

12/9/12

The Gospel of The New Covenant
2Cor. 4:1-6

Paul the apostle has laid out masterfully the obsolescence of the ministry of the Old covenant and the absoluteness of the ministry of the New covenant, disarming the attack by the Judeaizer against his ministry.

So Paul declared his absolute confidence in the ministry of the new covenant to save the sinner, based on three things:

- I. The gospel being effective in those preaching. vs. 1-2
- II. The gospel being ineffective to those rejecting the preaching. vs. 3-4
- III. The gospel being effective through those imparting the preaching. vs. 5-6

I. The gospel being effective in those preaching. vs. 1-2

A. The apostle Paul declared the effectiveness of the gospel based on the proper understanding of the Old and New covenant. vs. 1

- 1. Paul stated his confident conclusion based on recognizing the superiority of the New covenant over the Old. vs. 1a-b

* “Therefore, since we have this ministry.”

- a. In view of what had been said, this is the only logical conclusion of the two covenants! 2Cor. 3:7-18
 - 1) The word therefore “*dia*”, means for this reason, on this account or on these evidence.
 - 2) The distinct contrasts of the two covenants.
 - 3) The distinct glory of the one over the other.
 - 4) The distinct temporalness of the one over the permanence of the other. 2Cor. 3:7-14, 1:12-3:18
- b. In view of the fact that we were entrusted with this ministry. vs. 1b
 - 1) The ministry “*diakonia*”, the office of a servant of the New covenant grace, in contrast to the ministry of the Old covenant of the law.
 - 2) Appears 13 times in the epistle , 4 times in verse 7-9 of chapter three.
 - 3) The sufficiency as ministers by the Spirit that gives life, not of the letter that kills. 2Cor. 3:6a-b
 - 4) The ministry of the Spirit that is more glorious. 2Cor. 3:8
 - 5) The ministry of righteousness that exceeds much more glory. 2Cor. 3:9b

- 6) The ministry of liberty or freedom. 2Cor. 3:17
- 7) The ministry of unveiled faces beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord. 2Cor. 3:18a-b
- 8) The ministry that transforms people into the image of Jesus by the Holy Spirit. 2Cor. 3:18c-d
- c. In view of the fact of the inferiority of the Old covenant.
 - 1) The Old covenant is called the ministry of death because it demanded perfection. 2Cor. 3:7a
 - 2) The Old covenant is called the ministry of condemnation, accusing man as guilt. 2Cor. 3:9a
 - 3) The Old covenant is called one that was passing away or being made obsolete. 2Cor. 3:7e, 11a, 13b
 - 4) The law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, He fulfilled it. Gal. 3:24
- 2. Paul stated his confident conclusion based on recognizing they were entrusted with this ministry of the New covenant, the gospel having by mercy. vs. 1c
 - * “as we have received mercy.”
 - a. The word mercy “eleeo” as we have often come across means pity and compassion to one who can not help him or herself.

- b. They were poor and unable to do this ministry with the Old covenant. 2Cor. 3:10-11
- c. They were unable to do this ministry in and of themselves. 2Cor. 3:5
- 4. Paul stated his specific confident conclusion was in view of all these facts, so they were not dissuaded in carrying out the New covenant ministry of the gospel. vs. 1d
 - * “we do not lose heart.”
 - a. The phrase loose heart “ekakeo”, means to become faint, discouraged or spiritless in the preaching the gospel.
 - 1) Even though it looked like they would not always triumph, they would when God was leading. 2Cor. 2:14
 - 2) Even though they were a fragrance of Christ, an aroma of death to those who rejected the gospel and an aroma of life to those who believed the gospel. 2Cor. 2:15-16
 - 3) Even though there were hucksters of the gospel at Corinth accusing them of being hucksters. 2Cor. 2:17
 - 4) Even though they were being attacked about having no letters of commendation. 2Cor. 3:1-3

- 5) Even though they were being accused of trusting in themselves. 2Cor. 3:4-6
- 6) Even if it cost them their lives, they would not lose heart, though their outward man was perishing, yet the inward man was being renewed day by day, for they were looking to be resurrected! 2Cor. 4:7-16
- b. The plural pronoun is used by Paul.
 - 1) Three times the plural “we” appears in verse one.
 - 2) The reference is to Paul, Silas, Timothy and Titus.
 - 3) This would also apply to any one at Corinth preaching the gospel!

