

CHAPTER FOUR

Analysis

- A. Paul explained the nature of his ministry under the glorious New Covenant (1-6).
1. His attitude toward his ministry (1-2).
 - a) Since he had received it through the mercy that had been shown him by the Lord, he did not lose heart (1).
 - b) He did, however, reject things that were unbecoming to such a ministry (2a).
 - (1) He renounced the hidden things of shame.
 - (2) He did not carry on his ministry by craftiness.
 - (3) He did not handle the Word of God deceitfully.
 - c) He conducted himself in such a manner as to commend himself to every man's conscience (b).
 - (1) He did so by making the truth clear.
 - (2) It was done openly as in the sight of God.
 2. His attitude toward the gospel which he preached (3-6).
 - a) He assumed that his gospel might become veiled in some (3-4a).
 - (1) This could happen in the minds of those who were perishing.
 - (2) It was done by the god of this world.
 - (3) It was the result of their being blinded by unbelief.
 - b) He pointed out the result of this blindness: Those who are perishing do not see the light of the glory of the gospel of Christ who is the image of God (4b).
 - c) He gave his reasons for this view of the veiled gospel (5-6).
 - (1) Based on the message he preached:
 - (a) He didn't preach himself but Christ Jesus as Lord.
 - (b) He was their servant for Jesus' sake.
 - (2) Based on what God said:
 - (a) Let light shine out of darkness.
 - (b) God caused light to shine in his heart by revealing His truth.

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(c) This caused him to see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

B. Paul explained the secret of his ability to endure the trials of his ministry (7-15).

1. He was but an earthen vessel in which this treasure was carried that it might be evident that the power of his ministry was of God, not of himself (7).

2. Death was working in his case that they might have life (8-12).

a) He described the trials which he endured in his ministry (8-9).

(1) Pressed but not straightened.

(2) Perplexed but not unto despair.

(3) Pursued but not forsaken.

(4) Smitten down but not destroyed.

b) He explained the nature of these trials (10-12).

(1) They were like bearing about the dying of Jesus that the life of Jesus might be manifested in his body.

(2) He explained that he was delivered to death for Jesus' sake that the life of Jesus might be manifested in his mortal flesh.

(3) This meant that death was working in him, but life in the Corinthians.

3. His ministry was carried on in the spirit of faith (13-15).

a) His faith was like that of the Psalmist who said, "I believed, therefore I spoke" (13).

b) His faith was in God who raised up Christ and would raise him also (14).

c) His ministry of faith was for their sakes that the multiplied grace of the many might cause thanksgiving to abound unto the glory of God.

C. Paul explained his view of temporal suffering (16-18).

1. He did not lose courage in face of such suffering.

2. He thought of them in contrast to things eternal.

a) They were as light afflictions compared to the weight of eternal glory.

b) Things that are seen are temporal; things that are unseen are eternal.

*Paul's Response To The Ministry Under
The Glorious New Covenant*

Scripture

4:1-6. Therefore seeing we have this ministry, even as we obtained mercy, we faint not: 2 but we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by the manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in them that perish: 4 in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them. 5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 Seeing it is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Comments

Therefore seeing we have this ministry.—Paul had just explained his great boldness of speech in connection with his ministry under the New Covenant. This is a continuation of his answer to those who might criticize him for his claim to be adequate for such a ministry. *even as we obtained mercy.*—Paul had already made it clear that his sufficiency for this ministry was from God. He did not hesitate to admit that in himself he had no right to make such claims, for he remembered his former attitude toward Christ and his church. As he wrote to Timothy about the gospel of the glory of the blessed God which had been committed to his trust, he reminded him that Christ had counted him faithful and had appointed him to His service. This was in spite of the fact that once he had been a blasphemer and a persecutor and an injurious person. He had readily admitted to the Corinthians that he was the least of the apostles, not even worthy to be called an apostle because he had persecuted the church of God. See I Cor. 15:9. But he obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly in unbelief. See I Tim. 1:11-14. God's mercy had brought him pardon; his sins had been washed away by the blood of Christ at the time of his baptism. See Acts 22:16. Although Paul had been a Pharisee, his humility as a Christian reminds us of the publican who prayed, "Be merciful to me the sinner" (Luke 18:13). Paul may have had in mind those arrogant false teachers who were

troubling the church at Corinth, suggesting that they, too, should have called upon God for mercy.

we faint not.—Paul's humility is matched by his courageous faith and confidence in the Lord. He was like David who, after he had slain the lion and the bear, fearlessly faced the giant Philistine who had been defying the army of Israel. Like David, Paul also came in the name of the Lord. He refused to act the part of a coward as he faced the hardships of this glorious ministry. Neither was he frightened by the derogatory slander of the false teachers at Corinth. *we have renounced the hidden things of shame.*—While "renounce" may have the sense of "give up," it is doubtful that this would be true in Paul's case.

