

What Saith the Scripture?

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from the series
Stories of Faith

Paul The Christian Hero

"Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the Will of God,
according to the Promise of Life which is in Christ Jesus...
Fight the good fight of FAITH, lay hold on Eternal Life,
whereunto thou art also called,
and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses...
For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ,
not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake;
having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me"
(2Timothy 1:1; 1Timothy 6:12; Philippians 1:29-30).

Taken from the book,
"Heaven: Where It Is, Its Inhabitants, and How to Get There"

by the LORD's faithful servant,

[D. L. Moody](http://www.WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/D.L.Moody.html)

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Annotated with "bulleted" Scriptures and reformatting by Katie Stewart

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The way to get to heaven is to be saved through faith in Jesus Christ.

We get salvation as a gift, but we have to work it out, just as if we got a gold mine for a gift.

I do not get a crown by joining the church, or renting a pew.

- (Ephesians 2:8) "For by grace are ye saved through FAITH; and that not of yourselves: it is the Gift of God."
- (Romans 6:23) "The Gift of God is Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our LORD."
- (2 Corinthians 9:15) "Thanks be unto God for His Unspeakable Gift."
- (Ephesians 3:7) "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the Gift of the Grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His Power."

There was Paul. He won his crown. He had many a hard fight; he met Satan on many a battle-field, and he overcame him and wore the crown. It would take about ten thousand of the average Christians of this day or any other to make one of Paul. When I read the life of that Apostle, I blush for the Christianity of the nineteenth century. It is a weak and sickly thing.

- (1 Corinthians 9:16-17, 19-27) "16 For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for **necessity** is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel! 17 For if I do this thing **willingly**, I have a reward... 19 For though I be free from all men, yet have **I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more**. 20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the Law, as under the Law, that I might gain them that are under the Law; 21 to them that are without Law, as without Law, (being not without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without Law. 22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: **I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some**. 23 And **this I do for the Gospel's sake**, that I might be partaker thereof with you. 24 Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. 25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an **incorruptible**. 26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: 27 but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

See what he went through. He five times was scourged. The old Roman custom of scourging was to take the prisoner and bind his wrists together and bend him over in a stooping posture, and the Roman soldier would bring the lash, braided with sharp pieces of steel down upon the bare back of the prisoner and cut him through the skin, so that men sometimes died in the act of being scourged. But Paul says he was scourged five different times. Now if we should get one stripe upon our backs what a whining there would be; there would be forty publishers after us before the sun went down, and they would want to publish our lives, that they could make capital out of them. But Paul says,

"Five times received I forty stripes, save one." [2Corinthians 11:24].

That was nothing for him. Take your stand by his side.

- (1 Timothy 6:12) "Fight the good fight of FAITH, lay hold on Eternal Life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."
- (1 Timothy 1:19) "Holding FAITH, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning FAITH have made shipwreck."
- (Matthew. 6:20) "Lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven."

"Paul, you have been beaten by these Jews four times, and they are going to give you thirty-nine stripes more; what are you going to do after you get out of the difficulty? What are you going to do about it all?"

"Do?" says he. "I will do this one thing; I will press toward the mark for the prize of my high calling [Philippians 3:14]; I am on my way to get my crown."

He was not going to lose his crown.

"Don't think that a few stripes will turn me away; these light afflictions are nothing."

- (2 Corinthians 4:17) "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

And so they put on thirty-nine more stripes.

He had sprung into the race for Christ, as it were, and was leaping toward heaven. If you will allow me the expression, the devil got his match when he met Paul. He never switched off to a side-track. He never sat down to write a letter to defend himself. All the strength that he had he gave to Christ. He never gave a particle to the world nor to himself to defend himself.

"This one thing I do," [Philippians 3:13] he said, "I am not going to lose the crown."

See that no man take your crown.

- (Revelation 3:11) "Behold, I come quickly: **hold that fast** which thou hast, that no man take thy Crown."

"Thrice beaten with rods." [2 Corinthians 11:25]

Take your stand again beside him.

"Now, Paul, they have beaten you twice, and they are going to beat you again. What are you going to do? Are you going to continue preaching? If you are, let me give you a little advice. Now, don't be quite so radical; be a little more conservative; just use a little finer language, and, so to speak, cover up the cross with beautiful words and flowery sentences, and tell men that they are pretty good after all; that they are not so bad, and try and pacify the Jews; make friends with them, and get in with the world, and the world will think more of you. Don't be so earnest; don't be so radical, Paul; now come, take our advice. What are you going to do?"

"Do?" he says, "I do this one thing--I press toward the mark of the prize of my high calling." [Philippians 3:14].

So they put on the rods, and every blow lifts him nearer God.

Take your stand with him again. They begin to stone him. That is the way they killed those who did not preach to suit them.