B. The apostle Paul declared the effectiveness of the gospel is based on the preaching of the gospel with godly integrity. vs. 2

* The apostle Paul expresses this from the negative and the positive.

- 1. Paul used the negative characteristics to affirm their blamelessness. vs. 2a-b
 - a. They had renounced a life of duplicity. vs. 2a
 - * “But we have renounced the hidden things of shame.”
 - 1) Paul, Silas and Timothy had been transformed by the gospel.

- 2) They had renounced “apeipomen”, means to put away, give up and forbid themselves, found only this time in this form.
- 3) The hidden things of shame “kruptos aishune”, referring to those things that are kept secret and concealed by men from the public that are dishonest and disgraceful, as they execute the ministry to the Spirit!
- b. They were not being deceptive in their methods. vs. 2b
 - * “not walking in craftiness.”
 - 1) The word craftiness “panourgia” means cleverness, cunningness in evil.
 - 2) The word is used for the deception of Eve by Satan! 2Cor. 11:3
- c. They were not twisting or misusing the gospel. vs. 2b
 - * “nor handling the word of God deceitfully.”
 - 1) The phrase handling deceitful “doloo”, is to decoy or adulterate the word so as to catch with bait.
 - 2) Paul will use it and the previous word again, “But be that *as it may*, I did not burden you. Nevertheless, being crafty “panourgos”, I caught

- you by cunning “dolos” 2Cor. 12:16
2. Paul used the positive characteristics to confirm their godliness. vs. 2c
 - a. They were proclaiming the pure gospel. vs. 2c
 - * “but by manifestation of the truth.”
 - 1) They were manifesting the gospel by preaching it.
 - a) The word truth “aletheia”, refers to what is truth in any matter.
 - b) The word is being used for the gospel of the New Covenant.
 - 2) He has referred to the gospel by many other terms.
 - a) Diffusing the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. 2Cor. 2:14b
 - b) Speaking from God, in the sight of God, in Christ. 2Cor. 3:15c-d
 - c) Ministers of the New covenant. 2Cor. 3:6a
 - d) The revelation of God’s righteousness. 2Cor. 3:9
 - b. They were manifesting the truth of the gospel to every man to judge. vs. 2c
 - * “commending ourselves to every man’s conscience.”
 - 1) The word commending “sunisteemi”, means to place

- together, to set one against another.
- 2) In other words they were preaching the gospel and their life example to confirm and approve the message they were preaching.
 - 3) Appearing five more times. 2Cor. 6:4, 7:11, 10:18 (2x’s), 12:11
 - a) In presence, “For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.” 2Cor. 1:12
 - b) In letter, “For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand. Now I trust you will understand, even to the end.” 2Cor. 1:13
 - c. They were manifesting the truth before the ultimate judge. vs. 2c
 - * “in the sight of God.”
 - 1) The One who knows all things, even the intents of the heart.
 - 2) “For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.” 2Cor. 2:17e

Illustration

In 1752 Whitefield wrote to Benjamin Franklin; “As I find you growing more and more famous in the world of letters I recommend to your unprejudiced study the mystery of the new Birth. It is a most important study and if mastered will abundantly repay you. I bid you, dear friend, remember that He before whose bar we must both soon appear has solemnly declared that without it we shall in no wise see His Kingdom. #5280

Application

1. There are always those who will try to bring you into some form of bondage, in attempt to reveal your righteousness, but that is not the gospel.
 - a. By asceticism, legalism or mysticism, etc. Col. 2:17-23
 - b. Gentile believers who join Messianic churches, at times think they are superior.
2. There are many today who handling the word of God deceitfully merchandising the people of God. 1Tim. 4:1, 2Pet. 2:1-3
 - a. Attempting the latest trendy things in the church to attract more people.
 - b. Declaring they are improving the gospel.
3. There are those as Paul, called and enabled by God to care for His flock and do so.
 - a. Regardless of the response of the people.
 - b. Regardless of the attacks on the ministry.

* “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.” 1Pet. 5:2-4

The gospel must be effective first in those preaching!

II. The gospel being ineffective to those rejecting the preaching. vs. 3-4

- A. The apostle Paul declared that the ineffectiveness of the gospel is not due to the inferior quality of the gospel. vs. 3a

* “But even if our gospel is veiled.”