As to the righteousness which is in the Law, Paul declared that he had been found blameless. See Phil. 3:6. This reminds us of the Rich Young Ruler who said to Jesus that he had observed all the commandments from his youth. See Luke 18:21. But he had failed to keep the first commandment which said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Paul freely admitted, however, that before he had become a Christian he had been guilty of covetousness. Sin had dwelt in him, dominating his life and leading him to do many things he hated. See Rom. 7:7-20. But he had been released from the tyranny of that master when he became obedient to Christ the Lord. See Rom. 6:17-18.

"Renounce" also means to refuse. Even as a Pharisee, it is doubtful if Paul ever resorted to the shameful practices which he condemns in this context. But certain Judaizing teachers who had been disturbing the churches were guilty of them. Paul categorized the corrupt teachers who had been disrupting the Galatian churches as "false brethren, privily brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Jesus Christ, that they might bring us into bondage" (Gal. 2:4).

It is true also that Paul had persecuted the church of God and had tried to destroy it, because he was convinced that it was wrong. See Gal. 1:13. "Breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" he had traveled even to Damascus hunting them down. He had obtained letters from the high priest giving him authority to arrest any whom he might find that were of the Way, men or women, and bring them bound to Jerusalem. See Acts 9:1-2.

Whatever these hidden things of shame were, as an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul refused to become involved in them. He

gave full notice to all that he would not stoop to such practices in order to gain power over his fellowmen.

not working in craftiness.—This is a reference to the methods of those who indulged in the hidden things of shame. See Eph. 5:12. Some of them would do anything to accomplish their own selfish ends, even if it meant handling the Word of God deceitfully. Paul had already mentioned those who were making merchandise of the Word of God. As a fisherman uses a lure to attract the unsuspecting fish, so the false teacher used deceit in order to capture his victim. Paul, however, had said to the Ephesian elders: "I am pure from the blood of all men, for I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:26-27).

There are various ways to use the Word of God deceitfully. Using a Bible text to preach a "sermon" that has little or nothing to do with the Bible is one of the common ways of doing it. Teaching it accurately, but refusing to live by it is equally deceitful. Jesus condemned the scribes and Pharisees for this very thing. See Matt. 23:1-2. Paul wrote about some of the Jews who were doing the same thing, saying, "for this reason the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you" (Rom. 2:23).

Both Jesus and Paul demonstrated the proper use of the Scriptures. In the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus read from the prophecy of Isaiah concerning Himself. When He had finished reading He explained the meaning of the prophecy to the people. They wondered at the gracious words which He spoke. See Luke 4:16-21. Paul told Timothy that the inspired Scriptures were profitable for teaching, correction, instruction in righteousness, and that they completely equip the man of God for every good work. See II Tim. 3:16-17. Paul insisted on proclaiming the truth of God's Word and letting that truth be seen in his life. See Gal. 2:20 and I Cor. 11:1.

commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.—Paul's ministry was out in the open so that every man could see and know the truth for which he stood. And this is the thing that commended him to them. He was aware of the fact that as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ all that he said and did was done in the sight of God.

even if our gospel is veiled.—He was, no doubt, anticipating the reaction to his remarks about the veil that lies upon those who hear the Law of Moses read. He frankly admitted that the gospel is veiled in the case of those who were perishing. They were perishing because they had failed to turn to the Lord who is revealed in the

glorious New Covenant. The message of the gospel is about eternal life and also about eternal death. To reject the message of the Lord is to perish.

in whom the god of this world.—Satan is properly called the god of this age because he is worshipped by those who are perishing. Of course, there is only one true God, the Father, and one true Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ. See I Cor. 8:6. When Gentile sacrificed to idols, Paul said that they were sacrificing to demons and not to God. Idolatry was demon worship. Satan is known as the prince of demons. See Matt. 12:44. Satan even dared to challenge the Son of God to fall down and worship him, offering to give Him all the kingdoms of the world if He would do so. See Matt. 4:8. Jesus made it clear that no one can serve two masters. He said, "You cannot serve God and mammon" (Luke 16:13). Satan can be called the god of this age because of the time limit that is imposed upon his activities. At the close of this age, the devil will be cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone where are also the beast and the false prophet, and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. See Rev. 20:10.

