

2 Corinthians Chapter 4

2 Corinthians 4:1 "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;"

I admire Paul greatly. In the face of all kinds of hardship, he still goes on with the ministry. Paul never stops being appreciative of the mercy the Lord Jesus showed him in stopping him on the road to Damascus and getting him on the right track. Paul is compelled from within himself to continue to minister.

When we see "faint not", we see all of the terrible obstacles that Paul faced. He faced stoning, shipwreck, imprisonment, and worst of all, rejection from his own people. This just meant that he worked even harder to bring this simple message of salvation to all who would listen.

The task of ministering the New Covenant was too noble to lose heart over. Since God had called him to proclaim it, Paul could not abandon his calling. Instead he trusted God to strengthen him.

2 Corinthians 4:2 "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 is saying here, that he had totally turned his back on the world and the deceitfulness of riches. "Manifestation" means making real. We know that this was very real to him. His objective was to make people realize the simplicity and the necessity of receiving the Lord into their lives. Salvation is a daily walk with Jesus. We do not get forgiveness, and then go back into dishonesty.

The hidden things are referring to secret immoralities, hypocrisies, and the sins hidden deep in the darkness of one's life.

We must walk daily in the salvation we have received. Paul had learned to do just that. Paul is expressing here, the extreme importance of being honest with God, the people around you, and with yourself. The things of the world are laid aside.

This appears to be a reply by Paul to a direct and slanderous accusation against him, that he was a hypocrite, whose mask of piety hid a corrupt and shameful life.

2 Corinthians 4:3 "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:"

Gospel means good news. No one wants to hide good news. Paul did not try to hide it from anyone. This is speaking of those who have eyes to see and do not see, and ears to hear and do not hear. The gospel was offered, but they just could not see it. They were lost.

The gospel is veiled to those who are perishing so the problem was not with the message or the messenger, but with the hearers headed for hell. The preacher cannot persuade people to believe; only God can do that.

2 Corinthians 4:4: "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 of course is Satan. This is speaking of the mind set expressed by the ideals, opinions, goals, hopes and views of the majority of people. It encompasses the world's philosophies, education and commerce.

Those who will not receive the gospel are those who are of this world. They do not want to let go of the world to receive this gospel. Satan blinds men to God's truth through the world system he has created.

You cannot walk in the darkness of this world, and walk in the Light of God at the same time. The Light does away with darkness. Each of us is a free will agent. We can accept the Light of Jesus, or we can remain in the darkness. God will not force us to follow Him. It is our choice.

Christ is the image of God. We know that He is the Light. If His glorious Light shines in our heart, it totally does away with darkness. Accepting Christ is not a mind process. We must give Him our heart.

2 Corinthians 4:5 "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

Paul is explaining here, that he should not be their object of worship. Paul had made himself a servant to all mankind to win those he could to the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is another word for Messiah. Christ also means the Anointed One. Jesus means Savior.

Notice that Paul did not stop with introducing them to Christ Jesus as their Savior, but included Jesus as Lord. When Paul says that he is the servant of Jesus, it means that Paul has made Jesus his Lord.

The false teachers accused Paul of preaching for his own benefit, yet they were the ones guilty of doing so.

2 Corinthians 4:6 "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."

The word that God was translated from is Theos. The meaning of "Theos" is a Deity, Supreme Divinity, or Exceeding God. Everything that was applied to this earth, or created, all became as the Word was spoken. Creator God is also, the Spoken Word. The Light was eternal. It already existed. It was just commanded to shine its Light on the earth and give all things the power to be.

There was total darkness, and the Light shined, and did away with the darkness (Genesis chapter 1). This same Light that shined on the earth and gave all things the power to be, has taken up abode in the heart of the believer. This Light gives all believers in Christ the power to eternally be. He is Life. We know this Word, Creator, and Light, as Jesus Christ.

I can ask you one question, Christian. Are you filled with the Light of the Lord Jesus Christ? If you are, there is no darkness in you. Paul encountered this Light on the road to Damascus, and it changed Paul's life. From that moment on, Paul did not have to search for the Light. The Light lived in Paul.

Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

The same God who created physical light in the universe is the same God who must create supernatural light in the soul and usher believers from the kingdom of darkness to His kingdom of light (Col. 1:13).

2 Corinthians 4:7 "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

The "treasure" that the Christians have is, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ. The "earthen vessel" spoken of here, is the house of flesh. The flesh of man is from the dust of the earth. Our flesh is nothing.

The power of the Christian to minister is from Christ within him. The ministering of the Christian is Christ in him. We have been given power of attorney to use the name of Jesus. The real power in ministering is when we allow Christ to minister through us to the people.

2 Corinthians 4:8: "[We are] troubled on every side, yet not distressed; [we are] perplexed, but not in despair;"

The following Scriptures can say it much better than I possibly could.

Romans 8:35-37 "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? [shall] tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" "As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

We can be thankful with Paul in tribulation. Paul never once complained of the tribulations. He just stayed steadfast in the faith. That must be our lot, as well. We must not break under the pressures the world brings.

In (verses 8 and 9), Paul gave four contrasting metaphors to show that his weakness did not cripple him, but actually strengthened him.

We must be like the old oak tree, which is rooted deeply and is not easily blown over. We must not keep our eyes focused on the problems around us. We must focus on the Lord Jesus Christ, who will see us through, if we do not faint.

1 Peter 4:12-14 "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:" "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy [are ye]; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified."

2 Corinthians 4:9 "Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;"

The great promise of God to His own is that He will never leave us, or forsake us.

