

“Affliction Produces Glory”

2 Corinthians Chapter 4

2Cr 4:1 **1) The Glorious Gospel** vs 1-6

2Cr 4:2 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, 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.

- “this ministry” - the last chapter said this was the ministry of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:8)
What does New Testament teach that the Spirit does?
 - He guides in all truth. (John 16:13)
 - He brings to memory Christ's teachings. (John 14:26)
 - He shows things to come. (John 16:13)
 - He glorifies Christ. (John 16:14)
 - He speaks not of Himself but of Christ. (John 16:13)
 - He bears witness to Christ. (1 John 5:6)
 - He convicts the world of sin righteousness and judgment. (John 16:8-11)
 - He comforts. (John 15:26)
 - He prays and helps us pray. (Romans 8:26)
 - He edifies the body of Christ with gifts. (1 Corinthians 14:12)
 - He beautifies the body of Christ with fruit. (Galatians 5:22)
 - He raises the dead in Christ up. (Romans 8:11)
- Paul said “WE HAVE THIS MINISTRY!!”
- This is a great calling we have. This ministry is full. It keeps us busy. We may grow weary but we do not lose heart. (Ministry Burn Out) Ministry Burn Out is from doing things that fulfill personal, or prideful or expectations outside of the ministry of the Spirit. **People Lose Heart because they have lost sight of the true ministry of the Spirit.**
- The Proper Handling of the Gospel
 - Paul Does Not**
 - Hide the Gospel or Suggest a Special Knowledge or Insight
 - Preach with Craftiness
 - Preach a diluted Gospel (adulterated)
 - Paul Does**
 - Preach the truth
 - Preaches the truth in the sight of God

He doesn't use catchy add-ons to make the gospel appealing
He doesn't soft peddle sin, man's condition, eternal destiny, substitutionary sacrifice

He preaches to be commended by God. It's God's message anyway. So He looks to God if his message and method is acceptable not the crowd or the response.

“There is a higher scrutiny than that of the human conscience: it is to God that every minister of the gospel is ultimately and eternally answerable.” (Jack Hughes)

2Cr 4:3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

2Cr 4:4 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.

- Just as we learned that there is a veil over the Jews to see the Messiah there is a veil over those that are perishing.
- Christians have no need in hiding the gospel. Though many do. They veil it for just the right time or just the right opportunity. This is “*Christianeese*” but the real issue is fear and procrastination.
- Paul lets us see the problem in evangelism. There is an enemy who has blinded man. This Enemy in called the god of this age.
 - This “god” is no way equal to God Almighty. Satan is only “god” by popular choice of man.
- Our prayers in evangelism is for opportunities but it should also be about taking the veil off and opening the eyes of the blind.
 - This blindness isn't just Satan's work. The one who is blinded is accountable and responsible for his own blindness.
 - John 3:19-20 “*This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved*”

the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed."

2Cr 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

- Bond servants do not speak of their servitude. But speak of their master.

2Cr 4:6 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.

- "Light shall shine out of darkness" makes us think of the power of creation. But here in this passage it is speaking of the power of preaching the Gospel
- God "has shone in our hearts"!!! WHY?
- To Give Light (our heart were dark. God shines light from our hearts now)
- "To Give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God".
 - Where can we go to know God?
- "In the face of Christ"
 - People say "If God will show himself I'll believe. Then I'll become a Christian." This proves all men are liars. God has displayed Himself. You want to see God? Look into the face of Christ. Who is Jesus? What has he done? What did he do? Then you will know God.

1st Reality Check - Have we altered the Gospel to make it acceptable? Added to it / Take away or hide it? The Glorious Gospel is perfect just the way God intended it. We do not need to alter it. Let it do the work it does.

2Cr 4:7 **2) In A Humble Vessel** vs 7-12

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;

- The treasure is from the preceding verse "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God."
- The earthen vessel is you and I described in COMPARASON to the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. (The Gospel).
 - Paul is not demeaning our physical bodies. He is simply illustrating the truth.
 - God doesn't need to worry about the packaging. The treasure is what is important.
 - Even in Jesus we see this truth.
 - Isaiah 53:2 "He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him."
- The glory is in the treasure not in the vessel. The greatest among man in the all of history is still a clay pot in comparison to the treasure of the Glorious Gospel.
- "The surpassing greatness of the power" - is the Gospel. The greatest accomplishment man can achieve is bearing and giving the Gospel.
- And that power will be of God not of the vessel. This is so God receives the glory not us.

Speaking of the frailty of the clay pot.

2Cr 4:8 we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing;

2Cr 4:9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;

- There are pressures and stress in this life we live. But for the believer these pressures and stresses accomplish something completely different than we initially think.
 - Normally AFFLICTIONS would CRUSH us.
 - Normally PERPLEXTION would bring DISPAIR
 - Normally PERSECUTION would give us a sense of ABANDONMENT (Forsaken)
 - Normally being STRUCK DOWN would DESTROY us.
- Normally these things, affliction, perplexity, persecution and being struck down, has a finality to them. Normally the end result is our destruction.
- But for the Believer these things have a different purpose. To Glorify Jesus.

