Focus on the Eternal BY Malusi Skunyana

Read Romans 8:18 and 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

ROM 8:18 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.

2 CO 4:16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward [man] is renewed day by day.

2 CO 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding [and] eternal weight of glory;

2 CO 4:18 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.

Christians may expect to go through some hardships in this world, yet in everything, they should not lose their focus on the eternal inheritance that awaits the children of God. Indeed, we may be hard-pressed on every side, we may be perplexed, persecuted, and struck down – all because of Christ – but we need not lose our faith and our hope. Because for all the sufferings that we are called upon to endure for the testimony of Jesus Christ we will surely have a rich reward in heaven.

When Jesus was about to leave His disciples, He warned them, “In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” John 16:33. He told the disciples that they would be mistreated and persecuted because of Him, but they needed not fear, because He would be with them every step of the way. When the Christian church was faced with persecution, He comforted the saints through the apostle John, “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” Revelation 2:10. Indeed the Christian journey is not a smooth one; there are some thorns and thistles along the way. But it is a sweet journey all the same, because of the sweet presence of Jesus every step of the way, and because of the eternal reward that awaits the saints. In today’s passages, Paul wants us to understand that our sufferings in this world are nothing compared to the eternal weight of glory – eternal life – that awaits the faithful believer.

Paul himself suffered persecution and went through many hardships for his testimony. Once an enemy of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Paul was now a devoted disciple of the Jesus he had once despised. He had now become a living testimony of the power of the gospel of Jesus to change lives, and was so zealous to share the message of salvation with others such that he was prepared to suffer and even to die if needs be. Paul encouraged his fellow believers to look away from the persecution and difficulties they faced because of the gospel, and focus on the eternal reward of eternal life in the kingdom of God. He taught that the trials and tribulations the saints encountered were not worthy to be compared to the joy of the saved in the world to come. When the saints would be rejoicing in eternity, then their dark and foreboding experiences in this present world would not matter. Because in Jesus’ presence they would experience nothing but everlasting joy.

Dear friend, our most discouraging experiences today should not dim our view of the wonderful promises that God has given us. Though the outlook may be dark and unpromising, let us look up to Jesus and cling on His sure promise, “I will give you the crown of life.” Let our trials and tribulations serve only to bring us close to Jesus, and let us rejoice even in suffering, knowing that only in a little while Jesus will come again as He promised. Let us turn our eyes away from things that are temporal and focus on things that cannot be seen, let our thoughts be on the reward of eternal life that God has promised His children. I pray that you may find strength in Jesus to face your daily challenges. God bless you! Amen!