

## STUDY ON THE BOOK OF CORINTHIANS

### Second Corinthians – Chapter 4

*“Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart.” (v1)*

What ministry? Paul said “since we have this ministry...”

*“who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” (v3:6)*

Paul’s ministry is the ministry of the new covenant which is the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ... and this is the ministry of every believer today.

Paul goes on to state that he would not lose heart because he had received mercy.

**What mercy is Paul referring to?** The mercy of salvation. The Amplified bible expounded on this as “mercy from God, granting us salvation, opportunities, and blessings”

#### **Renouncing Stuff**

*“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.” (v2)*

Paul states that he had chosen to renounce stuff. If Paul had to make the choice to renounce stuff then, it is imperative that we also should follow suit. What did Paul renounce?

- He renounced the hidden things of shame
- He renounced every type of walk of craftiness
- He renounced every temptation to handle the word of God with deception

Instead, he manifested the truth! Which means, he did not only know the truth or believed the truth but through his lifestyle, also manifested the truth.

#### **Hidden Gospel & The Perishing**

*“But even if our gospel is [in some sense] hidden [behind a veil], it is hidden [only] to those who are perishing; among them the god of this world [Satan] has blinded the minds of the unbelieving to prevent them from seeing the illuminating light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” (vv3-4 AMP)*

These two verses give us an insight into why prayer and intercession aids evangelism. As we take the gospel of Christ into the world filled with unbelievers, we are contending against an established veil which has blinded the minds of the unbelieving preventing them from seeing the light of the gospel of Christ.

In his first letter to this same church, Paul mentions the same point:

*“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:18)*

Satan’s key weapon is lies. His lies have caused the unbelieving to be blind to the gospel of Christ. His lies today might be more sophisticated and in line with this modern age, but in the end, it is still a lie and our assignment is to dispel his lies and cause this veil to be removed.

## The Message

*“For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus’ sake. 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.” (vv5-6)*

The message is not about us. We are just the messengers. The message is about Jesus our Lord. We must not forget that.

Yes, share your testimonies! Yes, reveal how your life has been transformed! But the focus must be on Jesus. The moment the message is more about us than Him, then we have misrepresented the gospel.

We are nothing without Jesus. For it is God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts and this light is the light of the knowledge of the glory of the God in Jesus Christ.

## Vessels of Glory!

*“We are like common clay jars that carry this glorious treasure within, so that the extraordinary overflow of power will be seen as God’s, not ours.” (v7 TPT)*

*“But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it will be evident that such overwhelming power comes from God and not from us.” (v7 CJB)*

Paul uses figurative language to say that we are common clay jars (created from dust/clay) yet we possess the brilliant light of God’s glory, Jesus Christ, and carry him as treasure in our being. The outward vessel is not as important as the glorious treasure within.

All the versions of this verse that I had come across did not just reveal that we carry the brilliant light of God’s glory who is Jesus Christ in our bodies but mentions an “outflow”. The Passion Translation says, “the extraordinary overflow of power” and the Complete Jewish Bible says, “overwhelming power”.

By default, all believers should have an outflow of extraordinary, overwhelming power from them which comes from God and not from us.

## Quitting is NOT an Option!

*“Though we experience every kind of pressure, we’re not crushed. At times we don’t know what to do, but quitting is not an option. We are persecuted by others, but God has not forsaken us. We may be knocked down, but not out.” (vv8-9 TPT)*

This is someone who has his mind renewed. This is someone who knows his God. This is the confession of a warrior for Christ. Paul said:

- Though we experience every kind of pressure, we are not crushed!
- At times we do not know what to do, but quitting is not an option!
- We are persecuted by others, but God has not forsaken us!
- We may be knocked down, but not out!

How many believers today will make this type of confession? Paul is not referring to his own personal needs or desire here but his efforts in the furtherance of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Despite all, he is not crushed, and quitting is not an option. He may be knocked down right now, but he is not out.

This makes me recall the statement Arnold Schwarzenegger made in the film “The Terminator”. “I’ll be back”. Quitting is not an option.

## Definition of Living

*“We continually share in the death of Jesus in our own bodies so that the resurrection life of Jesus will be revealed through our humanity. We consider living to mean that we are constantly being handed over to death for Jesus’ sake so that the life of Jesus will be revealed through our humanity. So, then, death is at work in us, but it releases life in you.” (vv10-12 TPT)*

Paul said he considers living an exposure to death for Jesus sake. He states that he continually shares in the death of Jesus in his own physical bodies. Why?

- That the resurrection life of Jesus will be revealed through his humanity
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This statement is made twice – almost a literal repetition. Paul is saying the more we die to flesh and die to the schemes of the devil, the more the resurrection life of Jesus will be revealed through our humanity.

- The more dead you are then, the more the love you can give
- The more dead you are then, the more the resource you can give
- The more dead you are then, the more you can reveal Jesus to this dying world.

Living is therefore defined for the believer as the life of Jesus revealed through your humanity.

## Spirit of Faith

*“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, knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.” (vv13-15)*

Paul makes it clear that we have the same spirit of faith. How would the spirit of faith manifest?

1. Believe
2. Speak out that is believed.

## ***This is the guarantee!***

We know that He (God the Father) who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus!!!

## Be Encouraged!

*“Therefore, we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (vv16-18)*

Paul is not losing heart. He is not discouraged. Although, he might look at his body wearing out but his inner man (the true man of the spirit) is renewed day by day. This is important for as many of us that will walk the walk with God. We must place importance on the spirit-man than on the flesh.

Our light affliction is but for a moment. What a perspective!

Whatever may be challenge right now is temporary and it will pass however, the key things of life such as God’s presence, rest, peace, and blessings are eternal. Let us all pay greater attention to that.