 1. Paul admits that even when they preach the gospel with clarity and integrity, some times the gospel remains veiled to the hearer and not converted.
 - a. The word veil “kalupto”, means to cover or hide.
 - 1) Four times is used for the inferior ministry of Moses. 2Cor. 3:13-16
 - 2) The veil hid the glory of God on the face of Moses that fades away, indicative of being temporary, to

- be replaced by fulfillment through Jesus Christ.
- b.** The clear teaching is unmistakable.
 - 1) The symbol of the veil is after the same order of the Jew regarding Moses. 2Cor. 3:13
 - 2) The veil is said to be on the heart, hardness. 2Cor. 3:15
 - 3) The veil is used by Paul as a impediment to the Jew reading the Old Testament, keeping them from embracing the gospel that can only be done away in Christ. 2Cor. 3:14, 16
 2. Paul called the gospel “our gospel”.
 - a.** He makes himself and others who proclaim the gospel one with the gospel.
 - 1) The gospel made them born again.
 - 2) The gospel transformed them.
 - 3) The gospel gave them a living and sure hope.
 - b.** He makes himself and the others one with God.
- B.** The apostle Paul declared the ineffectiveness of the gospel is due to the quality of the hearer. vs. 3b
 * “it is veiled to those who are perishing.”
1. Paul identified those to whom the gospel is veiled, those who are perishing.

- a.** He was being accused of preaching of gospel mysterious or hidden, which was untrue!
 - b.** He said those perishing are those leading to death, eternal death. 2Cor. 2:16a
 - c.** He said those who are perishing are those who have a veil over their hearts to believe that Jesus is the only way to be saved. 2Cor. 3:16
 - d.** He said those perishing are those who, if they die physically without excepting Jesus and repent of their sins, they will be instantly in hell, being under the wrath of God. Jn. 3:36
2. Paul is not saying that the gospel is veiled to them by God, but by their own choice.
 - a.** The word perishing “apollumi”, means to be lost, ruined or destroyed.
 - 1) Lenski the Greek Scholar says this, “This is the substantivized present participle describing them as being in the act of slowly perishing, going into everlasting death.”
 - 2) This is not due to the irrevocable decree of God of predestination and election, for that would make God unloving, unkind and unholy.

- b.** Twice he uses the perfect passive tense.
- 1) Literally, “having been veiled” and now “remains veiled”.
 - 2) This is due to the hardness of the heart to the preaching of the gospel and rejecting it.
 - 3) The perishing is their own doing, not God’s.
 - a) God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. 2Pet. 3:9d
 - b) God does not violate man’s free-will, but whosoever believes in Jesus shall be saved. Jn. 3:16

C. The apostle Paul declared the ineffectiveness of the gospel is due to the hindrance of Satan. vs. 4

1. Satan is called the god of this age. vs. 4a
 - a. The word god “theos” is used in the sense of a ruler, not in the sense of equal to God.
 - b. Satan is a created being, Lucifer, the Cherub of heaven who rebelled against God and threatened to overthrow Him. Is. 14, Ezk. 28, Rev. 12:4
- c. Satan is identified by many other titles.

- 1) Jesus said, “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out, the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.” Jn.12:31, 14:30
 - 2) Paul called Satan, “The prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience. Eph. 2:2
 - 3) John tells us that, “The whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. 1Jn. 5:19
- d.** Satan’s rule is in this age “eon”.
- 1) The word refers to the marked out period of man in his fallen state and Satan’s activity.
 - 2) The age stands in opposition to the age to come when Jesus will set up His kingdom.
 - 3) The Jews always referred to the present age, the evil present age and the age to come of the Messiah.
2. Satan has and is blinding the minds of the unbeliever, men and women. vs. 4a-b

* “whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe.”

 - a. The word for minds “noema” refers to the thoughts and mental perception.
 - 1) The word is found in this form six times in the New Testament.

- 2) Five are found in this letter. 2Cor. 2:11, 3:14, 4:4, 10:5, 11:3
- b. The ability of Satan is not to rob the gospel of its power or glory, but only to blind men to the gospel preached by attacking their thoughts by:
- 1) The lust of the flesh.
 - 2) The lust of the eye.
 - 3) The pride of life.
- c. The attempts of Satan to blind the minds of sinners never against the will of man.
- 1) They are given illumination and conviction by the Holy Spirit when hearing the gospel.
 - 2) They are responsible for their own blinding by not accepting the gospel, due to the hardness of heart.
3. Satan's purpose for blinding men is that they not believe the gospel and be saved. vs. 4c-e
- a. Satan works to keep men and women from seeing the majesty of Jesus. vs. 4c
- * "lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ."
- 1) The gospel is light "photismos", the act of enlightening, illuminating the sinner of being lost in sin.

