

The Purity, Presence, and Power of Christ
Ministry Core Values, and the Benefits of Christ in Us!

Introduction: Welcome to the Winter/Spring Small Groups Term!

Hi Friends. Welcome to the Winter/Spring small groups term at CC Newnan. We are all excited about what the Lord will do as we seek Him this term. I hope that you are looking forward to digging in deeper to our Sunday texts, and discussing your perspectives on the ideas that our church is talking about this week from God's Word. Remember, you can go as deep as you want with these studies. Each week I will provide you a few discussion questions to help prime the discussion pump in your group. I will also provide you with related scriptures that supplement the ideas that we've discussed in the sermon this week. Finally, I'll provide you with a few suggested application questions to help lock it in for the week. Please let me encourage you to prepare for your small group meeting. Read ahead, pray, study, and let God bring you deeper into His presence.

May the Lord bless you richly this term, and let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works...Hebrews 10:24.

Pastor Joel

Exploration: Questions to guide our group discussion.

- In 2 Corinthians 4:1-6, Paul began by recounting six core values of his ministry. In order, these are: tenacity to persevere in hardships, pure motives in serving the Lord, truthfulness in the message that he preached, empowerment by the Holy Spirit to change lives, preaching that centered on Christ and not trying to build a name for himself, and the desire to bring the light of Christ into the darkness of a broken world. Taking these one at a time, how do these core values in Paul's ministry speak into our own lives as Christ followers about our own core values? What can we learn about our ministry core values from holding them up in comparison to Paul's? Simply, how do we match up with Paul?
- In verse 7, Paul described himself as an earthen vessel...a common clay jar...that contains the priceless treasure of Jesus Christ. He says that the Believer's power is Christ's power at work in us. The power isn't the vessel...it's Christ! If we can make the change in our thinking...rejecting the idea that we've been called in power to do something for God...and accepting the idea that we've been called in weakness that God may do mighty things in us, then we are on the way to Paul's understanding. What does it mean practically to let the power of God dwell in us rightly, and to trust not in the

Focal Text: 2 Corinthians 4

weakness of our flesh? How does this work in our service to the Lord? How does 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 sit with you? Does that passage make you swell with pride in Jesus, or swell with pridefulness in your flesh?

- In verses 7-18, Paul shares several examples of how he had boldness in his life as a result of yielding to Christ's power in him. Paul had boldness to face tribulations and to press forward when he encountered hardships. He also had the power to boldly preach the gospel when it wasn't safe or comfortable. Finally, he pressed forward in all things with courage and determination because his mind was on God's eternal promises and not on temporary earthly pleasures. As we consider these things, how should God's power be mightily working in our own tribulations, our witness, and our perspectives about pressing into eternal things? Are there other specific applications right now in your life where God's power is/should be sustaining you?

Additional Scriptures for Deeper Study:

- Colossians 3:1-4 Believers are to set their minds on things above.
- 1 Peter 5:1-11 Conduct for those who serve in the ministry.
- Matthew 13:1-13 The parable of the sower and the seeds: four fields.
- Ephesians 3:14-19 Be filled with all the fullness of God.
- Romans 8:31-39 We are more than conquerors in Jesus!

Application: How can I apply this to my life this week?

- Let's talk about our own ministry core values. Which of these from Paul, and what others as the Lord has laid them upon your heart, would you say comprise your strongest ministry core values. Were there one or more of Paul's core ministry values that you need to see more strongly in your life? Let's be honest with ourselves and evaluate.
- In what specific areas do we need to cease from our strivings and yield to God's power to work in our lives? Are there areas where we are striving in the flesh when God would have us to soar in the Spirit? Who has something to lay on the altar right now?
- The opposite of boldness is weakness. God has not called us to live a weak and fearful life, but to live in boldness and in His power. We can so easily get distracted by earthly things. How might God call us to set our minds on things above, and to press into our calling as we keep our minds on things eternal?