

The Lord is risen! He is risen indeed!

How would you describe your troubles in life? Few, easy, short, light, no sweat? Or would you describe your troubles as many, hard, they never seem to end, heavy, I'm up at night? Maybe it depends on the trouble. We had a car break down. Man! Who's driving whom tomorrow? Do we need to buy another car? How much is this going to cost? Hard, heavy. I'm up at night. Then the repair shop calls. \$100. We'll have it done tomorrow. We even had towing insurance only on that car. Ok! Easy, short, light, no sweat. The man who wrote 2 Corinthians was named Paul. These were some of his troubles. He was whipped, 39 lashes, a lot like Jesus. But Paul received the 39 lashes 5 times! 5 times 39! Three times Paul was beaten with rods. Once, he was stoned and left for dead. He went hungry and cold and tired and naked. And all because he wouldn't stop talking about Jesus. He never stopped going to the next town, the next place to speak about Jesus! And how did Paul describe his troubles? Few, easy, short, light, no sweat! Come on! What's the matter with him? Paul just had a different perspective. He had his eyes fixed on what you can't see. Heaven. He saw himself with Jesus forever. And compared to forever, any trouble on this earth was easy, short, light, no sweat. Man, wouldn't you love to have that perspective, the eternal one, the one that sees all troubles as easy, short, light, no sweat? Fix your eyes on the things you can't see, have faith in Jesus, see yourself resting in the arms of Jesus forever and you will say, "Few, easy, short, light, no sweat." Fix your eyes on the things you can't see.

The first thing you need for that perspective is faith. And it's the Spirit that gives faith. Notice the Spirit gives faith. Faith is not some decision I make by my own willpower. Faith is a gift that the Spirit gives and I merely passively receive. That faith leads to speaking. It's repeated twice. We believe and therefore we're also speaking. Or are we? My neighbors see my car. They see me running. But do they see me talking about the things we can't see? Glad I made it the whole school year without anyone knowing I come to church. Well, except that one time, when I said it was kind of boring. People at work? They don't want to hear the Bible-thumpin', judge makin', holier than thou bein' person actually saying anything about God. It's best to just stay quiet. As though we don't believe and therefore we don't speak.

My friends, fix your eyes on what you can't see. The one who raised our Lord Jesus back to Life again will also raise you. God raised Jesus. God accepted his work. Jesus was perfect and is perfect and Jesus gives his perfection to you! God raised Jesus. God will raise you. Jesus took care of all your sins on the cross. God can't see your sins. God can only see holiness. I know when you look at yourself, you can only see sins and you can't see the holiness that God gave you. Fix your eyes on what you can't see! Fix your eyes on that holiness God has already given you. Fix your eyes on the faith the Spirit graciously gives you. When you see your neighbors, friends, coworkers, don't look at the awkwardness you can see. Look at the soul you can't see. Don't look at the scowl on the face you can see. Look at the heart you can't see, a heart that needs Jesus.

God will make us stand, with you at our side, in God's presence. When your temporary, earthly life, that you can see, is over, Jesus will present you to God. And this presentation is a positive thing. Picture this in your mind. See this with your faith. Jesus says, "It's now, my privilege to present, joining us for all eternity, from Verona, WI. Joe!" And the angels go wild! Whoot Whoot! Really. They go wild! They are rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents. How much rejoicing will there be when one forgiven sinner actually makes it to heaven? And the crowds of believers will go wild! Joe! Joe! Joe! Joe! Let me show you your place next to Jesus. Let me give you a tour of your mansion. Joe! Joe! Joe! Joe! I'm not

joking. That's your welcome party to heaven. I know you can't see it. But can you see it? Can you see it, for all eternity? Can you fix your eyes on it?

