

Preaching the Gospel

Second Corinthians 4.1–15

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Prelude:

I. What had Paul just taught?

- A. He reminded the Corinthians that we are epistles of Christ.
- B. People read us and see Christ because
 - 1. we read Christ and become more like Him because
 - 2. we are looking into the mirror of His word.

II. That led Paul show how he could not lose heart.

Persuasion:

I. 4.1 • Do Not Lose Heart

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

- A. What ministry?
 - 1. See 3.9.
 - 2. The apostles and other preachers came preaching righteousness,
 - a) that there is a way of righteousness, hence
 - b) a way that leads to life and not to death.
- B. For that ministry, and for their own salvation,
 - 1. they had received mercy.
 - 2. So how could they lose heart?
 - a) They had to keep pressing on,
 - b) they wanted to keep pressing on,
 - (1) that they might bring this new ministry to the world.
 - (2) We are the recipients of their determination.

II. 4.2 • Renounce the Hidden Things of Shame

2 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.

A. Does the mercy we have received (v. 1),

1. mean that we can continue in shameful practices?
2. No, we have to renounce them.

B. What does it mean to renounce something?

1. How does that relate to what Paul said?
2. Remember that someone at Corinth was charging Paul with deception.
 - a) Instead he contends that he and his fellow preachers had renounced the hidden things of shame.
 - b) They were not walking in craftiness.
 - (1) They knew that to be true because
 - (2) by believing what he taught they had turned to God.

C. Nor did they handle the word of God deceitfully.

1. What are ways that a person can handle the word of God deceitfully?
2. Had Paul done any of those kind of things?
 - a) He commended himself to every man's conscience.
 - b) He was open for inspection.
 - (1) He knew that it was all done in the sight of God.
 - (2) Therefore, he had nothing to hide.

III. 4.3–4 • The Gospel Is Veiled to the Perishing

3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

1. However, some people just cannot see the gospel.
2. What might keep a person from seeing it?
 - a) Bad Christians, cf Rom 2.24
 - b) Their unwillingness to submit to God.
 - c) Their sin from which they do not want to repent.
3. Who is behind the blinding?
 - a) The god of this age, that is Satan is behind the blinding.
 - b) Why does he blind people?
 - (1) He does not want the light of the gospel of the glory of God to shine on them.
 - (2) Christ is whose image?

IV. 4.5–7 • Preach Christ Jesus the Lord

5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. 6 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. 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

- A. Any critics of Paul's should be able to see this without him having to say anything.
- B. What two things did Paul say that they preached?
 1. Not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.
 2. Themselves as their bondservants for Jesus' sake.
- C. Again, anyone at Corinth should have been able to see these things.
 1. Paul mentioned himself, but
 - a) not as the object of the preaching,
 - b) only as the bondservants of Jesus Christ.
 2. Do you see yourself as a bondservant or as someone to be served?

D. What reason did Paul give next for preaching Christ Jesus the Lord?

1. Paul declared that Jesus is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness.
 - a) The God who said, “Let there be light,”
 - b) is Jesus Christ, that is why we call Him Lord.
2. He is the same one who has shone in our hearts.
 - a) Why does He shine in our hearts?
 - b) He does it to give the light of the knowledge
 - (1) of the glory of God
 - (2) in the face of Jesus Christ.

E. However, he put that treasure in earth vessels.

1. That is why we are bondservants.
2. The message in this case is greater than the messengers.
 - a) Therefore, the glory does not go to the earthen vessels, but
 - b) to God because everyone can see that the power is of God.

V. 4.8–12 • Evidence of Not Losing Heart

8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So then death is working in us, but life in you.

A. Going back to verse 1,

1. considering everything that Paul had just written,
2. he and his team did not lose heart because
 - a) although hard-pressed on every side,
 - (1) they were not crushed;

- b) they were perplexed, but
 - (1) they were not in despair;
 - c) they were persecuted, but
 - (1) they knew that they were not forsaken;
 - d) they were struck down, but
 - (1) they were not destroyed.
3. The fact that he was writing this letter to them was proof of those things.
- a) His words remind me of:

**16 For a righteous man may fall seven times
And rise again,
But the wicked shall fall by calamity.**

– Proverbs 24.16

- b) See also:
 - (1) Psalm 145.14
 - (2) Micah 7.8–9
- B. Paul said that they were always carrying about in the body
- 1. the dying of the Lord Jesus,
 - 2. that is they suffered as He suffered.
 - a) His suffering in death
 - b) brings our own suffering when we live because of Him.
 - (1) Therefore, death was working through the apostles, but
 - (2) their close brushes with death brought life to the Corinthians.

VI. 4.13–15 • Believe and Speak

13 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, 14 knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. 15 For all things are for your sakes, that grace,

having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

A. Paul explained more why he and his team preached.

B. They had the same faith as the psalmist,

1. who said, "I believed and therefore I spoke."

2. Notice the context of that quote:

8 For You have delivered my soul from death,

My eyes from tears,

And my feet from falling.

9 I will walk before the LORD

In the land of the living.

10 I believed, therefore I spoke,

"I am greatly afflicted."

– Psalm 116.8–10

a) The psalmist also had the same experiences of brushes with death

b) for believing in the Lord.

(1) The psalmist spoke what he believed.

(2) For that affliction came upon him.

Exhortation:

I. Regardless of what you face, do not lose heart because the Lord is on your side.

II. Renounce shameful things.

III. Do not let the world's blindness to the truth discourage you.

IV. Just live your life in Jesus.