> “So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.”
>
> *— 2 Corinthians 4:12 (NIV)*

The Apostle Paul presents a profound paradox in this verse — that while he and his fellow ministers endure suffering, hardship, and even the threat of death for the sake of the gospel, the fruit of their suffering is *life* for others.

To understand this, let us consider an illustration: picture a lamb being led to the slaughterhouse. Within that lamb, death is already at work — in a matter of moments, its life will end. Yet, for those who partake of its meat, the result is nourishment and sustenance — *life*.

We could then say: death is at work in the lamb, but life is at work in those who eat of it.

This illustration mirrors the very image Scripture uses to describe

God’s servants — especially the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the ultimate example of a sacrificial Lamb.

> “He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth;
> he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
> and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
> so he did not open his mouth.” — *Isaiah 53:7 (NIV)*

Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, willingly embraced death — not for His own sins (for He had none), but for ours. Through His suffering, death, and resurrection, He secured eternal life for all who would believe in Him.

> “But he was pierced for our transgressions,
> he was crushed for our iniquities;
> the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
> and by his wounds we are healed.” — *Isaiah 53:5 (NIV)*

Without His wounds, there would be no healing. Without His

sacrifice, there would be no salvation. His death worked in Him, so that *life* might be at work in us.

In the same way, all who follow Christ are called to walk in His footsteps — not merely enjoying the benefits of His sacrifice, but also sharing in His sufferings, for the sake of others.

> “For your sake we face death all day long;
> we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” — *Romans 8:36 (ESV)*

Every time we endure rejection, opposition, persecution, or sacrifice for the sake of spreading the gospel, death is at work in us — but it is producing life in those who hear and believe.

Ministry, at its heart, is sacrificial. Paul’s statement in 2 Corinthians 4:12 is a declaration of pastoral love: “We suffer, so that you might live.” True gospel ministry will often cost the servant dearly — emotionally, physically, and even socially — yet the fruit is life, transformation, and salvation in others.

This truth calls every believer to a higher level of commitment. We must be willing to give of ourselves — our time, comfort, resources, and even our very lives — so that others may receive the eternal life that we ourselves have received in Christ.

> “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.
> And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.” — *1 John 3:16 (NIV)*

This kind of sacrificial love is not just admirable — it is foundational to the Christian life. It is how the early church grew. It is how revival spreads. It is how Christ is glorified.

May we, therefore, embrace this divine paradox: that through our willingness to die to ourselves — to our comfort, our will, and even our safety — others may find eternal life.

Maranatha — the Lord is coming!

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