It seems as if he was about to be paid back in his own coin, for when Stephen was stoned to death,

Paul, then known as Saul, cheered on the crowd.

"Now, Paul, this is growing serious; hadn't you better take back some of the things you have said about Jesus? What are you going to do?"

"Do?" he says, "if they take my life I will only get my crown the sooner."

He would not budge an inch. He had something that the world could not give; he had something it could not take away; he had eternal life, and he had in store a crown of glory.

- (Isaiah 28:5) "In that day shall the LORD of Hosts be for a **Crown of Glory**, and for a **Diadem of Beauty**, unto the residue of His people."
- (Isaiah 62:3) "Thou shalt also be a **Crown of Glory** in the hand of the LORD, and a **Royal Diadem** in the hand of thy God."
- (1 Peter 5:4) "And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a **Crown of Glory** that fadeth not away."

THESE LIGHT AFFLICTIONS.

Three times was he shipwrecked; a day and a night in the deep. Look at that mighty apostle, a whole day and night in the deep. There he was--shipwrecked, and for what? Was it to make money? He was not after money. He was just going from city to city, and town to town, to preach the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, and to lift up the cross wherever he had opportunity. He went down to Corinth and preached eighteen months, and he didn't have a lot of the leading ministers of Corinth to come on the platform and sit by his side when he preached. There was not a man who stood by him. When he reached Corinth he had none of the leading business men to stand by him and advise him; but the little tent-maker arrives in Corinth a perfect stranger, and the first thing he does is to find a place where he can make a tent; he does not go to a hotel; his means will not allow it; he goes where he can make his bread by the sweat of his brow. Think of that great apostle making a tent, and then getting on the corner of a street and preaching, and perhaps once in a while he would get into a synagogue, but the Jews would turn him out; they did not want to hear him preach anything about Jesus the Crucified.

When I read of the life of such a man, how I blush to think how sickly and dwarfed Christianity is at the present time, and how many hundreds there are who never think of working for the Son of God and honoring Christ.

Yet when he wrote that letter back to Corinth, we find him taking an inventory of some things he had. He is rich, he says,

"In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren." [2 Corinthians 11:26].

This last must have been the hardest of all.

- (1 Thessalonians 2:19) "For what is our hope, or joy, or **Crown of Rejoicing**? Are not even **ye** in the presence of our LORD Jesus Christ at His Coming?"
- (Philippians 4:1) "Therefore, **my brethren**, dearly beloved and longed for, **my joy and crown**, so stand fast in the LORD, my dearly beloved."

"In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often; in hunger and thirst, in fastings often; in cold, in nakedness; and besides those things that are without, the care of all the churches." (II Cor. xi, 26-28.)

These are only some of the things that he summed up. Do you know what made him so exceedingly happy? It was because he believed the Scripture; he believed the Sermon on the Mount. We profess to believe it; we pretend to believe it; but few of us more than half believe it. Listen to one sentence in that sermon: "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven," [Matthew 5:12] when you are persecuted. Now persecution was about all that Paul had.

That was his capital, and he had a good deal of it; he had laid by a good many persecutions, and he was to get a great reward Christ says: "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven." If Jesus Christ spoke of it as "great" it must be indeed wonderful. We call things great that may look very small to Jesus Christ; and things that look very small to us may look very large to Him. When the great Christ, the Creator of heaven and earth, He who formed the heavens and the earth by His mighty power, when He calls it a great reward, what must it be?

Perhaps some people said to the Apostle to the Gentiles:

"Now, Paul, you are meeting with too much opposition; you are suffering too much."

Hear him reply:

"Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." [2 Corinthians 4:17].

"Our light affliction," he calls it. We would have called it pretty hard, pretty heavy, would we not?

But he says:

"These light afflictions are nothing; think of the glory before me, and think of the crowning time; think of the reward that is laid up for me. I am on my way; the Righteous Judge will give it to me when the time comes;"

and that is what filled his soul with joy; it was the thought of reward that the Lord had in store for him.

Now, my friends, let us just for a minute think of what Paul accomplished. Think of going out, as it were, among the heathen; the first missionary to preach to these men, who were so full of wickedness,

so full of enmity and bitterness, the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, and to tell them that the man who died outside the walls of the city of Jerusalem the death of a common prisoner, a common felon, in the sight of the world, was the promised Christ; to tell them that they had to believe in that crucified Man in order to enter the kingdom of God. Think of the dark mountain that rose up before him; think of the opposition; think of the bitter persecution, and then think of the trifles in our way.

- (Romans 8:18) "For I [Paul] reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

SONGS IN PRISON.

But a great many worldly people think Paul's life was a failure. Probably his enemies, when they put him in prison, thought that would silence him; but do you know that I believe to-day Paul thanks God more for prisons, for stripes, for the persecution and opposition that he suffered, than for anything else that happened to him here?