Christ conquered Satan at the cross and provided the means whereby His followers may also overcome him, that is, by the blood of the Lamb, the Word of their testimony, and their dedication to the Lord that is indicated by the fact that they love not their lives even unto death. See Rev. 12:11 and Heb. 2:14.

blinded the minds of the unbelieving.—Belief in Christ rests solidly on the evidence of His resurrection. See Rom. 10:9-10. The sheer weight of that evidence compelled the apostles who had investigated every phase of it to believe that God had raised Jesus from the dead. The inspired writers have left us a reliable record of the evidence of that greatest fact of history.

Paul knew that many were blind because they did not want to believe. They were satisfied with the Old Covenant and proud of their own righteousness.

Jesus had found this same blindness among the people of His day. They did not understand what He said because they did not hear what He was really saying. Why? Because they were intent on doing the evil which their father, the devil, was suggesting to them. He was a liar and the father of liars. His offspring were not interested in the truth which the Son of God spoke. See John 8:42-46.

that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.—Unbelief had closed the minds of those who were perishing. They would not permit

the knowledge of the gospel which tells of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ to enlighten their darkened minds. They "loved the darkness rather than the light" (John 3:19).

who is the image of God.—Paul pointed out the seriousness of this blindness. To reject Christ is to reject God, for He is the image of God, that is, "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15). John, also, says that "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18). Thus both John and Paul emphatically state their belief in the deity of Jesus. John says that "the Word was God" (John 1:1), and that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

The Gospel of John unfolds the story of the Father as He is seen in the Person of Jesus Christ. Jesus declared, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). He also said "no one cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6). When Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us," Jesus answered, "Have I been so long time with you, and do you not know me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:8-9). Indeed, if they had recognized Him, they would have known the Father. See John 14:7. The writer of Hebrews indicates that the Son is the exact representation of God. See Heb. 1:3. The veil of unbelief prevented many from seeing this truth.

Paul declared that in Christ "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). The most complete explanation of this profound truth of Christianity is found in Phil. 2:5-11. His deity and humanity are presented by Paul in terms similar to those used by John in his Gospel and his first epistle. See John 1:1-8 and I John 1:1-4.

for we preach not ourselves.—In no way did Paul preach himself. He always preached Christ Jesus as Lord. He was merely the agent through whom the knowledge of Christ had been made known in every place. He had no lordship over their faith; his task was to help them in their joyous relationship to the Lord.

Of himself he could say, "I am your servant for Jesus' sake." In so doing he was following the standard which the Lord had set for all who would serve Him. "Whosoever would be first among you," He said, "let him be servant of all." The Son of Man did not come to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for the many. See Mark 10:44-45.

This attitude was the opposite of that of the false teachers who were troubling the Corinthians, for they were commending themselves and measuring themselves by their own standards. See II Cor. 10:12.

Seeing that it is God.—This is Paul's reason for preaching Christ. In contrast to what he had said about the god of this world who had blinded the minds of the unbelieving, Paul declared that it was God who caused light to shine out of darkness and who had shined in his heart to give the enlightenment that comes from the knowledge about the glory of God as it is seen in the face of Jesus. He wrote to the Galatians to say that God had revealed His Son in him that he might preach Him among the Gentiles. See Gal. 1:16.

Several contrasts are seen in these verses: (1) The god of this age is contrasted with God who created the world. (2) The blinded minds of the unbelievers are contrasted with the enlightened heart of Paul as a believer in Christ. (3) Unbelief which prevented the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ from dawning on the darkened minds is contrasted with the faith of the opened heart that allows the enlightenment that comes from the knowledge of the glory of God which is seen in the face of Christ to shine.

The shining brilliance on the face of Moses suggests the thought of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Moses' face shone as he spoke to Israel the message which God had given him. Christ is the One through whom God revealed His gospel to the apostles, and they preached Christ Jesus as Lord for the salvation of the believer.

Paul had been permitted to see the brilliant light and to hear the voice of Christ when He commissioned him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. See Acts 26:12-18. Jesus told him that through his preaching the Gentiles were to "open their eyes, that they might turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in Christ."

Since Paul has been discussing the Old Covenant in contrast to the New, it might be well to recall what the writer of Hebrews said about the mountain from which God spoke to Israel. That mountain "burned with fire and unto blackness and darkness, and tempest and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which they that heard entreated that no more should be spoken unto them" (Heb. 12:18-19). The message that came from Mount Zion, however, brought the good news of remission of sins that had been promised.

to all believers from the time of Abraham. See Gal. 3:6-14; Isa. 2:1-4.

