

2 Corinthians 04 - Living by Faith; Secret of Endurance

I. Paul's explanation of his ministry (2 Cor 1:1—7:16)

(3) Paul's philosophy of ministry (2:14—6:10)

(B) New Covenant is the basis of ministry (3:1—4:6)

(d) New Covenant opens blind eyes (4:1-6)

(C) Ministry imitates Christ's pattern of death and resurrection (4:7-15)

(D) Ministry is to be performed with the right motivation (4:16—5:21)

(a) Eternal perspective (4:16-18)

(i) Outward deterioration versus inward renewal (4:16)

(ii) Light afflictions versus eternal glory (4:17)

(iii) Temporal physical versus eternal spiritual (4:18)

2 Corinthians 4

(d) New Covenant opens blind eyes (4:1-6)

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

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1 Therefore, since we have this ministry through the mercy shown to us, we do not get discouraged.

1 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

- Paul, instead of complaining about what he didn't have, rejoiced in what he did have. You and I can do the same thing! The way you look at your ministry helps to determine how you will fulfill it.

- "This kind of" ministry brings men life, salvation, and righteousness; one that transforms lives (1 Tim 1:12-17).

- *The church is the only organization in the world which exists entirely for the sake of those who are not members of it!*

— Would God have entrusted this ministry to him so that he might fail?

— With divine calling came the divine enabling... God finishes what He begins.

2 but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in trickery nor distorting the word of God, but by the open proclamation of the truth commending ourselves to every person's conscience in the sight of God.

2 but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

2 Instead, we have renounced secret and shameful ways. We do not use trickery or pervert God's word. By clear statements of the truth we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience before God.

2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, 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.

- Paul's attitude kept him from being a deceiver. False teachers handle God's Word in deceptive ways.

- Satan, in his "temptations" of Christ, quoted Scripture deceitfully (Matt 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13). This should remind us that in watching for Satan's ministers, don't overlook the pulpits!

The Blinded Eye

3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

3 So if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are dying.

3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

- "Revealed only by the Spirit of God; not by "apologetics."

— Are the unsaved able to receive without the intervention of the Holy Spirit? (no).

4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they will not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

4 In their case, the god of this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe to keep them from seeing the light of the glorious gospel of the Messiah, who is the image of God.

4 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.

- The "god of this world" and the "prince of this world" are not casual titles: they are accurate (3x: John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)

[Lord's Prayer: Matt 6:13: "Deliver us from the Evil One"!]

This is not a theological concept, but a fact of experience. Satan is real. He is incredibly powerful. He has targeted you. The world is his turf; it is hostile to your interests. His principal weapon is deceit and deception. Even Persian Zoroastrianism saw the whole

universe as a battleground between the god of the light and the god of the dark, between Ormuzd and Ahriman.

Characteristic examples: Evolution (biogenesis); humanism; deification of man—despite his visible decline morally, physically, and mentally! [Species evolve? Why then are we so concerned by the extinction of species? Why isn't there more "evolving"?]

Why are we so concerned about subtle changes in the ozone layer, etc.? If there is such a delicate balance in nature, who originally balanced it? Balance implies design; design implies a designer; a designer implies an ultimate purpose...and responsibility to the designer!

Isn't it fascinating what people adopt after rejecting the truth?! Watch the bizarre views of the pantheism of the "New Age," or the paranormal assumptions which replace the Biblical truth, etc. [The Bible has been designed to anticipate hostile jamming: The Message is spread on the available bandwidth; fourier analogy (Is 28?)]

Methods of "blinding": religious pride, legalism, intellectual pride. The presumption that the mind of man is the highest intelligence in the universe leads to the belief that one's own rationality is the final appeal to truth and authority. It follows that anything outside the limited sphere of man's rationality is unreal and impossible.

C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*: p.14-15, MacMillan, NY, 1962:

If the mind of man is the highest intelligence in the universe, then our minds have come into being without a Creator, a result of cause and effect in the processes of nature. It follows then that the mind is only a chemical process having evolved out of inorganic materials.

If this be true, then I have no reason to trust my thoughts as being valid. There is no reason to believe that the chemical process going on in my mind and causing these thoughts has any meaning or correlation to reality (if there is such a thing). When I think a profound thought it may only be a chemical reaction from having too much pepperoni on the pizza. And what reason is there to believe that the thought that there is no God has validity either? Many cannot see God's glory in Christ because their rational presuppositions rule it out. [Pre-trib, pre-millennialism derives from a literal presupposition towards the Word of God; vs. allegorization, skepticism, etc.] I am fascinated by people who talk endlessly about the search for truth, yet have no interest in talking with anyone who claims to have found it! Searching for truth appeals to one's sense of pride, but finding the truth demands submitting to it. How do we communicate with people who are blinded by pride? Humbly. [Technology operates in a world of largely unanswered questions.]

