

"TO THE CHURCH OF GOD WHICH IS AT CORINTH" PAUL'S LETTERS TO THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH



The Second Corinthian Letter Chapter 4

2 CORINTHIANS 4

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

³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 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. ⁵ For we do not preach

WE DO NOT LOSE HEART

- ☀ What ministry is Paul talking about?
- ☀ What mercy had Paul received?
 - ☀ What ministry and mercy have we received?
- ☀ What threatened Paul to lose heart?
 - ☀ What threatens to make us lose heart?
- ☀ Why didn't he lose heart?
 - ☀ What can we learn about not losing heart?
- ☀ What sorts of "shameful" things could Paul be talking about that he had renounced?
 - ☀ What does it mean to renounce something?
 - ☀ Hidden things because of shame...
 - ☀ walking in craftiness (what is this?)
 - ☀ adulterating the word of God (what is this?)
- ☀ What does Paul mean by "commending ourselves to every man's conscience"?
 - ☀ How was he commending himself to everyman's conscience?
- ☀ It is possible that Paul's opponents had accused him of being **confusing** in his teaching, and this is why he previously told them that they can understand what he wrote. This is also possibly why Paul says, Even is our gospel is **veiled**, it is veiled to those who are perishing, because the god of this world has **blinded** them.

ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-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.

- ☀ How does the "god of this world" (who is this, by the way) blind the minds of men?
- ☀ What light are they not seeing?
- ☀ And Christ is the image of **God**
- ☀ What is Paul's meaning (and implication about others) when he says that he is not preaching himself?
- ☀ How should the Corinthians view Paul? How should we view our preachers?
- ☀ How should Jesus be viewed?
- ☀ "God who said, '**Light** shall shine out of **darkness**,' is the One who has shone in our **hearts** to give **Light** of the **knowledge** of the glory of God in the face of **Christ**."
- ☀ Simply put, this means what?

TREASURE IN EARTHEN VESSELS

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; ⁸ we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. ¹¹ For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of

- ☀ Tell me something about earthen vessels...
- ☀ Common or extraordinary?
- ☀ Durable or breakable?
- ☀ You can put things in them that are **valuable** or **trash**
- ☀ What treasure is Paul talking about?
- ☀ So, what is the contrast that Paul making here?
- ☀ Why? "So that the **surpassing** greatness of the **power** will be of **God** and not from **ourselves**."
- ☀ Another way of putting it might be, "Don't judge the **value** and **power** of the **Gospel** by this humble **messenger**."
- ☀ How does Paul now describe himself (this earthen vessel)?
 - ☀ We are afflicted (**pressured**) but not crushed
 - ☀ We are perplexed (**don't understand what's going on**), but we are not despairing (at **hope's** end).
 - ☀ We are **persecuted** but not forsaken (**abandoned**)
 - ☀ We are **struck** down, but not **destroyed**

Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. ¹² So death works in us, but life in you.

- ☀ What does it mean in vvs. 10, 11 to carry about in the body the dying of Jesus? (especially in this context)
- ☀ And why does Paul do this?
- ☀ What was Paul hoping to tell the Corinthians about himself — contrasted with others who had come to Corinth and stirred up trouble?
- ☀ What does this teach us today about how to view what persecutions we might face?

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

PAUL’S MOTIVATION FOR PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL

- ☀ What does it mean to “believe, therefore I spoke”?
- ☀ What did Paul believe that made him speak up?
- ☀ Lesson for us?
- ☀ What did Paul know?
- ☀ What was Paul looking forward to?
- ☀ What was Paul expecting that the Corinthians do with the Gospel that he had shared with them?
- ☀ Lessons for us?

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For momentary, light affliction is

THEREFORE WE DO NOT LOSE HEART

- ☀ What is the outer man Paul speaks of here?
- ☀ What’s happening to the outer man?
- ☀ What is the inner man he speaks of?
- ☀ What’s happening to the inner man?
- ☀ What is the lesson for us?

producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,
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.

- ✿ How light were Paul's afflictions?
- ✿ What does Paul mean by momentary? What is he contrasting this to?
- ✿ What is producing the eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison?
- ✿ How does that happen?
 - ✿ During his afflictions, what was Paul...
 - ✿ ...not looking at?
 - ✿ ...looking at?
- ✿ How does this help the Christian?