

2 Corinthians 4

Jesus

2 Corinthians 3:17 Now **the Lord is the Spirit**; and **where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty**. 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Privilege of Preaching Freedom
Ministers of the New Covenant of the Spirit of Life

I. The Light of Christ's Gospel

1 Therefore, since we have **this ministry** as we have received mercy, **we do not lose heart**.

We do not lose Heart
Become Utterly Spiritless/Worn out/Exhausted by Accusations

- We *received* mercy from God, then...
- We *received* this ministry from God

God has given each of us a ministry
A sphere of people we interact with

When we know God is leading we will not lose heart/Get burnt out
Where God guides God provides...As we cooperate with His Spirit

2 But we have **renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully** but by **manifestation of the truth** commending ourselves to **every man's conscience in the sight of God**.

Accusations: Secret Sin/Dishonesty/Deceitfulness/Using God's Word to manipulate

Paul's Answer: We actually acted in Truth/Integrity/Fear of God

Paul's Challenge: Compare your Accusations to Actuality. Check your conscience

Conscience: gr. *soon-i'-day-sis* lit. the soul as distinguishing between what is morally good and bad...an alarm that can be put on snooze

Gossip led to accusations which seared the conscience of the Gossipers
Each time setting a stumbling block back to repentance

- Paul's challenge to his accusers: Check your conscience/motives
- None the less we do what we do **in the sight of God**

We've purposed to Walk in the Light/Our lives an Open Book
To preach the Glorious Life-Giving Gospel of Jesus

3 But **even if our gospel is veiled**, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the **god of this age** has blinded, who **do not believe that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.**

Satan's Title: god of this age
Satan's Mission: Keeping blind men blind...

John 3:18 He who believes in [Jesus] is not condemned but he who does not believe is **condemned already** because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Satan keeps blind men blind
That the Good News of the Glory of Christ *should not shine on them*

- Satan uses 2 methods to blind by Pride. 2 sides of same coin
 1. **Self-Pity:** I'm not good enough that Christ could shine on me
 2. **Self-Righteousness:** I am good enough/Don't need Christ to shine on me

In these 2 ways Satan veils the minds of our loved ones to the Light
What can we do? Wrong question...

5 For **we do not preach ourselves**, but **Christ Jesus the Lord**, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.

We do not proclaim ourselves as the source of Light
We proclaim Jesus alone who opens the eyes of the blind

1 John 3:8 ... For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might **destroy the works of the devil.**

Not us but Jesus. He's got this...

6 For **it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness**, who has **shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge** of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

God Commanded Light to Shine into Darkness at Creation
God Sent Light to Shine into our dark Hearts at Re-Creation

- **Light:** Lit. Brightness emitted by a radiant body

To know God as we Behold His Glory in the Face of Jesus Christ

Paul saw that bright light at conversion/Scales falling from his eyes
God desires the same in our sphere of family/friends/coworkers

1 Timothy 2:4 [God] who **desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, **not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.**

You say they will never ever believe?

1 Timothy 1:15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners**, of whom I am chief.

- Jesus came to destroy the work of the devil
- Jesus came into the world to save sinners

Satan's work of blinding is great, but God's work of bringing Light is greater. [Guzik]

Pray God would release the hold of Satan on their minds:

Lord, Shine upon them the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God
To behold Salvation in the Face of Jesus

We don't preach us/We preach Christ
The same God who said *Let there be Light* to Creation says the same to that guy
Saving Faith: *The gaze of a sinful soul upon a Cross*

Each of us ar a Living Treasure Chest filled w/Light
Precious treasure of the Gospel of Life

- You are a sinner/Condemned from birth. John 3:18
- The Penalty for sin is death/Eternal Separation
- Jesus paid the price for your sin by dying on the Cross
- Jesus resurrected on the 3rd day. God accepting Jesus in your place

Q. Who is sufficient to share this Light?

A. Those whom God makes sufficient...

II. Cast Down but Unconquered

7 But we have this **treasure in earthen vessels**, that the **excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.**

Judges 7:2 And the Lord said to Gideon, "The people who are with you **are too many** for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, **lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'**"

God reduced Gideon's army from 32,000 to 300 fighting men
Yet God had victory against Midian's 135,000

- Each with a clay vessel filled with Light...

...20 Then the three companies blew the trumpets and **broke the pitchers—they held the torches** in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing—

...22 When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the Lord set every man's sword against his companion throughout the whole camp; and the army [of Midia] fled...

