

WHAT IT MEANS TO LIVE FOREVER
Easter Sunday –April 1, 2018 –2 Corinthians 4: 13-18
The Church of the Covenant

Eternity isn't just pie in the sky in the sweet by and by. It isn't only about a future reality; it is about today. Jesus Christ is risen TODAY. So TODAY what does it mean to live forever? As our scripture states: *"I believe and so I speak"*. On a Sunday like Easter I cannot keep silent; I cannot fail to speak; I cannot keep quiet about a stone rolled away, and a Savior escaped the finality of death, and an eternal victory won over the powers of darkness on a cross and through an open tomb. I remember 15 years ago when I was working for a seminary so I wasn't preaching on Easter and I remember the choir in the church I was attending with my parents striking up "Christ the Lord is risen today" and I was standing there weeping because I was silent on Easter. I must never be silent again on Easter I prayed. Whatever is going on in your life today, wherever you stand in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ, whether you believe or you kinda believe today, whether you've been burned by a church in the past, whether this is all new to you or whether you've been in church your whole life on an Easter Sunday and you need to feel the power of the resurrection move in your heart today, this sermon and what I share is for you Today. It didn't just happen 2,000 years ago in a garden tomb. It is happening today right here in this place. For YOU. The stone is rolled away from your heart and Jesus has come in all His resurrected power today...

Our scripture begins with the Apostle Paul writing *"knowing that HE who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence."* (2 Corinthians 4: 14) In that day when we die when we believe God will come and raise us in the power of the resurrection with Jesus and draw us into His presence. Ah, but today God has come in the power of the resurrection to do the same. With Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit God has come to raise us up today. Whatever is down in you today the resurrected Jesus has come to raise you up. As it then says, *"So we do not lose heart"*. (v. 16) We do not get discouraged today. We do not get down. Despair flies away by an empty Garden Tomb that once held a lifeless Savior but now holds the promise of eternal life. Darkness flees in the light of an Easter morn. The heart is the very place where our faith and our life is held. Maybe your heart feels crushed and driven to despair today by the circumstances in life. We do not lose heart because our heart can be filled with HOPE as our heart is filled today with the POWER of the resurrected Lord Jesus. Open your heart to the eternal Jesus today. All that is dead within will come alive!

Then the Apostle Paul writes: *"This slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison."* (2 Corinthians 4: 17) Glory is the light of God in eternity. We are raised from glory into glory; from the light of this world into the eternal light of the next. The eternal "weight"; what does that mean? How much does a ray of light weigh? Tiny miniscule, next to nothing, imperceptible. This weightiness is rather the description of the holiness of God, the QUBOD, it is weighty and heavy and tangible and real. The presence of God in His holiness has extreme weight; ah, but the light of His glory is gossamer and without weight. But this life and all its troubles and trials, sicknesses, pain and even death itself, the Apostle describes as *"this slight momentary affliction"*. As human beings we amplify our

troubles. We make them HUGE. We dwell on them and make them larger and larger and larger. We live our life from our troubles, not from our HOPE. We fill our minds incessantly with thoughts of them. We turn our troubles into giants. The Apostle is saying, BY COMPARISON THEY ARE NOTHING IN RELATION TO THE ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY WE WILL RECEIVE IN ETERNITY. Our troubles are a minute speck. They are a sub atomic particle on a speck, on a dot, on the tiniest head of a pin you ever saw. By comparison to all eternity. To the light and glory and holiness of the infinite presence of the infinite God. Think of our existence as a vast eternal time line stretching from our birth into eternity. Our life and all its toil and trouble is such a minute speck versus a timeline that stretches forever into the eternity of God's presence. It puts it all in perspective. It allows us to persevere. It allows us to never give up hope. It empowers us to never despair, to never ever lose heart. Whatever is going on in your life today, whatever you have blown up way out of proportion in relation to the eternal weight of glory, whatever has gotten you down, the resurrected Christ has come today to point out the vastness of eternity HE has promised for you and to give you HOPE.

As some of you know my dear Mother whom I love is in decline. After Dad died her physical maladies have conspired against her and she is becoming more and more forgetful. She lives with me and we have wonderful caregivers. But it is hard to see someone I love so much decline so much. It makes me grieve even while she lives. But I am blessed to do for her what she did for me in growing up and to care for her and to pray with her and to encourage her heart. And it is but a slight momentary affliction. It is a tiny speck on an otherwise wonderful and brilliant life. It is minute in relation to a promise of eternity in the Lord Jesus Christ. And when my Mother passes away, and when she is received into the arms of Jesus, every physical malady will be cured and every broken piece of her life will be made whole, and everything she has forgotten will be restored to her memory once again. No more suffering and no more pain. And when I see her next she will be restored completely, shining in an eternal weight of glory, seeing her risen Savior face to face, and for a vast eternity, infinite and wonderful. Together we will be with the Lord. It is why we must never lose heart and never lose HOPE especially in the light of eternity on Easter.

The Apostle concludes with an observation and with this same observation I conclude. We look not to the things which are seen, but to the things which are unseen. We look not to the troubles and issues and problems in life, we look to a spiritual kingdom which is unseen to the world, but which we may "see" with spiritual and resurrected eyes. For the things that are seen are transient. Passing away. They are this slight momentary affliction. *"But the things that are unseen are eternal."* (2 Corinthians 4: 18) TODAY all those who loved and trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ are all around us. Swirling around us in the mighty cloud of witnesses and the communion of the saints. With angels and archangels they are with us. Their slight momentary affliction is now over. And they get to experience the weight of the glory and presence of God forever. **That's what it means to live forever.** Amen and Amen.

*By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, PA
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*