

## Sermon 1: God's Gracious Design: 2 Corinthians 4:3-6

**Text: 2 Corinthians 4:3-6** "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ..."

**Summary:** God has graciously called His church out of darkness to give the light of the gospel to the world through them.

**Proposition:** We must submit to His call and take the gospel to the world.

**Interrogative:** How should we follow this call?

**Truth 1: The world is blind: 4:3-4** "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not..."

- **Four Basic descriptions:**

- **Ignorant:** "Our gospel be hid"

- **The gospel is good news, and they are ignorant of this good news: Ephesians 1:3-9** "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ...in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace...he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace...he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself..."

- **The world does not know these wonderful truths:**

- **Romans 1:21-22** "Their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools..."

- **Proverbs 4:19** The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble..."

- **Lost:** "To them that are lost"

- **They are on a journey stumbling in the darkness:**

- They do not understand who they are
      - They do not understand why they are here.

- They do not understand where they are going.
- They are on a journey leading to eternal destruction and misery:
- **Blinded:** "Whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds..."
  - **Their minds and affections are darkened**
    - **Romans 1:24** "God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves..."
    - **Romans 1:26** "God gave them up unto vile affections..."
  - **They have embraced Satan's deception: Ephesians 2:2** "Walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience..."
- **Unbelieving:** "Them which believe not..." **Romans 10:1-4** "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved...they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth..."
- **Satan actively works to deceive people keeping them in darkness:**

**Truth 2: The gospel is light: 4:4** "Lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them..."

- **First: The light of the gospel is their only hope: Isaiah 9:2** "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined..."
  - Darkness needs to be replaced by light.
  - Death needs to be replaced with life.
- **Second: Christ is the center of that message: John 1:9-13** Christ "Was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God..."
  - He is the true Light.
  - He illuminates every person.
  - Those who receive Him are His children by spiritual birth.

**Truth 3: Christ is Lord: 4:5** "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake..."

- **First: The gospel is about Christ the Lord, not about us:**
  - "We preach not ourselves..."
  - "But Christ Jesus..."
- **Second: He is the Lord whether He is acknowledged or not:**

"Christ Jesus the Lord..."

  - **Isaiah 45:22-23** "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear..."
  - **Philippians 2:7-11** Christ "Made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father..."
- **Third: We have embraced Him as the Lord and should submit to Him as our Lord:** "Your servants for Jesus' sake..."
  - **"Your servants:"**
    - **1 Corinthians 4:10-13** "We are fools for Christ's sake...we are weak...we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace...being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day..."
    - **1 Corinthians 9:22-13** "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. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you..."
  - **"For Jesus' sake:"**

**Truth 4: The church is called: 4:6** "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ..."

- **In this text:**

- **A universal command:** "God...commanded the light to shine out of darkness..."
- **An experiential grace:** "Hath shined in our hearts..."
- **An objective commission:** "To give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ..."
- **Last Week: Romans 10:8-19**
  - **A universal Promise: Romans 10:12-13** "The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved..."
  - **A universal Principle: Romans 10:14-17** "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God..."
- **The Apostle Paul: Acts 26:16-18** "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things...To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me..."
- **The question is not if we are called, but rather how God has fitted us to follow this call.**

#### **Application:**

- **First: We must have a renewed assessment of the world.**
  - Ignorant
  - Lost
  - Blind
  - Unbelieving
- **Second: We must have a renewed sense of the gospel's power.**
  - It is the world's only hope.
  - It is entirely about Christ.
- **Third: We need to practically submit to Christ's lordship.**
  - He is the Lord no matter what people think of Him.
  - We must relate to Him as our Lord.
- **Fourth: We must personalize God's calling.**
  - **General Call:** Every Christian is called to be personally engaged in this great ministry.
  - **Specific Applications:**
    - Burning passion for God's glory
    - Unique gifts
    - Seasonal opportunities
    - A specific location