

Even the wisest amongst us has to scratch his head with the ideology of how, how can I survive this moment? I know I'm strong, I know I'm tough, I know I'm resilient, I know I'm committed, but how can I withstand the turbulence of this moment? You must understand that when we delve into the complexities of this text and we dare to hear the Apostle Paul speak, he is not speaking something he saw on Instagram, he's not picking up a quote from Twitter and running with it.

This is a man who has suffered and been beaten, this is a man that's been left for dead, this is a man who has wounded in such a way that the lacerations against his skull caused the crowd to think he was dead. And after they all walked away, thinking he was nothing but a corpse, he got his bloody body up off the ground and walked away and then he said, "For I reckon". It is it's not so much the rest of the text that I want to grapple with, I wanna have grapple with the, "For I reckon". I reckon is a term that it almost sounds country to me.

I grew up in West Virginia and when people would be talking and you wanted to respond to

them, and you say, "Well, I reckon". I reckon, it made you sound country, it made you sound hillbilly, it made you sound out of sorts. And I know that this King James Bible that I'm holding couldn't be written in West Virginia or down in Mississippi where my grandparents come from where they'd say, "I reckon it's over yonder, I reckon it's across the street, I reckon it's around the store". I reckon, where did this term come from that the Apostle Paul who is intelligent beyond human comprehension would use such a word? Certainly he just not using it as my cousins and my friends did playing in the school yard, "For I reckon".

What does he mean by reckon? Reckon speaks to reasoning, it speaks to rationale, it speaks to trying to understand, as Marvin Gaye would say, "Tell me what's going on? What's going on"? I have to admit, 2020 has left me scratching what hair I don't have trying to figure out what is going on, and I struggle with the word reckon, so I had to look it up. And it says *logizomai* in the Greek, where we get *logos*, it means in the sense of an account or reckoning, and then I begin to understand that reckoning is not a country term, reckoning is an accounting term,

an accounting term, where we reconcile the books.

And isn't that what we all want to do with our suffering and with our pain and with our life? Is find some kind a way to make sense out of it, to make purpose out of it. If I had to lose my daughter, why? I have to make this pain makes sense. There's not one amongst us with a grain of intelligence at all that hasn't spend a moment trying to audit our own lives and try to figure out why did I have to go through that? Why was I abused at a vulnerable age? Why didn't my father and mother leave me? Why did I move from house to house? Why did I grow up in foster homes? I wonder why?

I reckon, I reckon, I reckon means I'm wrestling trying to reconcile what in the world is going on in my life, I reckon means I'm trying to figure out why am I dealing with what I'm dealing with like I'm dealing with it when I'm dealing with it. This is not the time for

me to be going through pain and yet I do not always get to pick the moments that I hurt, that I suffer, that I cry, that I wail, that I lose. I don't get to pick the weapons that are used against me or the rocks that are thrown at me, or the ships that fall apart, or the dogs that attack me. I don't get to pick my own story, I reckon. I reckon.

There have been moments in my own life that I had to sit down, get all by myself, get quiet, make everything shut up for a minute and just try to reckon. It is at this moment of deep reflection that we are allowed by the Holy Spirit to hear one of the greatest orators and thinkers of our time grappling with the ideology of how do I make sense out of life? This is the Apostle Paul trying to figure out what's it all about Alfie, what's going on? Tell me what's going on, I reckon. This is the Apostle Paul who tells us that when he went to Asia he was so overwhelmed that he went into a state of depression and wanted to die, this is not some whimsical upstart motivational speaker who's trying to give us a good feeling.

This is somebody who is acquainted with grief and sorrow and injustice and misunderstanding and pain and turmoil of such consequence that when they didn't kill him he thought about killing himself. For I reckon, how did he find the strength to get up when the stones had knocked him down, and how did he find the strength to overcome depression when he felt like caving in and giving up his own life, and how did he find the strength to resist the shame of being laughed at by his own fellow scholars because he dared to believe in Jesus? He was an intellect and their laughter was more painful than the stones at Lystra, how did he find the courage to go on when everybody was talking about him?

It must be hidden, not in his manuscript, not in his preaching, but the audit that goes on in his head when he says, "For I reckon". How you reckon about a thing determines how you deal with it, how you overcome it, how you withstand it, how you persevere. Whatever you reckon determines your direction, whatever you reckon determines whether you lay there and play dead

or get up and fight again, whatever you reckon determines whether you forgive or whether you spend the rest of your life hating somebody who went on with their life. What what are you reckoning with, how are you reconciling the books so that you can have the peace to go forward?

