

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 4TH-5TH, 2024 // 2 CORINTHIANS

PERSISTENCE (2 CORINTHIANS 4:1-6) GLORIOUS MINISTRY

We've been given a ministry. Paul wants us to know the only reason we have this ministry at all is because of the great mercy of God. This ministry is serving under the new covenant. We have been entrusted with this ministry to go and make disciples.

- **We should be excited we get to share in this ministry. We get to do this!**

AUTHENTICITY

Paul mentions the gospel that we've received should change our lives. We should give up shameful ways, secret thoughts and desires (Hebrews 12:1). Coming to Christ is more than just a knowledge that Jesus died on the cross. It is placing our trust in Him.

- We are living testimonies to the change God has made in us.

BE CLEAR

Paul wants clarity in his message. He does not distort the Word or use clever persuasion (1 Corinthians 2:4). No matter his circumstances, Paul understands the message is not about him.

- **We need to be careful we're not "preaching" contradicting gospels by speaking one way and living another.**

KILL HYPOCRISY

Our lives must proclaim the truth of God's Word by the way we live. We no longer live in sin (Romans 6). "It's just who I am" is not an excuse. **When we surrender to Christ we are supposed to walk in humble obedience.** Christians should be authentic.

- **We're not perfect, but our lives shouldn't contradict what we preach.**

"OPEN DISPLAY OF TRUTH"

There is not another gospel. There is no secret message or special prayers. We don't water down the message but speak the truth in love. Too often churches are about everything but the gospel. We don't need to be hip or clever. The Word is enough. (Hebrews 4:12-13)

- **We don't need the gospel, and...**

"THE GOD OF THIS AGE"

We have an adversary who is seeking to steal, kill, and destroy. We will always find what we're looking for. The evidence of God for salvation is all around us, but we must want to see it. The problem isn't the gospel. The problem is so many are deceived by focusing on the wrong thing.

- **What are we focused on?**

BLINDED

The gospel of Christ is only veiled because we continue to live in sin. Paul says it's not about their intellect, but about their spiritual condition. Only when we finally see ourselves as sinners can we admit we need a Savior.

- **We can only be delivered through confession and repentance.**

FROM LIGHT TO LIFE

The reference Paul uses from Genesis ties the creation of light to Jesus as the light of the world. Just as the Spirit of God moved over the waters, the Spirit of God moves in our hearts.

- **It is God who draws us, brings conviction and then regenerates our hearts.**

CRACKED POTS (2 CORINTHIANS 4:7-15) TREASURE

The metaphor Paul uses to describe followers of Christ helps remind us that we are just the vessel. It is the power of the gospel message that changes lives. **It is God IN us that makes the difference.** The insufficiency of man reveals the sufficiency of God.

- **Our testimony is about the power of God.**

THE VALUABLE MESSAGE

The view of the gospel in Paul's mind was twofold.

- The treasure represents the new covenant ministry.
- The second is the priceless ministry carried around in "jars of clay." It's not our competence. **God chooses the weak so it's clear He is the one doing the work.**

EXTRAORDINARY POWER

Paul compares our frailty as humans versus the evidence of God's power. All our trials and suffering are opportunities for Christ to demonstrate His power in us.

- **Our testimony must be clear in exalting the name of Jesus. Our responsibility is to let others see the glory of God in us that displays His power** (2 Corinthians 3:18).

FOUR COMPARISONS

These are reminders we are never left alone. Paul was shipwrecked, beaten with rods, arrested, and imprisoned but compared to knowing Christ, considered it all an honor. Our hope isn't found in our circumstances.

- **We focus on the reward for our faith. No matter what happens, we have assurance of eternal life.**

"...GIVEN OVER TO DEATH..."

Paul was willing to face suffering and death for the sake of the message. "I bear...the marks of Jesus" (Galatians 6:17). The experiences that brought death to him meant life for other Believers. Paul just wants Jesus (Philippians 3).

- **It is tough to love people in the midst of trials and persecution, but God called us to make disciples.**

"...TO THE GLORY OF GOD"

This world was not Paul's home. He was confident of one day being raised to new life (Philippians 3:7-11). Paul was willing to go anywhere and endure anything as long as it brought glory to God.

- **Have we become so distracted by the world and "the god of this age" we're not even thinking of the glory of God?**

DON'T GIVE UP (2 CORINTHIANS 4:16-18) THEREFORE

In view of eternity, this life is short. Paul puts his sufferings in perspective. Rather than giving up, Paul allowed the Holy Spirit to renew him day by day. We experience renewal by **reading the Word, praying, and being in community.**

- **Life takes on new meaning when we see things through God's eyes.**

FOCUS

It is faith that enables the Christ follower to see things that cannot be seen (Hebrews 11:1-3). Culture challenges us to live and die for things that are temporary, but our hope is in things that are eternal.

- **When things get hard and there is suffering, we have to fix our eyes on Jesus and know our only hope is found in Him.**

MINISTRY

- The gospel is good news. We've been given the directive to share with others.
- Take risks for this glorious gospel. We have been given extraordinary power.
- **Don't give up! Making disciples is going to cost us something. People don't reject the gospel when we present it poorly, it's because Satan blinds them.**

CLARITY

- The enemy wants the truth to be distorted. Be clear. Confess failures, repent, and rely on the grace of God.
- Make certain that God is the one we exalt when we tell our story.
- We don't have to be perfect before we share the good news.
- **Leave the results up to the Holy Spirit.**

THIS IS TEMPORARY

- We can't be distracted by the "god of this age."
- This world is not our home.
- Afflicted, but not crushed. Confused, but not in despair. Persecuted, but God is with us. Struck down, but we will rise again.
- Philippians 3:12-14 (NIV)