- 2) The glory "doxa" of Christ, the magnificence, excellence, preeminence, Kingly majesty as Messiah.
- 3) Particularly the Jew, for Jesus is the fulfillment of all the Old Testament.
- b. Satan works to keep men and women from seeing the deity of Jesus. vs. 4d
- * "who is the image of God."
- 1) The word image "eikon" means figure of likeness.
 - 2) The word is used of the image of Caesar on a coin. Matt. 22:20
 - 3) The word is used of Jesus, as the visible form of the invisible God. Col. 1:15
- c. Satan works to keep men and women lost. vs. 4e
- * "should shine on them."
- 1) The word "shine" "augazo" means to beam upon or irradiate, found only this time in the New Testament.
 - 2) The meaning is clear to save them from their sins.
 - 3) That they not continue to perish and ultimately perish for all eternity.

The parable of the Sower illustrates what Paul is teaching to the Corinthians, as Satan snatches “harpozo” away the seed before it can be planted in the heart. Matt. 13

Application

1. The Scriptures tell us that Satan is like a roaring lion, walking about and seeking whom he may devour. 1Pet. 5:8
 - a. How does the blinding of Satan, the sovereignty of God, as He initiates salvation through the gospel and man’s free-will work together?
 - b. Paul tells Timothy God uses preaching and teaching, “And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will. 2Tim. 2:24-26
 - c. Paul tells Timothy God uses prayer, particularly for the unbeliever in authority, for God desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. 1Tim. 2:1-4
2. There are Christians who use the phrase to bind Satan when they pray, especially for the lost.

- a. Yet the passages that contain the expression “to bind and loose” in the KJV, if they are examined they will reveal the context to be foreign to such an interpretation. Matt. 12:29, 16:19, 18:18
- b. The passages deal with authority over demon possession, the authority of Peter for the Day of Pentecost and for church discipline.
- c. The terms were used by the Jews for allowing and disallowing, permitting and not permitting.
- d. When God initiates salvation He gives man the ability to choose or He would be the author of confusion and unjust.
- e. When God initiates salvation, man can resist the gospel of his own free will or by the blinding of Satan, leading to death.
- f. What part does prayer play in salvation if man is being blinded by Satan and how is God’s business?
 - 1) The responsibility to pray for the lost is not only commanded, but should be our desire by the love of Christ that is to constrain us.
 - 2) The leading of God in our lives to pray for a particular lost can be the way God will enable that individual to respond to the gospel, but it will never violate his or her free-will.

* Ongoing resistance and rejection of the gospel by individual can result in the same condition as the Jews, they **could not believe** due to their ongoing hardening of their hearts! Jn. 12:39

3. The simple truths to keep in mind regarding the lost are important.

- a. For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Heb. 4:12
- b. The heart of man is the problem, even as the Spirit of God repeats after ever message to the seven churches, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is says”. Rev. 2-3
- c. Satan is literally “the lie” and the father of it and he will always be attempting to deceive the lost.
 - * “You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and *does not* stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it. Jn. 8:44

The gospel will be ineffective to those rejecting the preaching!

III. The gospel being effective through those imparting the preaching. vs. 5-6

- A. The apostle Paul declared the gospel is effective by pointing sinners to Christ. vs. 5a
 - 1. The proclamation of the gospel is not centered on any human person.
 - * “For we do not preach ourselves.”
 - a. Paul says that they did not preach themselves, Paul, Timothy, Titus or any other person.
 - b. Paul had rebuked the Corinthians in his first letter for their party splits of which he had been chosen as head, of Paul, Cephas, Apollos and of Christ. 1Cor. 1:12
 - 2. The proclamation of the gospel is centered on Jesus. vs. 5b
 - * “but Christ Jesus the Lord.”
 - a. The word “but” stands in sharp contrast to Paul and his fellow-workers.
 - b. Jesus is the One whom they preach, the human Incarnation of God, whose name means “Yahweh is salvation”, the Greek translation of the Hebrew name Joshua.
 - 1) The word preach “kerusso”, means to herald and used of one who was hired by the king to make all public proclamations!