A young man who had been with me almost since the inception of my ministry periodically came along down through the years as he followed me, and he would ask me in a private moment, "Was it worth it"? And the question that he asks me, depending on the time that he asked it elicited a different type of response. Most of the time I responded, I'd love to tell you I responded, "Oh yes, it was worth it", but for years and years, I said, "I don't know yet, I'm not sure, I'm still reckoning". If you happen to ask me at a time that I was in great pain or great suffering or great denial, "Was it worth it"?

I didn't know how to answer him because I hadn't finished auditing the books, I was still, still trying to get everything in the right column and make sense out of it, and I was still trying to compute the cost, how much

it costs to be me. I wasn't sure it was worth it, I knew he was trying to ask me so he could determine his own life's course and I was supposed to say, oh yes, it was worth it, but I dropped my head, and I said I'm still thinking about it.

The liability of the stage, was it worth it? The viciousness of people, was it worth it? The expectations of those who admire you who put you on pedestals that they could never live up to and then knock you down for fun, I wasn't sure it was worth it. The inability to be saved from amongst your own clergy, I wasn't sure it was worth it, you're never enough, if you go down, you're not low enough, if you go up, you're up too a high, I don't know, was it worth it? I do not know what I'm... Don't judge me. Don't you judge me. Was it worth it? I don't know, I didn't know, I wasn't sure, I wasn't sure.

Like you go into the accountant's office and you say, "Am I good to go"? and they're still in the middle of the audit, and I had to tell the young man, "I am still in the middle of the audit". I'm 40, and I'm still in the middle of the audit. I'm 45, and I'm still in the middle of the audit. I'm 50 years old and I'm still in the middle of the audit. And some of you out there are going through some things in your life, in your marriage, in your marriage, in your marriage, in your finances, in your company, with your children, and I know you would never tell anybody what you're reckoning but deep down inside, you're wondering was it worth it?

And we serve a God who demands that we always have something left and some of you haven't got to that something left because you're in the liability stage. And when you're in the liability stage everything's going out and nothing's coming in and it looks like God is not fair, but if you stay where you are and endure hardness as a good soldier, after a while, the same soldiers, the same police officers who hit you in the head will escort your body back because if you hold out long

enough you will rise again undaunted, and the same people who watch you be crucified will watch you be resurrected, and the same people who watch you go down will watch you come back up again.

It is that that the Apostle Paul talks about... Oh, God, I feel the Holy Ghost. It is that that he's talking about. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time". He said you caught me at a bad moment, this present time is crazy, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time". I reckon that the mask on our faces and our inability to meet, and our inability to touch the people in our own family, I reckon that the pain we endure and jobs that we lost, and the funerals that we had to stand back from the family, I couldn't hug my own members. I reckon that the suffering of the people who stood outside the hospital in the parking lot watching their parents die on FaceTime, the sufferings of this present time.

This present time is a tough time, it's ripping marriages apart, it's ripping ministries apart, it's ripping businesses apart. The sufferings of this present time is a liability stage but you cannot have liabilities and not eventually accrue assets, and that's what this text is all about. It's crawling through the liabilities till you get to the assets, oh my God, like the woman with the issue of blood. I'm crawling and bleeding, I'm crawling and hurting, I'm crawling and embarrassed and ashamed, and I'm crawling while they're whispering about me, and I'm crawling where even the law is against me but I'm crawling on.

He asked me was it worth it, and I knew what I was supposed to say, but he asked me while they were beating me with billy clubs, and he asked me while they were nailing me to a tree, and he asked me while the rocks were being thrown up against my head and I couldn't think straight, so I said, "I don't know yet".

Somebody I'm talking to right now, you don't know yet, so I thought I would bring before you this morning somebody who had already been through it. And unless you've been stoned half

to death and snake-bitten and sailed on ships that shipwrecked and you had to float across on broken pieces, unless you have spent years locked up in a cold grotto in a cave in a jail cell begging for a coat, then whatever else you're suffering with cannot compare to the testimony of the Apostle.

For the man that I bring before you today, he endured all of that and he was still thinking about it, "For I reckon". I reckon I stood over my mother's grave, and I reckoned. I stood in the hospital with her trying to make sure she understood the difference between me and my brother, and I reckoned. I watched my baby girl give birth to a baby boy, and I reckoned. There are moments in your life where you're still counting it all up and I came to tell you don't stop counting because God won't be satisfied until your assets outweigh your liabilities, God won't stop until your assets outweigh your liabilities.

I came to tell you that the sufferings of this present world are not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed not on us. Not our jewelry, not our watches, not our car, but

the glory in us is a direct result of the sufferings of this present time and that's why I tell hell it was good for me that I was afflicted. If I had not been afflicted I wouldn't have the power to stand where I'm standing right now. It was good for me that people didn't help me, it was good for me that I had to crawl through the crowd to touch the hem, it was good for me, made me better, made me wiser, made me stronger, made me tougher, made me more resolute, that I ain't gonna let no devil just have what God gave me.