- (2 Corinthians 12:9-10) "And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My Strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the Power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take **pleasure** in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

The very things we do not like are sometimes the very best for us.

Christians probably might not have these glorious Epistles, if Paul had not been thrown into prison. There he took up his pen and wrote letters to the Christians in Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Coloss, and to Philemon and Timothy. Look at the two Epistles that he wrote to the Corinthians. How much has been done for the world by these Epistles. What a blessing they have been to the church of God; how great a light they have thrown on many a man's life. But we might not have had those Epistles if it had not been for persecution.

- (Philippians 1:20-30) "20 According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also **Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.** 21 **For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.** 22 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. 23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, **having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:** 24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is **more needful for you.** 25 And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; 26 that your rejoicing may be **more abundant in Jesus Christ** for me by my coming to you again. 27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the FAITH of the Gospel; 28 and **in nothing terrified by your adversaries:** which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of Salvation, and that of God. 29

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake; 30 having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me."

Perhaps John Bunyan blesses God more to-day for Bedford jail than anything that happened to him. Probably we would not have the [Pilgrim's Progress](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Stories/Bunyan.Pilgrims.Progress.html) -- it he had not been thrown into that prison. Satan thought he accomplished a great deal when he shut up Bunyan for twelve years and six months; but what a blessing it was to the world; and I believe Paul blesses God to-day for the Philippian jail, and for the imprisonment he suffered in Rome, because it gave him time to write those blessed letters. Talk of Alexander making the world tremble with the tread of his armies, and of Csar and Napoleon's power, but here is a little tent-maker, who, without an army, turned the world upside down.

Why?

Because God Almighty was with him.

Paul says in one place:

"None of these things move me." (Acts xx, 24.)

They threw him in prison, but it was all the same; it did not move him. When he was at Corinth and Athens preaching, it made no difference. He just "pressed toward the mark of the prize of his high calling." [Philippians 3:14]. If God wanted him to go through prisons to win the prize, it was all the same to him. They put him in prison, but they put the Almighty in with him, and Paul was so linked to Jesus that they could not separate them. He would rather be in prison with Christ than out of prison without Him. He would a thousand times rather be cast into prison with the Son of God and suffer a little persecution for a few days here, than to be living at ease without Him.

- (James 1:12) "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the **Crown of Life**, which the LORD hath promised to them that love Him."
- (Revelation 2:10) "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: **be thou FAITHful unto death**, and I will give thee a **Crown of Life**."

He heard the cry, "Come over into Macedonia and help us."

- (Acts 16:12) "From thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days."

He went over and preached, and the first thing that happened to him was that he was put into the Philippian jail. Now, if he had been as faint-hearted as most of us, he would have been disappointed and cast down. There would have been a great complaint. He would have said: "*This is a strange Providence; whatever brought me here? I thought the Lord called me here; here I am in prison in a*

strange city; how did I ever get here? How will I ever get out of this place? I have no money; I have no friends; I have no attorney; I have no one to intercede for me, and here I am."

Paul and Silas were not only in prison, but their feet were made fast in the stocks. There they were, in the inner prison, a dark, cold, damp dungeon. But at midnight the other prisoners heard a strange sound. They had never heard anything like it before. They heard singing. I do not know what song those two imprisoned evangelists sang, but I know one thing, it was not "a doleful sound from the tombs." You know we have a hymn, "Hark, from the tombs a doleful sound." They did not sing that, but the Bible tells us they sang praises. That was a queer place to sing praises, was it not?

- (Acts 16:23-26) "23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: 24 who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. 25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. 26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed."

I suppose it was time for the evening prayers, and that they had just had their evening prayer and then sang their evening hymn. And God answered their prayers, and the old prison shook, and the chains dropped, and the prison doors were opened. Yes, yes; I have no doubt that in glory he thanks God that he went to jail and that the Philippian jailer became converted.

- (Acts 16:27-34) "27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. 28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. 29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, 30 and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31 And they said, Believe on the LORD Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. 32 And they spake unto him the Word of the LORD, and to all that were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. 34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."
- (Romans 10:9) "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the LORD Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

SWEPT INTO GLORY.

But look at him at Rome. Nero has signed his death warrant. Take your stand and look at the little man. He is small; in the sight of the world he is contemptible (II Cor. xii, 10); the world frowns upon him. Go to the palace of the king and talk about that criminal-- about Paul-- and you will see a sneer on their countenances.

- (2 Corinthians 12:10) "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in

necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

"Oh, he is a fanatic," they say; he has gone mad."

I wish the world was filled with such fanatics. I tell you what we want to-day is a few fanatics like him; men who fear nothing but sin and love no one but God.