- 2) The message was not his, but given to him.
 - 3) The authority to proclaim was not his own, but vested to him!
 - 4) The responsibility for the response of the people was not his, only the proclamation!
- c. Jesus, whom they preach is the Christ or Messiah, the One promised from the beginning of time, as Lord literally, not simply that He is Lord. Gen. 3:15, Is. 7:14, Mic. 5:2
- 1) He is the One who tells us how to live.
 - 2) He directs and guides our lives.
 - 3) He is the One we depend on for everything.
- B.** The apostle Paul declared the gospel is effective by being a servant of sinners and saints. vs. 5c
- 1. Paul stated they were servants of the gospel to the Corinthians.
 - * “and ourselves your bondservants.”
 - a. He included as he has throughout the passage the plural pronoun “ourselves”.
 - 1) Paul, Silas, Timothy and Titus.
 - 2) And all others that worked with him at Corinth.

- b. He identified himself and the others as bondservants.
 - 1) The word bondservant “douloi” means a servant by choice not compulsion.
 - 2) The Old Testament bondslave was one who desired to serve his master for life, usually on the seventh year of his release.
 - 3) He was taken to the door of the masters house and his ear was pierced to the door post to place an earring, as a mark of his devotion to serve him for life by choice.
- 2. Paul stated their service to the people was in view of Jesus. vs. 5c
 - * “for Jesus’ sake.”
 - a. The preacher is to be the servant of the people.
 - 1) Too often this is not the case today.
 - 2) Too often those in ministry want to be served, rather than to serve.
 - 3) Jesus called them “hirelings”. Jn. 10:12-13
 - b. The preacher is the servant of the people out of his love for Jesus.
 - 1) Because Jesus loves His people.
 - 2) Because Jesus is honored and gloried in and through the service.
 - 3) Because Jesus is their example.

C. The apostle Paul declared the gospel is effective only by God. vs. 6

1. Paul stated salvation is a Divine work, as at the creation of the world. vs. 6a
 - * “For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness.”
 - a. He recalled the feat at creation that was beyond any human capacity, yet God did it by His very command and therein is the parallel that we dare not miss, salvation is God’s creative act alone by His Spirit.
 - b. Paul recalled how there was darkness upon the face of the deep and the Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters. Then God said, Let there be light”, and there was light. Gen. 1:2-3
2. Paul stated they were saved by the Divine work of God in order to preach to others the gospel of salvation. vs. 6b
 - a. God gave Paul, Silas and Timothy an opportunity to hear the gospel.
 - * “who has shone in our hearts.”
 - 1) The light of the gospel shone “lampo” to give light in their hearts.
 - 2) Exposing the darkness of their deceitful and desperately wicked hearts, revealing their sins and lostness. Jer. 17:9

- 3) Their believing and acceptance of the gospel removed the veil from their hearts, as they heard the Old Testament Scriptures. 2Cor. 3:16
- b. God did this Divine work in them in order for them to preach the gospel to other sinners.
 - * “to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.”
 - 1) Imparting the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.
 - 2) The phrase is synonymous with the gospel, the message of salvation that bring glory “doxa” to God.
 - 3) This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. 1Jn. 1:5
- c. God does this Divine work only through His Son. vs. 6b
 - * “in the face of Jesus Christ.”
 - a. The Old covenant through Moses was obsolete, due to the fact that it was prophetic of Jesus and now fulfilled.
 - * The Jews could not look steadily at the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away. 2Cor. 3:7, 13
 - b. The New covenant through Jesus was absolutely required revealing the

glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ for sinners to be saved.

* The Christian with an unveiled face beholds as in a mirror the glory of the Lord and is being transformed into the same image of Christ, from glory to glory by the Spirit. 2Cor. 3:18

Illustration

God is not looking for ability to preach His gospel as much as availability, even as the account of Balaam's donkey can not be any clearer to all who are used of God.

Application

1. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life and no man comes to the father but by Me", it seem to be very clear who we are to preach. Jn. 14:6

a. Him we **preach**, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Col. 1:28

b. Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching. 2Tim. 4:2

2. Those who are used by God to preach the gospel are to see themselves as spiritual parents motivated by love for their children.

a "Now *for* the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved." 2Cor. 12:14-15

b. Jonah was not the best example of a servant, he ran from God because he knew God would save the Ninevites if they repented, he just did not want to be like his God!

3. We are the instruments of God for the salvation the lost.

a. "Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God." 2Cor. 5:20

b. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:10

The gospel is effective through those imparting the preaching!

Conclusion

Paul has declared his absolute confidence in the ministry of the new covenant to save the sinner based on these three things:

I. The gospel being effective in those preaching!

- II.** The gospel being ineffective to those rejecting the preaching!
- III.** The gospel being effective through those imparting the preaching!