

## Lenten Devotional March 24, 2018

### Scripture

#### 2 Corinthians 4:13-18

<sup>13</sup>But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture—"I believed, and so I spoke"—we also believe, and so we speak, <sup>14</sup>because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence. <sup>15</sup>Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. <sup>16</sup>So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup>For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, <sup>18</sup>because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

### Devotional

#### Dr. Scott Hagley, Assistant Professor of Missiology

In one of his broadcasts of the radio show "A Prairie Home Companion," Garrison Keillor tells a story about a young boy who grows up believing he has royal bloodlines. Shortly after the boy's father left him and his mother, we are told, the boy began receiving anonymous letters claiming the family's connection to Scandinavian royalty. The promise offered in the letters sustains the child throughout the insecurities of childhood and buffers him from fears of abandonment. His unseen identification with royalty enables him to endure all kinds of hardship with peace and equanimity.

In 2 Corinthians, Paul reflects on the different challenges faced by him and his companions for the sake of the gospel. They, too, are vulnerable and have every reason for fear. But Paul has entrusted himself to Jesus Christ and has a gospel-shaped imagination. His sufferings share in the death of Christ and place him at the mercy of the resurrection power of God: "we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us with Jesus, and bring us with you into his presence" (verse 14).

As with the boy in Garrison Keillor's story, identification reframes Paul's experiences so that what is hidden—his life in Christ—can re-narrate what is visible—his present circumstances . . . but with one large difference: Paul's hope stems not from anonymous letters, but from the real presence of Christ in the Spirit and through the grace poured out on the community of Christ.

#### Prayer (adapted from Psalm 43:3)

Creator God,

Send out your light and your truth;  
let them lead me;  
let them bring me to your holy hill  
and to your dwelling.

In the name of Jesus Christ,  
raised from the dead;  
and by the power of your Spirit,  
Amen.