



RENEWAL

by Whitney Davis

Wasting away. Many people feel like they may be “wasting away.” The past two years have taken a lot out of us. We also must accept that physical death is a fact of life, something we will all face eventually. The reality is that our flesh is slowly aging until the day we breathe our last. The circumstances and things we face in life have taken a toll on our bodies, minds, and hearts. It’s easy to lose heart when we can’t see how our current difficult season will ever end.

Paul, who wrote this passage, understood this outward wasting away. He was imprisoned, persecuted, beaten, shipwrecked, abandoned, given a thorn in the flesh, and faced death- to name a few. Paul, who endured all these things

and more, can encourage us today not to lose heart. He declares that though we may feel like we are perishing, we are daily being renewed by the work of the Holy Spirit. Through Paul, we learn that God uses fragile, imperfect vessels to carry His gospel. No matter how much suffering and difficulty he faced, Paul refused to quit. So how is this possible for us? How do we keep going and refuse to quit?

The answer to that question is found in the second part of this scripture. In our weakness, Christ renews us day by day. The definition of “renew” is- to make like new: restore to freshness, vigor, or perfection. Only the work of Christ on the cross makes this possible. We cannot, in our strength,

restore our bodies to a state of perfection. The Holy Spirit makes this daily renewal possible in us. We don't have to become worried, anxious, or fearful. We receive new life when we experience salvation and as we grow in our faith journey with Jesus. We are transformed into His image and likeness. Christ grants us mercy in our time of need and renews our strength as we wait on and trust in Him. Paul's encouragement to us is not to quit- for we know that after our earthly bodies fail and meet death, we will be resurrected with Christ. Spending eternity with Jesus, fully restored and whole, far outweighs the sufferings we face in this life.

Here's what you need to remember:

1. Our mortal bodies will fail and meet a physical death. As we progress toward this, we will often feel as if we are wasting away.
2. Jesus provides us DAILY renewal to endure our present suffering and continue to press on in His strength and for His glory.
3. Our eternal reward in heaven, spending forever with Jesus, far outweighs these momentary struggles we face on earth.

Don't lose heart if today feels hard. Press on. Keep going. Allow the Holy Spirit to renew you day by day.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

1. How do you feel about the reality that your mortal body will experience wasting away and eventually death? Discuss.
2. In what ways do you feel this wasting away in your own life?
3. How have you experienced the Holy Spirit renewing you daily in challenging times?
4. What does it mean to you that we can trust that these troubles are temporary through the work of the cross?

CALL TO ACTION:

1. Spend some time reflecting and journaling this week about the ways you feel your body may be failing or wasting away. Then pray about and journal how the Lord is providing renewal for you despite your circumstances.
2. Speak this passage, 2 Corinthians 4:16-17, out loud every morning this week, and trust the Lord for the DAILY renewal He provides. [Commit not to be consumed by the ways you feel like your body is failing you, instead focus and believe for the daily renewal the Lord gives you for the journey.]

MEMORIZE:

"Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all."

2 CORINTHIANS 4:16

