

12/30/12

2Cor. 4

Paul declared his utmost confidence in the ministry of grace, the New covenant, that replaced the Old covenant by way of being its fulfillment.

The Old Testament revelation was progressive and climaxed in the New Testament, in, by and through the person of Jesus Christ.

* The common saying is that New is concealed in the Old and the Old is revealed in the New.

Every believer should read the Old and New Testament every year to be growing in the life of the Spirit.

4:1-6 The message and messenger of the gospel.

4:1 The firm conclusion of Paul regarding the ministry of the New covenant.

- 1) The conclusion is based on the contrast between the Old and New covenant that causes them to always triumph. 2Cor. 2:12-3:18
- 2) The conclusion is based on having received this ministry. Acts 9, Gal. 1
- 3) The conclusion is based on having received mercy, "eleo" pity and compassion. 2Cor. 3:5-6

* In view of all this do not lose heart or get discouraged even when people do not respond to the gospel favorably!

2Cor. 4:16a

4:2 The honorable manner described by Paul described in their preaching of the gospel.

- 1) They had renounced the hidden things of shame, referring to the things of dishonesty and disgrace as many others who know not God.
- 2) They were not walking in craftiness, referring to cunning plans to catch men with bait.
- 3) They were not handling the word of God deceitfully, referring to adulterating the word with human thought or opinion.
- 4) But instead they were manifesting the truth of the gospel.
 - a) Commending themselves to every man's conscience.
 - b) In the sight of God.

4:3-4 The acknowledgment of Paul that the gospel is not always accepted.

- 1) But when and if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. vs. 3
- * In other words the fault is not of the gospel nor of God but the choice of the individual. 2Cor. 3:14-15

- 2) Satan is the one who is blinding the minds of men and women. vs. 4
- a) The word for minds refers to the thoughts and perceptions of man.
 - b) Satan is called the god of this age, the period of evil during the age of man, till Christ returns to set up His kingdom.
 - * This title is only found this one time in the New Testament.
 - c) He is called the ruler of this world, the prince of the power of the air, the evil one and described as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Jn. 12:31; 14:30; Eph. 2:2; 1Pet. 5:8
 - d) He continues to blind those who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.
 - * The word image is used for a figure or likeness. Matt. 22:20; Col. 1:15

4:5 The faithfulness of Paul confessed in the imparting the message entrusted to Him by Jesus.

- 1) He and those with him were not preaching themselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord.
 - a) He was the Messiah prophesied to come. Is. 61:1

- b) He was the incarnation of God. Jn. 1:1, 14; Phil. 2:5-11
- c) He was Lord of all or not at all.
- 2) He and those with him were the bondservants of the Corinthians.
 - a) They as the bond servant of the Old Testament did it of their own free will out of love for them.
 - b) They did it for the sake of Christ, implying their love for Him.

4:6 The entire work of salvation ascribed by Paul to be of God alone.

- 1) Salvation is as impossible as the act of calling light out of darkness.
- 2) He alone saved us by shining the light of the gospel in our hearts.
- 3) He alone enabled us to be able vessels to impart the knowledge of the glory of God, the gospel.
- 4) He alone imparts it in the face of Jesus Christ as opposed to the veiled face of Moses. 2Cor. 3:14-16

4:7-15 The paradox of the messenger and the message.

4:7 The frailty of the vessel and the power of the gospel pointed out by Paul.

- 1) The believer in contrast to those who are perishing have this treasure of the gospel

deposited in this earthen vessel for those who believe.

