

2 Corinthians 11:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

Analysis

In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Five more categories of suffering focus on physical deprivation and exhaustion: *en kopō kai mochthō* (ἐν κόπῳ καὶ μόχθῳ, 'in labor and toil')—overlapping synonyms emphasizing exhausting work. *En agrypniaiis pollakis* (ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις πολλάκις, 'in sleeplessness often')—vigilance from danger or work preventing rest.

In hunger and thirst (*en limō kai dipsei*, ἐν λιμῷ καὶ δίψῃ)—involuntary deprivation from poverty or travel. **In fastings often** (*en nēsteiaiis pollakis*, ἐν νηστείαις πολλάκις)—voluntary spiritual discipline or forced by circumstances. **In cold and nakedness** (*en psychei kai gymnōtēti*, ἐν ψύχει καὶ γυμνότητι)—exposure to elements, inadequate clothing.

The cumulative effect is devastating: Paul's life involved relentless physical hardship—exhausting labor, sleepless nights, hunger, thirst, fasting, cold, insufficient clothing. This was daily reality, not occasional crisis. The repeated *pollakis* (πολλάκις, 'often') underscores frequency. This is the lifestyle of someone who 'became poor that ye through his poverty might be rich' (8:9), following Christ's own pattern.

Historical Context

Paul's tentmaking trade (Acts 18:3) involved manual labor to support himself. This, combined with extensive ministry, left little time for sleep. Travel on foot through varying climates without modern conveniences meant exposure to hunger, thirst, cold, and inadequate shelter. Paul's voluntary poverty for the gospel's sake meant enduring deprivation wealthy false teachers avoided.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's daily experience of hunger, cold, exhaustion, and sleeplessness challenge prosperity gospel claims that God always grants health and wealth to the faithful?
2. In what ways might modern ministry's professionalization and comfort insulate us from the suffering Paul considered normal for apostolic work?
3. What would it mean to embrace voluntary poverty and physical hardship for gospel advance rather than seeking financial security first?

Interlinear Text

ἐν	κόπῳ	καὶ	μόχθῳ	ἐν	ἀγρυπνίαις	πολλάκις	ἐν	
In	weariness	and	painfulness	In	watchings	often	In	
G1722	G2873	G2532	G3449	G1722	G70	G4178	G1722	
λιμῷ	καὶ	δίψῃ	ἐν	νηστείαις	πολλάκις	ἐν	ψύχει	καὶ
hunger	and	thirst	In	fastings	often	In	cold	and
G3042	G2532	G1373	G1722	G3521	G4178	G1722	G5592	G2532
γυμνότητι·								
nakedness								
G1132								

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 6:5 (Parallel theme): In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;

1 Thessalonians 2:9 (Parallel theme): For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

Philippians 4:12 (Parallel theme): I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

2 Thessalonians 3:8 (Parallel theme): Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:

Hebrews 11:37 (Parallel theme): They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

Acts 14:23 (Parallel theme): And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

Jeremiah 38:9 (Parallel theme): My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon; and he is like to die for hunger in the place where he is: for there is no more bread in the city.

1 Corinthians 7:5 (Parallel theme): Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

2 Corinthians 11:23 (Parallel theme): Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.