2Cr 4:10 always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

2Cr 4:11 For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

- You and I speak easily of having the Life of Jesus manifested in us. But these troubling difficult things of life have a purpose also. THAT WE CARRY ABOUT IN THE BODY THE DYING OF JESUS.
- **Philippians 3:10-11** "that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead"
- **1 Corinthians 4:8-16** "You are already filled, you have already become rich, you have become kings without us; and indeed, I wish that you had become kings so that we also might reign with you. For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor. To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless; and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure; when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now. I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me."
- **Mark 10:38-39** "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it."

2Cr 4:12 So death works in us, but life in you.

- The goal and result of affliction in our lives is to bring life to others.
- G. Campbell Morgan tells the story of a great young preacher who was impressive early on in his ministry. Once he had the young man to speak at his church, and after the sermon Morgan asked his wife, "Wasn't that wonderful?" She quietly replied, "Yes, but it will be more wonderful when he has suffered." Morgan adds: "Well, he suffered, and it was more powerful." (Guzik)
- It is much like the difference of Bill Gates telling you Life is wonderful and Joni Eareckson Tada telling you life is wonderful.
- The irony is that the Corinthian church thought less of Paul because of the afflictions he suffered. Yet it was those very afflictions that brought life to them.

2ND Reality Check - Is the vessel receiving honor?
Are you fighting off affliction or allowing it to bring life to others?

2Cr 4:13 **3) Speaks Out** vs 13-18

But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I BELIEVED, THEREFORE I SPOKE," we also believe, therefore we also speak,

- Do you know if you strongly believe something you will speak it out!
- Paul is quoting David in Psalm 116:10

What do we believe? What do we speak?

2Cr 4:14 knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you.

- We believe God Raised the Lord Jesus! SO SPEAK IT OUT!
- We believe that He will raise us up also! SO SPEAK IT OUT!
- We believe that He will present each of us with the whole church! SO SPEAK IT OUT!

2Cr 4:15 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.

2Cr 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

- "ALL THINGS" The Glorious Gospel in an earthen, at times afflicted vessel is for the sake of others.
- THIS GOSPEL IS SPREADING!!! Are you a part of it?

- Paul says it brings thanksgiving and praise to the Glory of God.
- He adds that this renews the believer to see souls saved. That in the saving of souls "BURN OUT" is not possible.

2Cr 4:17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,

2Cr 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.

- My words that title this passage "Affliction Produces Glory" at the beginning may have caused doubt that it was truth. Because we usually focus on the "Affliction" part.
 - As we have seen this affliction isn't just troubles encountered in life.
 - But these afflictions are troubles or difficulties we encounter as we live for the sake of others bringing them the "Light of the knowledge of the glory of God" - Christ!
- Through this passage we are being refocused on the "Glory" part. This eternal glory is the salvation and eternal home we have through the solid promise of Christ.
- IN COMPARISON our afflictions are light. The salvation of those perishing is a glory "FAR BEYOND" any attention paid to difficulties or troubles we encounter. Our afflictions are Momentary but glory is eternal.

Hans Schleffer - *"The December evening was cold. As Hans Schläffer left the Anabaptist meeting in Schwaz, he was headed up the Inn River toward his home in the mountains of Austria. There he planned to sit out the winter months until Spring, when he would renew his ministry. But the plans of this former Roman Catholic priest received a rude shock.*

On this day, December 5, 1527, Hans Schläffer was arrested by local Roman Catholic authorities. In nearby Frundsberg Castle, they tortured him and priests examined him about infant-baptism. Hans said that according to scripture, a man had to "hear, understand, believe, and receive" God's word before being baptized. As he saw it, this alone counted as Christian baptism. Children need not be baptized and the Lord did not command it because they were already his. He might have added, as he had written--and was now demonstrating-- that "the Christian life is not child's play; but bitter earnestness, truth, courage and saintliness must be there."

When asked on what foundation the Anabaptists rested, he replied, "Our faith, actions, and baptism rest on nothing else than the commandment of Christ."

Hans was known as a master of prayer. On the day he was arrested, he had been teaching his hearers about prayer. Two months later, on the night before his execution (his head was cut off), he was still focused on prayer. He wrote a last letter to his flock; it was smuggled out of the castle and preserved for us. It read in part:

"Oh Father in heaven, whoever lives in Christ your Son and suffers and dies with him will rise with him in glory to be in his Kingdom forever. This is how we have understood the holy Gospel. This is how we understand Christ and his teachings, and this is how we now understand the word faith which we never understood like this before."

With the letter he included a prayer. It concluded with these words:

"Eternal Father! We pray that You will send workers into Your vineyard; for the harvest is great, while the laborers are few. We pray for all those who carry Your gospel throughout the whole world, that You will strengthen them with the power of Your holy spirit, that in them all the terror of man may be quenched and that they will not renounce Your Word through fear.

"Sustain us in Your Holy Name, and let us not wander away from You, fountain of living waters, that we may hold fast to the true faith firm unto the end."

3rd Reality Check - Do you believe? SPEAK IT OUT!

**"Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible[®],
Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973,
1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation
Used by permission." (www.Lockman.org)**