- a) The ministry of the Spirit. 2Cor. 3:8
 - b) The light of the gospel. 2Cor. 4:4
 - c) The knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 2Cor. 4:6
- 2) The believer's frailty of a common clay pot is contrasted to the precious value of the deposit, the gospel.
- a) The analogy was a common one of the day, as a person would hide something of value in a clay vessel, the gospel being the more valuable.
 - b) Paul was said to be a chosen vessel by God. Acts 9:15
 - c) For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? 1Cor. 4:7
- 3) The sole purpose of God was that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of man.
- a) That mankind would be impressed and admire the power of God to save sinner, through frail yielding clay vessels.
 - 1) The phrase excellence of the power "huperbole dunamis" means to throw beyond all measure of inherent power by virtue of the

divine nature of the gospel and Holy Spirit.

- 2)) The word "of", "ek" not out from us literally.
 - 3)) God's grace was sufficient to make His strength perfect through weakness, so Paul boasted in his infirmities, that the power of God might rest on him. 2Cor. 12:9
- b) Not that people be impressed with the vessel.
- 1)) The false teachers were criticizing Paul saying he was weighty and powerful in his letters, but in bodily presence weak and in speech contemptible. 2Cor. 10:10
 - 2)) The power of the gospel in a weak vessel is beautifully illustrated in Gideon clay pots. Judges 7
- 4:8-10** The personal proof of the power of God by Paul is the ministry of the Spirit.
- * This long list of hardships is in view of the false accusations of the false teachers against Paul of living an easy life.
- 1) We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed. vs. 8a-b
 - a) This is the first of four paradoxical contrast, due to the power of God.
 - b) The four participles are in the present tense of what constantly goes on,

Pressed to the limits, but not compressed.

- c) Jesus said, “I am with you always, even to the end of the world.” Matt. 28:20
- 2) We are perplexed, but not in despair. vs. 8c-d
- a) There is a word play, the second is the stronger of the two, perplexed, but not thoroughly perplexed, therefore not loosing heart. 2Cor. 4:1, 16a
- b) God always showing the way of escape. 1Cor. 10:13
- 3) We are persecuted, but not forsaken. vs. 9a-b
- a) The word persecuted “diokomenoi”, means to make to run or flee, chasing someone, but never abandoned.
- b) This took place as soon as he was born again, in Damascus, Antioch of Pisidia to Iconium, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, etc. Acts 9:24; 2Cor. 11:32-33
- c) Committing self to God as a faithful Creator in sufferings. 1Pet. 4:19
- 4) We are struck down, but not destroyed. vs. 9c-d
- a) He and Silas were beaten, imprisoned for casting out a demon from a young woman and asked to leave the city. Acts 16:14-40

b) J. B Phillips paraphrase!

- 1)) The 8 participles are progressive in severity.
- 5) They were always recipients of hatred, rejection and violence for preaching Jesus. vs. 10a
- a) The phrase carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, refers to the similar suffering Jesus experience.
- b) The word dying “nekrosis”, is the noun expressing the action, the putting to death of Jesus.
- c) The marks of Christ, Paul bore. Gal. 6:17
- 6) The purpose and reason was that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in their body. vs. 10b
- a) That sinners might see the example of Jesus in and through them, denying self. Matt. 16:24
- b) That Jesus may live through them. Gal. 2:20
- 4:11-12** The sufferings experienced were due to being vessels of Jesus.
- 1) They were always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake by choice. vs. 11a
- a) Due to their identity with Jesus.
- b) Due to preaching Jesus as Lord and Savior.

- 2) The purpose or reason was that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. vs. 11b
- a) The divine super-natural power of God sufficiency for protection and endurance.
- 1)) Paul was stoned at Lystra. Acts 14:19-20
 - 2)) Paul revealed his near-death experience in Asia. 2Cor. 1:8-11
 - 3)) The other list of sufferings. 1Cor. 4:11-13; 2Cor. 6:3-10; 11:23-27; 12:10
- b) But our mortal flesh, indicates our decaying body that is destined to die one day!
- 1)) Every human is dying and will die physically one day.
 - 2)) It is appointed unto man to die once and after this the judgment. Heb. 9:27
- 3) The ultimate goal and plan of God was to manifest sacrifice of love for the benefit of others. vs. 12
- a) Death works in us, the apostles and anyone preaching the gospel.
 - b) But life in you, the Corinthians, who received the gospel or anyone else.”
 - 1)) “We are killed all the day long.” Rom. 8:36