But how will I ever get there? I'm a sinner! God has a solution. It's in verse fifteen. Undeserved love. We often call that grace. I know you can't see grace either. And I can't draw a picture of undeserved love. But this undeserved love covers all your sins so God can't see them, doesn't see them and God isn't fixing his eyes on the sins he can't see. God is fixing his eyes on grace he can see. This grace is always more than enough. Always more than needed. It's not that I've done 10,000 sins in my lifetimes and God's grace covers 10,001 and so I better not get the counter to 10,002. There's always more than enough grace. There's always more undeserved love. That love spreads to more and more people. It's why some brave missionaries came to Verona to preach God's grace. It's why some brave missionaries went to Mt. Horeb, to preach God's grace. It's why we are working with believers in Monroe, to spread God's grace to more and more and more and more people, so that the chorus of thanksgiving in heaven we can't see will be greater and greater and also so the chorus of thanksgiving on earth, which we can see and hear, will be greater and greater and bring more and more and more and more glory and honor to God!

I know we can't always see that chorus getting bigger. I know the believers in Mt. Horeb and Monroe aren't right in front of us. But we fix our eyes on what we can't see. We have to let God lift our eyes away from the visible, to the invisible. Take yourself as an example. What you can see is an outer shell, a body, dying. We don't need to mention too many examples to make the point. Glasses getting thicker? Waistline getting thicker? Hair getting thinner? Legs getting slower? But there's an inner self, a soul, you can't see. God is always making that inner self new, day by day. Our inner self, our soul, is always being made new, by God, day by day. Right now, you are listening to God's Word. God is renewing your soul, today. People so often tell me, "I feel so good after I come to church." That's because the Spirit is working here to renew your soul. But it doesn't have to just be here. Read your Bible. Day by day. And your soul will be renewed. Read the Meditations devotion. And your soul will be renewed. Day by day. There's a two minute time of Grace video you can get emailed to you. Day by day. Think of all the things you do for your outer shell, your body, day by day and that shell is dying. You can't prevent it. You can't keep your body from dying. But God's Word can keep your soul from dying. God's Word will renew that soul, day by day by day.

And when that soul is renewed, then your eyes will be fixed to have the perspective of Paul, remember Paul, the guy who was whipped and beaten and stoned and still called his troubles few, light, easy, short time, no sweat? Yeah. That's what he calls it. Our light load of trouble, which lasts only a short time. I know when you are in the midst of those troubles, it's hard to see them as a light load of trouble, which lasts only a short time. The week I studied for and wrote this sermon, started out like one of those weeks. Yeah, Pastor has them too, don't really want to get out of bed. Don't feel like doing much. Everything seems to go wrong. Until the day I studied this part of the Bible. And God renewed my inner self. And God put my eyes back where they belong, on the tremendous amount of glory and honor that will last forever. The tremendous amount of glory and honor that will last forever. What are problems of this earth, compared to eternity? How big is a problem when you think about heaven? How heavy is a trouble, compared to the weight of glory we will wear in heaven? There is no comparison. The tremendous amount of glory and honor that will last forever? It's greater than anything we can imagine. It's beyond beyond. This eternal glory is above and beyond above and beyond.

But what about when mom dies. Who would call that, "Easy, short, light, no sweat, a light load of trouble?" There's something hard and heavy you can see when mom dies. No doubt. Mom is gone. I

won't see her again. On this earth. But you see, there's something you can't see. There's a tremendous amount of glory and honor for us that will last forever. For your believing mother went to heaven. Your believing mother is with Jesus. I know you can't see mom next to Jesus. I know you have to picture in your mind mom resting in the arms of Jesus. But she's there. And it's that heaven mom lived for. It's that heaven you are living for. I know you can't see it. But you have to fix your eyes on what you can't see. Fix your eyes on what you can't see. I know we look at people based on what we can see. Go to a wedding and people think and say, "What a lucky guy. She's so pretty." What if she were ugly, but had strong faith in Jesus you can't see, had God's undeserved love renewing her every day on the inside and she was spreading that undeserved love to more and more people? Would that be a beautiful bride? We say, "He has a good job." And we usually mean, "makes a lot of money we can see. And so he can buy nice things, we can see." But what if his job made very little money, but renewed the inner self of countless people, day by day? What if his job stirred up a greater chorus of thanksgiving to God? What if his job kept the eyes of people fixed on the things you can't see, things that are eternal, forgiveness of sin, faith, life in heaven? Wouldn't that be the best job? Wouldn't we see that as the greatest job, the job that fixed our eyes on the things we can't see? Fix your eyes on the things you can't see. Amen.