>18</sup> because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen, for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

### **Introduction: What it means to be physically weak?**

My youngest son, WooJin, who is now 13 years old, is interested in gaining strength. So, he does a lot of exercises that can build muscle, such as push-ups and sit-ups. My son often challenges me to arm wrestling. As I arm wrestle with my son, I experience his strength growing every day. I imagine a day sometime in the future when I will be pushed out of power by my son. My thought is that while my body is debilitating, my son's body grows stronger. The Apostle Paul, who wrote today's text, also mentions a similar experience in the text.

The Apostle Paul wrote 2 Corinthians around AD 55-56, about 20 years after he met Jesus on the road to Damascus and was transformed. Paul was about 50 years old at the time. Since the average life expectancy at that time was early 50s, the Apostle Paul's age was close to that of the average end of life. The Apostle Paul mentioned how our bodies get sick and weaken over time. But Christians are not to be discouraged by such a reality. It is a fact that our spirit and mind can be renewed day by day, unlike our bodies that slowly weaken over time.

Today, the Apostle Paul teaches us about the Christian way of life based on his own experience. As the Apostle Paul said, even if our bodies are weak, we hope to have a wonderful experience with the growth of our spirit and mind daily.

So, what is the Apostle Paul admonishing us to do in order to live a life that renews us day by day?

### **Body: The Christian way of life**

#### **1. We must not become discouraged by our physical aging.**

**Let's look at the first half of 2 Corinthians 4:16. “So we do not lose heart.”**

There is something that all creatures in this world cannot deny. As time goes by, our bodies will gradually grow old. We cannot deny this law of nature. However, there are many people who become discouraged because of their aging body.

The Apostle Paul also experienced the weakness of his body. Moreover, the Apostle Paul faced great external challenges in preaching the Gospel. However, despite these circumstances, the Apostle Paul confessed that he never loses his heart even if his body grows old. The faith of the Apostle Paul is a great example for us.

As the verse of today's text says, as the body weakens, passion disappears, good intentions are lost, and people become disappointed. But we must be able to acknowledge and accept our limitations. If we do not accept this fact, we lose more through discouragement. Because if we remain discouraged by the weakness of our bodies, we will not be able to experience the wonderful grace of the Lord at work through our spirit and our hearts. A person who is discouraged by the weariness of the flesh tends to fail in renewing the inner nature. So, while we acknowledge the weakness of the body, we must renew our spirit and mind daily.



## 2. We must renew our spirits and minds daily.

Let's look at the second half of verse 16 in today's text. **“Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day.”**

This verse tells us that Christians should strive to renew our spirit and mind daily, even though our body is getting old. Here, **“being renewed”** refers to becoming more mature toward the Lord and becoming more personal. This Christian image is in stark contrast to the image of the world, where, as the body ages, it becomes discouraged and swept away by worldly desires.

But what we must remember is how our spirit and mind can be renewed every day. This is possible only with the grace of the Lord and the help of the Holy Spirit.

Our life is as fragile as jars of clay, but if we have the Lord who is our treasure, our inner nature will be renewed day by day (2 Corinthians 4:7-10).

But, how can we have the Lord, who is our treasure, in our fragile life like jars of clay?

## 3. Christians must be able to see the invisible with the eyes of faith.

**2 Corinthians 4:18** says; **“We look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.”** This verse tells us that we should focus on the world of eternal life, rather than clinging to the world of the flesh, which disappears after a short period of time. The Apostle Paul asserts that this is a way to renew the inner nature rather than to become discouraged even though the body is worn out.

**Psalm 90:10** says: **“The length of our days is seventy years-- or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.”** And **Psalm 90:5** says: **“You sweep men away in the sleep of death; they are like the new grass of the morning.”**

So, Christians should pay attention to the eternal world. If we are not alert and look to the eternal world, we will always fall into the temptations of the world and lose sight of the eternal world. In fact, most people are obsessed with the visible, but we should know that the invisible makes the visible beautiful. **So, in verse 17 of today's text, the Apostle Paul says, “For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure.”** The Apostle Paul confessed that the afflictions for this purpose were only temporary and light because he had seen eternal glory. This is the mystery of faith.

**Jesus said in Matthew 11:29-30; “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”** The meaning of this verse is that Jesus' yoke is heavy, but as we look into the eternal world, our yoke is light.

## Conclusion: The Gospel gives us real freedom.

Now let's summarize today's sermon. Christians are those who are invited by the Lord so that as our bodies grow old we do not become discouraged during hardships in our environment. And the Apostle Paul himself, through his own experience, makes it clear how our spirit and mind can be renewed day by day. Let us seek the Lord's grace and help. The Lord will surely hear our prayers and pour out abundant grace into our spirits and hearts every day.

Our yoke will be lightened when we do not become discouraged by the aging of the body and focus on the unseen and eternal. Only the gospel that the Lord showed us through the love of the cross gives us true freedom. I hope everyone can enjoy such grace. **Amen!**