I have paid too much to get where I am right now, it was good for me that it didn't come easy. It was good for me that I had to sweat for it and crawl for it and pray for it and do without to get it because it made me appreciate it. My God is a God of profit, my God is a God of profitability, he is a God of what you got left. While over and over again in the Scriptures, we see God dealing not just his profits and losses and assets and liabilities, but over and over again we see a God who thinks about profit, "I won't just give you enough oil to pay off your debts, I'll give you enough or that you can live off of the rest. I won't just

take your two fish, five loaves of bread and feed the 5.000, I'll give you such profit you'll have 12 baskets full left and your problem will be how can we get this back home? I am not just a God that opens up the windows of heaven but I'll pour you out a blessing you don't have room enough to receive, I am a God of profitability".

And every time he ran into one of his servants that were not profitable he cursed them for being an unprofitable servant. I came to tell you this Sunday morning that God's gonna get something out of your agony, and God's gonna get something out of your pain, and God's gonna get something out of your loneliness, and God's gonna get something out of your distress, and God's gonna get something out of your despair, and God's gonna get something out of every tear that you ever shed in your life, and God is going to reap something out of your childhood, and God is gonna bring something out of your pain and your forlornment and your depression and your confusion. For I reckon. I reckon, I reckon.

So I wanna challenge you to do an audit on your life and judge nothing before its time, but judge the righteous judgment, and the righteous judgment takes time. It took me years to answer that question. Finally, as I got older and my hair got white, I walked up to him one day and I said, "It was worth it". I didn't answer that the first decade, I didn't answer it the second decade. Finally I came along and said, "It was worth it". For the glory that shall be revealed in us is so worth it.

I'm almost closing here, but I want you to understand that Paul did not start this text out talking about suffering, and he didn't start it out talking about this present time, and he didn't start it out talking about I reckon. He started it out telling me that I was a joint heir with Christ, that I was an heir with Christ in God, that I had an inheritance laid up for me, that there was something that God was going to give me that was so beyond me, that I was a joint heir, not just an heir but a joint heir with Jesus.

Can you imagine being a joint heir with Jesus Christ? A joint heir means everything he

inherits I inherit it too. Good God Almighty. And because he knew that he was an heir of God, and a joint heir with Jesus Christ, he had to throw that into the audit. He had to throw into the audit that if God be for you, he's more than the world against you. Had to throw it in the audit that there is no sickness in Jesus and there is no failure in Jesus, and there is no pain in Jesus, and there is no despair in Jesus. That if I am a joint heir with Jesus, then I reckon that the sufferings. "The sufferings of this present world are not worthy to be compared".

I should just knock the scale over, there's no comparison. There is no comparison between what God has for you and what you are going through. I'm going to say that again, there is no comparison, it doesn't even measure out what God has for you in comparison to what you're going through. So I want to tell you right where I am today that weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning. And I want to challenge you, don't count in a vacuum of emotional despair or intellectual complexities, don't count it in the vacuum of one season in your life, don't count it by the rocks they

throw at you, don't count it by the snake that bit you, don't count it by the marks in your body, keep on counting till you come to a profit.

If you keep on counting God will open up the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing you won't have room enough to receive. If you keep counting, after a while he'll make your enemies your footstools. If you keep on counting, he won't just make you a conqueror, he'll make you more than a conqueror. If you keep on counting. If you keep on counting, he'll turn the whole thing around. If you keep on counting, he'll bring you out on top. If you keep on counting, the last shall be first, the tail will be the head. If you keep on counting, you'll get up and walk away healed while Jesus is trying to figure out who touched me, you'll walk away healed if you keep on.

I got to count it all up, I got to count it all up, I got to count it, I got to count it, I gotta count it all up. Devil, I ain't through counting, devil I'm not through counting. I won't stop counting till I get everything God promised me, I won't stop counting until I

become the head and not the tail, I won't stop counting until he baptizes me in wisdom and glory. I won't stop counting till I get to the end of my story, and I reckon that the sufferings of this present world.

I'm preaching to every suffering saint watching me right now, keep counting. This season will pass, this moment of inconvenience will pass, this season of shame and disgrace will pass, this season of mockery will pass. The hoses will run out of water, and the policemen will run out of blows, and the crowd will run out of rocks, and you'll still be standing if you count it all up. Stand there and count it all up until God vindicates you, count it all up till you get a crown for everything you went through, count it all up until God sets before you an open door, count it all up until the child that broke your heart comes back to wipe your head, count it all up until those who said you were a nobody want to be mentored by you. Just keep on counting till you count it all up.

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