Hebrews 13:5 "[Let your] conversation [be] without covetousness; [and be] content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

We see from the following Scripture, that we will not die until God is ready for us to come home.

Luke 21:18 "But there shall not a hair of your head perish." God has a set time for us to go to heaven. They may cast us down, but we will not give up the ghost, until God is ready for us to.

2 Corinthians 4:10: "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."

The flesh must die for the spirit to live. On this earth, we are in this body of flesh. There will come a time when we will remove this flesh as a man removes a garment, and our spirit body will live.

The word "Always" indicates that the suffering Paul experienced was endless. And the suffering was a result of attacks against the "Lord Jesus," not Paul and other believers. Those who hated Jesus took out their vengeance on those who represented Him.

Through Paul's weakness, Christ was put on display. His suffering, the false apostles said, was evidence the God was not with him and he was a fraud. On the contrary, Paul affirmed that his suffering was the badge of his loyalty to Christ and the source of his power.

2 Corinthians 4:11 "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."

"Delivered unto death" refers to the transferring of a prisoner to the executioner. It was used to refer to Christ's being delivered to those who crucified Him but in this case, it refers to the potential physical death constantly faced by those who represented Christ.

"In our mortal flesh" is another term for Paul's humanness, his physical body.

2 Corinthians 4:12 "So then death worketh in us, but life in you."

Paul faced death every day, yet he was willing to pay that price if it meant salvation for those to whom he preached.

2 Corinthians 4:13 "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;"

Paul remained true to his convictions, no matter the cost. He was not a pragmatist who would alter his message to suit his listeners. He was convinced of the power of God to act through the message he preached.

“Spirit of faith” means the attitude of faith, not the Holy Spirit. Paul had the same conviction about the power of the message as did the psalmist in Psalm 116:10 who in the midst of his troubles, confidently asked God to deliver him out of his troubles. He could confidently do so because he believed God would answer his prayer.

2 Corinthians 4:14 "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present [us] with you."

This is explained very well in the next two verses in Jesus' own Words.

John 11:25-26 "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:" "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

It is the spirit man that never dies. Jesus rose from death of the body. He had a new body. It was taken from the old body, because it still had the nail prints in his hands. It was different enough, however, that the disciples did not recognize Him, until their understanding was opened.

We are the inheritance of the Lord Jesus. He will present us before His Father and the angels in heaven.

2 Corinthians 4:15 "For all things [are] for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God."

Everything, in and on the earth, was made for the use of man. God prepared the earth and then brought the man. God has always had the well-being of mankind in mind. God sent His Son to redeem us. Grace is not for God's sake, but for our sake. God gave us a way out (Jesus Christ).

“To the glory of God” is the goal of all that the believer does.

2 Corinthians 4:16 "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward [man] is renewed day by day."

Our physical body was not made for eternity. It is a fragile thing. It came from dust and unto dust it shall return. Our outward (flesh), man was made to die. The spirit, within the flesh, is the eternal being. The Spirit is made for eternity.

Our outward man, the physical body is in the process of decay and will eventually die. Paul was referring to the normal aging process.

Is renewed: The growth and maturing process of the believer is constantly occurring. While the physical body is decaying, the inner self of the believer continues to grow and mature into Christ likeness.

2 Corinthians 4:17 "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding [and] eternal weight of glory;"

The few little problems we have while we are housed in a body of flesh, are nothing compared to the wonderful things God has in store for us. We will shed this body of flesh and live on with Jesus in our spiritual body.

1 Corinthians 2:9 "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

From a human perspective, Paul's own testimony lists a seemingly unbearable litany of sufferings and persecutions he endured throughout his life, yet he viewed them as weightless and lasting for only a moment.

"Eternal weight of glory": For Paul, the future glory he would experience with the Lord far outweighed any suffering he experienced in this world. Paul understood that the greater the suffering, the greater would be his eternal glory.

2 Corinthians 4:18 "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."

So many times, we are told not to look to the things of earth which pass away. The earth, and everything in it, will pass away. Even the earth itself, is of a temporary nature. This again, is speaking of the flesh and the spirit. The flesh represents all that you can see with the physical eye. The spirit is not seen with the physical eye. The spirit is the hope of mankind. Faith is spirit. We have faith that all that God promised, He will do.

Pursuing God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the souls of men should consume the believer.

2 Corinthians Chapter 4 Questions

1. Why does the author greatly admire Paul?

2. What is meant by "faint not" in verse 1?
3. What were some of the cruel things Paul endured?
4. What had Paul renounced in verse 2?
5. What does "manifestation" mean?
6. Salvation is a daily _____ with Jesus.
7. Who is the gospel hid to?
8. Gospel means _____.
9. Who blinded their minds that they believed not?
10. Why does God not force Christianity upon us?
11. If God does not want our mind, what does He want?
12. Paul preached what?
13. What had Paul made himself, to cause people to come to Christ?
14. Christ is another word for _____.
15. Who commanded the Light to shine?
16. God in verse 6, was translated from what word?
17. What does it mean?
18. The Light that shined gave all things the _____ to be.
19. When did Paul come in contact with this great Light?
20. We have this treasure in _____.
21. What is the treasure of the Christian?
22. The Christian has been given power of attorney to do what?
23. We are troubled on every side, yet not _____.
24. Why did the author compare a Christian to an oak tree?
25. Who will quicken our mortal bodies?
26. We are delivered to death for _____ sake.

27. What is the death that is working?
28. Why was Paul compelled to speak?
29. Who is the Resurrection?
30. Who will Jesus present us before?
31. The inward man is _____ day by day.
32. The things which are seen are _____.