



9/8/26

Okay... some people are pet owners and some are pet parents. I am a pet parent, and today is my baby Toby's 13th birthday. I've prayed every single day since we got our sweet maltipoo (the day before the tornado in November 2013), that the Lord would let him be with us until he was at least 14. Now that he's 13, is it okay to ask for more time??? I thank God so much for our pets. They're a wonderful example of God's grace. So... I guess that makes me a pet parent... and as he gets older, I guess I act more like a pet grandparent. Hahaha. How about you?

*Blessings,
Jonna*

2 Corinthians 4:11-18

I have a quote by a missionary from the late 1800's into the early 1900's named Amy Carmichael. I pray regularly that God will align my heart with the challenge of this quote. She said, "If I ask to be delivered from trial rather than for deliverance out of it, to the praise of His glory; if I forget that the way of the Cross leads to the Cross and not to a bank of flowers; if I regulate my life on these lines, or even unconsciously my thinking, so that I am surprised when the way is rough, and think it strange, though the word is, 'Think it not strange,' 'Count it all joy,' then I know nothing of Calvary love." Paul KNEW Calvary love. He said in Ephesians 3:13, right before he prayed that all believers could know the breadth and width and height and depth of God's love, "I ask you not to lose heart over what I am suffering for you, which is your glory." I see that same mindset here in 2 Corinthians 4:11-18 and so many other passages.

A Kingdom Outpost has that mindset because we are not deceived by the philosophy of the world that says our happiness is found in our comfort, wealth, and ease. It's an easy deception to embrace. But it's not true and it never delivers on the promise. When our happiness is dependent on our circumstances, when is enough ever enough? And life always has struggle for every person ever. So what happens to our happiness when we face struggles?

God wants to give us something way deeper than happiness dependent on comfortable and easy. He wants to give us joy. Joy can exist alongside the struggle. With it comes peace and security.

So what can I learn from Paul's example so that I can be a faithful partner in a Kingdom Outpost?

Vs. 11-12 ~ "For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you."

"We who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake." That does not sound comfortable or easy. The Greek for the word "live" is "zoe". It means more than physical life. It's spiritual and eternal life. This is speaking of believers. What does it mean to be given over to death? I think it means that we're always putting our flesh and its desires to death, so that the life of Jesus will be evident in us.

Peter talked about this in 1 Peter 4:1-2. He said, "Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God." Paul also talked about this in Colossians 3 when he said, "Put to death what is earthly in you."

Paul was literally facing death everywhere he turned, and it was worth it to him in order to see the life of Jesus shining brightly through him so that more people could know JESUS. Paul was never about pointing to himself, only to Jesus! He was willing for the death of Jesus to be actively working in and through him so that more and more people could have the eternal, spiritual life of Jesus at work in them.

O Lord, I want to have this same mindset!!! I need Your Spirit to grow this in me! Your word says in Psalm 37:4, "Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart." O Lord, my desire is to delight in You above my comfort! My desire is to be free of pride and its flip side... shame... and be humble like Jesus. My desire is to see any suffering I experience as an opportunity to be more and more free from the deception of sin, and be more and more filled with the fullness of God. Please make it so.

Vs. 13-15 ~ "Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, 'I believed, and so I spoke,' we also believe, and so we also speak, knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into His presence. For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God."

Genuine faith in the Lord says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, and I will speak its truth no matter the cost. Just as those who went before me confessed the name of Jesus without

apology, I will, too."

What is it that I believe so emphatically that I would consider suffering for Christ a privilege and an opportunity? I believe that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, and so I will be raised from the dead to eternal life with Him. I believe that the Father will answer Jesus' prayer from John 17:24, "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that you have given Me because you loved Me before the foundation of the world." I will know if I'm truly delighting in the Lord in genuine faith if this truth causes celebration in my heart. O Lord, please help me to have my eyes so focused on You that nothing makes me happier than seeing Your grace extend to more and more people, all for Your glory. Please remove the desires in me that don't align with Your desires for me.

Vs. 14-16 ~ "So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 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."

Having a Kingdom Outpost mindset means that my circumstances will not cause me to lose heart, to be discouraged, even when that means my "outer self is wasting away." This truly is a mindset that can only come supernaturally by the power of the Holy Spirit at work in me. The most important part of me is not my outer appearance, but the inner part of me where my character, desires, feelings, and choices are shaped. This is the true fountain of youth... to become more and more like my eternal Lord Jesus.

When I have the mindset that the youth I want is what comes from the Lord to my heart and soul, then I will see all my afflictions as an opportunity to invest in my eternal weight of glory. The afflictions I experience as I rely on the Holy Spirit's strength will not just be something I endure, but they will be my joy. These trials are light and momentary in the perspective of eternity. They produce in me a surpassing and excessive weight of glory and honor from the Lord!

The Greek repeats the same word twice to speak of this glory God is going to give me as I look to Him and His pleasure. The word is "hyperbolé". My affliction as I keep my eyes fixed on the eternal and not the temporary is going to produce in me an excessive excessive weight of glory and honor. It's the word we call "hyperbole" when people speak so excessively that we know they're going over the top. Except with the Lord, there's no going over the top! What He has for me is superabundantly beyond what I can imagine in my finite mind. Do I believe that? Is temporary comfort more important to me than everlasting glory that can't be matched? Is my faith in the Lord strong enough to believe what He promises? Does it matter to me?

The hard thing about faith is it means I have to put all my confidence in what I can't see. I can never say, "I have to see it to believe it." Just a few verses after this, Paul said, "We walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7). Faith necessarily means that I have to trust Him whom

I can't see over all the temporary things I can see.

O Lord, please make this so in me. This is not just for the Pauls of the world. This type of faith can be for ALL believers if we will keep our eyes on You instead of our circumstances. Father, You know my heart. You know that I want this mindset, but there's still so much work to be done. I often let what I see make me question what I can't see. Please help me to give You full access to my heart especially when my feelings want to take me another direction. Help me to stand on the facts of Your word. They are the truth. They are hope. My feelings are just feelings. Please help me not to wait for my feelings to change, but to take a stand for You and watch as You change my feelings. Praise Your name. This hope would not be mine if Jesus had not died for me and rose again. Amen!