- 2)) Paul says, “I die daily.” 1Cor. 15:31
 - 3)) Paul wanted to know the fellowship of Jesus sufferings. Phil. 3:10
 - 4)) The sufferings were for the sake of Christ. Col. 1:24
- c) Paul is used parallelism from verse 10-12, between Christ and them, them and the Corinthians.
- 4:13-15** The confident trust is based on the assurance of the resurrection.
- 1) The quote by Paul is from the Psalmist in his confidence and trust in God for deliverance from death. vs. 13
 - a) They have the same spirit of faith, as David, having confidence in God through the difficulties of life. Ps. 116:10
 - b) They believe, as David.
 - c) They speak what they believe, the gospel.
 - d) The Corinthians and Paul both know God and are his servants.
 - 2) The assurance of Paul is based on the fact that their faith, belief and speech was based on absolute confidence in the fact that God will raise them up. vs. 14
 - a) God the Father raised Christ first.

- b) God the Father would raise up Paul and his companion, if they died.
 - c) God the Father would raise up the Corinthians. 1Cor. 15:1-8, 20-23; 2Cor. 1:8; 1Thess. 4:14
 - d) They would all be present together at the resurrection.
- 3) The benefit Paul says is for the Corinthians. vs. 15
- a) That grace having spread through the many who heard and partook of the gospel.
 - b) That these might give thanks in abundance to the glory of God for their salvation, in response to the gospel.

4:16-18 The perspective through the power of the gospel.

4:16 The confirmation of Paul's conclusion.

- 1) He and the others conclude they do not loose heart becoming discouraged with all the hardships of the ministry since they had been given and enable for the ministry and the certain hope of be raised from the dead.
 - a) They did not faint or become discouraged if people rejected the gospel. vs. 1

- b) If they were persecuted for the gospel. vs. 8-9
 - c) If they were put to death. 2Cor. 1:8-9
- 2) He takes hold of the reality of this life regarding the outward and the inner man.
- a) The outward man is the physical and temporal existence of our being, which wears and tears as a tent through used and abuse. 1Pet. 1:6-7
 - b) The inner man is the new creation of God by His Spirit, which is being transformed and renewed through the word, prayer and obedience on an ongoing basis, in true righteousness and holiness. Is. 40:31; 2Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10

4:17 The insight of Paul in the Spirit by comparison.

- I) The light afflictions are but for a moment. vs. 17a
 - a) As difficult and painful as they were to Paul he is assessing them from the perspective and comparison of temporal time to eternity.
 - b) Physical persecution, even death by decapitation is light compared to eternal life with Jesus.
 - c) Eighty years in comparison to eternity is a moment.

- 2) The eternal weight of glory being worked out for us a far more exceeding than we can imagine. vs. 17b
- a) The word working “katergazomai”, is present tense, continuous.
 - b) The phrase more exceeding “huperbole”, means to throw beyond, we get our word hyperbole from it which is used to describe in an exaggerated manner, while not being literal, such as, “He was fast as lightning”.
 - c) The magnitude of recompense and benefit is beyond the imagination, “eternal weight of glory”, the idea being of weight and fullness.

4:18 The disciplined focus of Paul on life on a daily basis.

- 1) The priorities of life are on the things that are not seen, the spiritual things of God. Heb. 11:13
* The word look “skopeo”, means to take aim, to gaze.
- 2) The physical things are transient and temporal and spiritual things are eternal, so we do not allow the material things to distract or deceive us regarding the spiritual priorities of life. Heb. 11:6, 12:2

- a) The phrase “not seen”. “blepo” means to perceive, indicating the invisible things of faith.
- b) We must enter the kingdom of God through many hardships. Acts 14:22