Earthen/Clay Vessels get chipped/broken in a violent world
God uses cracked pots so others will see the Light of God in our lives

8 We are **hard-pressed** on every side, yet **not crushed**; we are **perplexed**, but **not in despair**; **9** **persecuted**, but **not forsaken**; **struck** down, but **not destroyed**—

- **Hard-pressed:** Pressed like grapes...yet not crushed to death
- **Perplexed:** w/out resources, in straits, wanting, embarrassed ...but not utterly lost
- **Persecuted:** to make to run or flee, put to flight, drive away...yet not abandoned
- **Struck:** Thrown to the ground. Put in a lower place...yet not destroyed

Psalm 37:24 Though he fall, he **shall not be utterly cast down**; For the **Lord upholds** him with His hand.

Psalm 129:2 Many a time they have afflicted me from my youth; Yet **they have not prevailed against me.**

Isaiah 54:17 No weapon formed against you shall prosper

Paul addresses the Church in Corinth directly...

10 [We are] ...always carrying about in the body the **dying of the Lord Jesus**, that the **life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.**

Philippians 3:10 ...that I may **know Him** and the **power of His resurrection**, and the **fellowship of His sufferings**, being **conformed to His death...**

Many long to know the power of His resurrection but want nothing to do with the fellowship of His sufferings or being conformed to His death. However, there are **certain fragrances God can only release through a broken vial**, so Paul rejoiced in knowing both the suffering and the glory were connected. [Guzik]

Romans 8:17 [We are heirs with Jesus] ... if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

11 For we who live are **always delivered to death for Jesus' sake**, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. **12** So then **death is working in us, but life in you.**

Romans 8:36 As it is written: For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

- I want to be a successful Pastor like Jon Courson reaching thousands
- Are you willing to suffer like Jon Courson? 16 yr daughter/Wife/Son die before him

Here is the irony. The Corinthian Christians despised Paul because of his great sufferings and because of what they thought was their great lives of "victory." They did not see that their

lives of victory were only possible **because God made Paul such an effective servant through suffering.** [Guzik]

Yet we do not lose heart...

13 And since we have the **same spirit of faith**, according to what is written, **"I believed and therefore I spoke,"** we also believe and therefore speak, 14 knowing that **He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus**, and will **present us with you**. 15 For all things are **for your sakes**, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

I believed therefore I spoke? I REALLY believe what I say...God is real. God's Word is perfect. Jesus rose and so we will I...My suffering has a good purpose. All things are working together for my good, to bring my heart to a place of thanksgiving and giving glory to God. **I really believe that.** [NJC]

Tell you kids you REALLY believe that.

III. Seeing the Invisible

16 Therefore **we do not lose heart**. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet **the inward man is being renewed day by day**.

Therefore: Knowing in our gut that our Suffering has Eternal Purpose
We do not lose heart 2X.

Though outwardly we suffer in a sinful world
Our inner man is being renewed day by day

Ephesians 3:16 [May God...] grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be **strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man**, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...

- **Renewed in Strength.** Recharged

Isaiah 40:29 He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength...31 But those who wait on the Lord Shall **renew their strength**; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

- **Renewed in Knowledge.** Replenished

Colossians 3:10 ...and have put on the new man who is **renewed in knowledge** according to the image of Him who created him...

- **Renewed in Mind.** Re-minded

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Our inner man is being renewed day by day

God digs making things new...

Revelation 21:4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." 5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." 6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

17 For **our light affliction**, which is but **for a moment**, is working for us a **far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory...**

Suffering will Work for us if we let it...

Hebrews 12: 11b ... afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness **to those who have been trained by it.**

Motivated by what it accomplishes Eternally...
Paul made Temporal suffering a workhorse for God's purpose

Romans 8:18 [Paul knew God is good] For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the **glory which shall be revealed in us.**

1 Peter 1:6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the **genuineness of your faith**, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith—**the salvation of your souls.**

Light afflictions feel pretty heavy
Momentary trials feel like forever
[Compared to Paul?]

18 **...we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.**

2 Corinthians 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.

We don't base our deductions on what we see or feel
We base our conclusions on what God's Word says is true

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| 1. When we feel they're hopeless | God says He desires all men to be saved |
| 2. When it all feels meaningless | God says suffering works for us. Eternal benefits |
| 3. When we feel we are lost | God says Jesus was raised/We rise/Never leave |
| 4. When we feel beaten down | God says our inner man is being renewed |

We walk by faith, not feelings. Feelings sometimes follow faith. Either way...
We continue to keep an Eternal Perspective/We do not Lose Heart/We have Hope

...For the things which are seen are temporary, but the **things which are not seen are eternal.**

Such as our New Eternal Bodies...next week