- (Philippians 1:6) "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a Good Work in you **will** perform it until the Day of Jesus Christ."
- (Philippians 2:12-13) "Wherefore, my beloved, as **ye have always obeyed**, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own Salvation** with fear and trembling. **For it is God which worketh in you** both to will and to do of His Good Pleasure."

Rome never had such a conqueror within her walls. Rome never had such a mighty man as Paul within her boundaries. Although the world looked down upon him, and perhaps he looked very small and contemptible, yet in the sight of heaven he was the mightiest man who ever trod the streets of Rome. Probably there will never be another one like him traveling those streets. The Son of God walked with him, and the form of the Fourth was with him. But go into that prison; there he is; officials come to him and tell him that Nero has signed his death-warrant. He does not tremble; he is not afraid.

- (1 John 4:18) "There is no fear in Love; but perfect Love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in Love."

"Paul, are you not sorry you have been so zealous for Christ? It is going to cost you your life; if you had to live it over again, would you give it to Jesus of Nazareth?"

What do you think the old warrior would reply?

- (Romans 8:37) "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

See that eye light up as he says:

"If I had ten thousand lives I should give every one of those lives to Christ, and the only regret I have is that I did not commence earlier and serve Him better; the only regret I have now is that I ever lifted my voice against Jesus of Nazareth."

- (Galatians 2:20) "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the FAITH of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

"But they are going to behead you."

"Well, they may take my head, but the Lord has my heart. I care nothing about my head; the Lord has my heart and has had it for years. They cannot separate me from the Lord, and when my head is taken off, I shall depart to be with Christ, which is far better.
[Philippians 1:23]"

And they led him out. I do not know at what hour; perhaps it was early in the morning. There is a tradition tells us that they led him two miles out of the city. Look at the little tent-maker as he goes through the streets of Rome with a firm tread. Look at that giant as he moves through the streets. He is on his way to execution. Take your stand by his side and hear him talk. He is talking of the glory beyond.

He says:

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. I shall see the King in His beauty to-night. I have longed to be with Him; I have longed to see Him. This is the day of my crowning."

- (2 Timothy 4:8) "Henceforth there is laid up for me a **Crown of Righteousness**, which the LORD, the Righteous Judge, shall give me at that Day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His Appearing."

The world scoffed at him, but he did not heed its scoffing. He had something the world had not; burning within him he had a love and zeal which the world knew nothing about. Ah, the love that Paul had for Jesus Christ! But, oh, the greater love the Lord Jesus had for Paul!

- (Matthew 27:29) "And when they had platted a **Crown of Thorns**, they put it upon His Head, and a reed in His right hand: and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!"

The hour has come. The way they used to behead them in those days was for the prisoner to bend his head, when a Roman soldier took a sword and cut it off. The hour had come, and I seem to see Paul, with a joyful countenance, bending his blessed head, as the soldier's sword comes down and sets his spirit free.

- (Philippians 1:23) "Having a **desire** to depart, and **to be with Christ**; which is FAR better:"

If our eyes could look as Elisha's looked, we might have seen him leap into a chariot of light like Elijah; we would have seen him go sweeping through limitless space.

Look at him now as he mounts higher and higher; look at him, see him move up; up--up--up--ever upward.

Look at him yonder!

See! He is entering now the Eternal City of the glorified saints, the blissful abode of the Savior's redeemed. The prize he so long has sought is at hand. See the gates yonder; how they fly wide open.

See the herald angels on the shining battlements of heaven. Hear the glad shout that is passed along, "He is coming! He is coming!" And he goes sweeping through the pearly gates, along the shining way, to the very throne of God, and Christ stands there and says:

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." {Matthew 25:21}.

- (Psalm 21:2-6) "2 **Thou hast given him his heart's desire**, and hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah. 3 For Thou preventest him with the blessings of **goodness**: Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head. 4 He asked **Life** of Thee, and Thou gavest it him, even length of days **for ever and ever**. 5 His glory is great in Thy Salvation: honour and majesty hast Thou laid upon him. 6 For Thou hast made him most blessed for ever: Thou hast made him exceeding glad with Thy countenance."

Just think of hearing the Master say it. Will not that be enough for everything?

O friends, your turn and mine will come by-and-by, if we are but faithful. Let us see that we do not lose the crown. Let us awake and put on the whole armor of God;

- (Ephesians 6:11,13) "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil... Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

let us press into the conflict; it is a glorious privilege; and then to us too, as to the glorified of old, will come that blessed welcome from our glorified Lord:

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

THE END

"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to FAITHful men, who shall be able to teach others also"

(2 Timothy 2:2)

"Fight the good fight of FAITH,
lay hold on Eternal Life,
whereunto thou art also called,
and hast professed a good profession
before many witnesses.

Laying up in store for themselves
a good foundation
against the time to come,
that they may lay hold on Eternal Life"

(1 Timothy 6:12,19).