5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants on account of Jesus.

5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

5 For we do not preach ourselves, but rather Jesus the Messiah as Lord, and ourselves as merely your servants for Jesus' sake.

5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus the Messiah.

6 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.

- Comparison to the Creation as in Gen 1:3: Initially formless and empty, hopeless; (from a precedent judgment?) until the light of the Spirit causes a "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17)

- "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9)

- His Word, and initiative, "Let there be light," makes everything new

(C) Ministry imitates Christ's pattern of death and resurrection (4:7-15)

7 But we have this treasure in **earthen containers**, so that the extraordinary *greatness* of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;

7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;

7 But we have this treasure in clay jars to show that its extraordinary power comes from God and not from us.

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

- "...earthen containers" - mud pots. We must focus on the treasure not the vessel. It is the treasure within the vessel that gives it its value.

- Example: Fine china, elegant place settings, but without nourishing food for the hungry, desperate to be fed (Is 42:8)

- God will not give His glory to another. God has made us the way we are so that we can do the work He wants us to do (Acts 9:15)

- A vessel must be clean, empty and available for service (2 Tim 2:21)

- The real characteristic of man is not his power but his weakness.

- Pascal said, "A drop of water or a breath of air can kill him."

- Our very genetic structure (despite its defects inherited from Adam) is in the hands of God (Ps 139:13-16)

The following is one of three sections in 2 Corinthians listing Paul's sufferings (also 6:1-10; 11:16—12:10):

8 *we are* afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing;

8 *we are* afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing;

8 In every way we're troubled but not crushed, frustrated but not in despair,

8 We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

- Paul was not afraid of suffering or trial because he knew that God would guard the vessel so long as Paul was guarding the treasure Cf. 1 Tim 1:11; 6:20).

— God is glorified through weak vessels. The true test of ministry are scars not stars.

9 persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed;

9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;

9 persecuted but not abandoned, struck down but not destroyed.

9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;

- At our wit's end but never at our hope's end. "No pain, no gain?" "No Cross, no crown!"

The storm is the measure of the sailor.

10 always carrying around in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

10 always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

10 We are always carrying around the death of Jesus in our bodies, so that the life of Jesus may be clearly shown in our bodies.

10 We are always carrying around the death of Jesus in our bodies, so that the life of Jesus may be clearly shown in our bodies. 10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

11 For we who live are constantly being handed over to death because of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our mortal flesh.

11 For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

11 While we are alive, we are constantly being handed over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be clearly shown in our mortal bodies.

11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

12 So death works in us, but life in you.

12 So death works in us, but life in you.

12 And so death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

The Secret of Endurance

13 But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written: "I BELIEVED, THEREFORE I SPOKE," we also believe, therefore we also speak,

13 But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed, therefore I spoke," we also believe, therefore we also speak,

13 Now since we have the same spirit of faith in keeping with this Scripture: "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak.

13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;

- Believing is seeing (not the other way around!) Of what was Paul so confident? Four basics (remember these, especially when gripped with fear and doubt):

14 knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will also raise us with Jesus, and will present *us* with you.

14 knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you.

14 We know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will also raise us with Jesus and present us to God together with you.

14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.

15 For all things *are* for your sakes, so that grace, having spread to more and more people, will cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

15 For all things *are* for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.

15 All this is for your sake so that, as his grace spreads, more and more people will give thanks and glorify God.

15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

(D) Ministry is to be performed with the right motivation (4:16—5:21)

(a) Eternal perspective (4:16-18)

(i) Outward deterioration versus inward renewal (4:16)

16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer person is decaying, yet our inner *person* is being renewed day by day.

16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

16 That's why we are not discouraged. No, even if outwardly we are wearing out, inwardly we are being renewed each and every day.

16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

- Paul's sufferings (Cf. 11:23-28). We need to communicate as a dying man to dying men: having come to terms with our own mortality.

(ii) Light afflictions versus eternal glory (4:17)

17 For our momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,

17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,

17 This light, temporary nature of our suffering is producing for us an everlasting weight of glory, far beyond any comparison,

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

- Note contrasts: affliction, glory; light affliction, weight of glory; light affliction but for a moment, weight of glory that is eternal.

(iii) Temporal physical versus eternal spiritual (4:18)

18 while we **look** not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

18 while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

18 because we do not look for things that can be seen but for things that cannot be seen. For things that can be seen are temporary, but things that cannot be seen are eternal.

18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

- "...look" - not a casual glance but an intense examination, a constant scrutiny, a steady gaze after clear focus... gripped by the reality... [5:11, "...knowing the terror of the Lord."]