

## Exegetical Notes – 2 Corinthians 4:1-18

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### 2 Corinthians 4:1-18

#### Verses 1-2

***Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. <sup>2</sup> Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.***

- This chapter begins with the word “therefore.” This is the conclusion! This is because of all that Paul has said in the preceding chapters.
- God has given Paul the ministry which he is performing. Since his ministry is God's gift to him, he receives it gratefully and does not “lose heart” when things do not go as he thinks they should.
- He has renounced secret and shameful ways. He is open and honest.
- He does NOT distort the word of God. He preaches what God has said accurately and correctly.
- What he is he is! It is his accurate exegesis of God's word which is what should cause the people of Corinth to embrace it, not his looks or his personality.
- Paul uses the plural pronoun to refer to himself in this passage because he has other members of his ministry team with him when he writes these words. He requires that all the members of his ministry team be as he is. Open and honest and correctly handling the word of God.

#### Verses 3-6

***<sup>3</sup> And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. <sup>4</sup> The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. <sup>5</sup> For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. <sup>6</sup> For God, who said, “Let light shine***

***out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.***

- “If our gospel is veiled,” (see notes of 2 Corinthians 3:7-18).
- The eyes of those who refuse to accept Jesus as their Savior and Lord and as Israel’s Messiah are blinded. They are blinded by “the god of this age.” That god is Satan. Because of this, they cannot embrace the truth.
- Paul presents Jesus as Savior, Lord, and Messiah. He does not push himself, but clearly presents Jesus as the glory of God. This is why he is rejected by some. They are blinded by Satan. He is nothing more than God’s servant faithfully handling God’s word.

### **Verse 7**

***<sup>7</sup> But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.***

- “But we have this treasure in jars of clay.” This is the problem! Christians are not yet perfected. “Jars of clay” are common pots. They are not fancy dishes. They have imperfections. The Greek could be translated “cracked pots.” These imperfections get in the way. Christians must be forgiving of each other because none of them is perfect (see Matthew 6: 14-15 and 18:21-35). Even the great Apostle Paul and the members of his team were imperfect vessels.
- But God works through their imperfections to show His power. It all comes from God and not from them!

### **Verses 8-12**

***<sup>8</sup> We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; <sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. <sup>10</sup> We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. <sup>11</sup> For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. <sup>12</sup> So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.***

- Paul and the members of his ministry team experience difficult times. Their ministry does not always run smoothly. They are crushed, perplexed, persecuted, and struck down; and this sometimes from the members of the congregations which they serve. But they know that God is with them. They are upheld in their ministry by God.

- They suffer as they do so that Jesus may be revealed in them. They suffer to preach the gospel so that some may hear their message and believe.

### Verses 13-15

***<sup>13</sup> It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, <sup>14</sup> because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. <sup>15</sup> All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.***

- Paul is most likely quoting Psalm 116:10. He means that his testimony of Jesus comes from his personal faith that Jesus is Lord. He speaks as he does because of what he believes. He believes what he preaches.
- Paul believes that Jesus will raise him to eternal life along with those who believe in Jesus. He is consistent! He is not perfect, but he believes what he preaches.
- This consistency is to the benefit of the Corinthian Church. Their thanksgiving for Jesus and for their salvation should overflow to God's glory, not Paul's.

### Verses 16-18

***<sup>16</sup> Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. <sup>18</sup> So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.***

- Because of this, Paul and the members of his team DO NOT LOSE HEART when life and ministry seem rough, disappointing, or overwhelming. Though they suffer the effects of sin in their bodies, they are renewed everyday by God.
- They do not focus on things as they are here on earth, but keep their eyes on God. What they see and feel does not determine how they live or think. Their attitude and their expectations are determined by what they believe.

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