John wrote of Christ saying "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not" (John 1:4-5). Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). All this seems to say the same thing that Paul did when he spoke of "the enlightenment of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Paul's View Of His Ministry

Scripture

4:7-18. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves; 8 we are pressed on every side, yet not straitened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; 9 pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed; 10 always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you. 13 But having the same spirit of faith, according to that which is written, I believed, and therefore did I speak; we also believe, and therefore also we speak; 14 knowing that he that raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also with Jesus, and shall present us with you. 15 For all things are for your sakes, that the grace, being multiplied through the many, may cause the thanksgiving to abound unto the glory of God.

16 Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; 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.

Comments

But we have this treasure.—Paul's ministry as an apostle in connection with the New Covenant had been obtained through the mercy of God. He, therefore, did not hesitate to declare that he was in no way

shrinking from the responsibilities involved in it. To him, it was a privilege to proclaim the gospel of the glory of Christ, for it is this gospel that gives enlightenment to the believer as he comes to know about the glory of God as it is seen in the Person of Christ. This gospel message is the treasure in such earthen vessels as the apostles. God had committed it to them as a trust. See I Tim. 1:11.

Paul wrote to Timothy telling him to guard that which had been committed to him—the gospel which was the precious treasure which had been given to him in trust for safe keeping—urging him to “turn away from profane babblings and oppositions of the knowledge which is falsely so called, which some professing have erred concerning the faith” (I Tim. 6:20-21). The human being is indeed a fragile vessel in which to entrust the precious message of eternal life, but such is the confidence that God had in Paul and others who dedicate themselves to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul said to Timothy, “The things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (II Tim. 2:2).

the power may be of God and not from ourselves.—This is the secret of Paul’s ministry. The power of his message was not in himself but in God. He had written to the Corinthians in the first letter saying, “I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling: And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of men’s wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (I Cor. 2:4). To the Romans he wrote, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16).

Paul’s enemies at Corinth were evidently proud of their personal appearance, their ability as orators, and their power to persuade the Corinthians to believe them rather than the gospel which Paul had preached. Paul did not bother to defend himself against their insinuations that his bodily presence was weak. He took it as an occasion to point out that his power was from God, not from himself. This power could be seen in the miracles which the apostles performed. The miracles demonstrated that their message came from God. Its effect had been seen in the transformed lives of those whose sins had been washed away by the blood of Christ. They were living a life of separation from sin and dedication to the service of God. They had been pardoned in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of God. See I Cor. 5:11.

There was another side to this ministry that had to do with life and death. It was that of human frailty facing the hardships of this ministry, facing them in such a manner that the power of God might be seen in His servants. Paul pointed out five examples of this human weakness. In none of them was he preaching about himself, for his faith and hope were in God throughout all his trials. The first four examples present contrasts between the hardships he faced and the relief that always came. The last explains his attitude toward all the hardships which he suffered in preaching the gospel.

pressed on every side, yet not straitened.—This begins the list of physical hardships which Paul suffered in his ministry. He had been in tight places, but always found the way out. The riot at Ephesus is a good example. See Acts 19:23-41. The town clerk quieted the mob that would have destroyed Paul and made it possible for him, after having exhorted the disciples, to go on to Macedonia. The arrest in Jerusalem was another tight spot in which Paul was saved from the violence of the angry crowd by the Roman soldiers that policed the temple area. See Acts 21:35. The pressures of his ministry finally resulted in his imprisonment. On the night following his arrest in Jerusalem, the Lord stood by him and said, "Be of good cheer, for as thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (Acts 23:11).

perplexed, yet not unto despair.—The difficulties involved in communication between himself and the Corinthian church left him at his wits end. He was eager to help them and to prevent the false teachers from making havoc of the church of God. But he did not despair; he took the necessary action that finally led him to Macedonia where he found Titus and learned about the situation at Corinth.

pursued, yet not forsaken.—Paul's enemies pursued him wherever he went; but he was never left in the lurch, for the Lord was always with him. His enemies pursued him until they succeeded in having him arrested, but this led to his being sent to Rome where he presented his case—actually, the case for the gospel—before Caesar. In the stormy crossing of the sea that threatened the lives of all on board the ship, an angel of God said to Paul, "Fear not, Paul, thou must stand before Caesar. And lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee" (Acts 27:23-24). In the trial that followed, when all other had forsaken him, the Lord stood by Paul. See II Tim. 4:17. Out of confidence of victory, Paul wrote this message to Timothy, "Be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill thy ministry. For I am already being offered, and

the time of my departure is come, I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at the last day; and not to me only, but to all that have loved the Lord's appearing" (II Tim. 4:5-8).

smitten down, yet not destroyed.—Paul knew what it meant to be struck down like a soldier on the battle field. At Lystra the enemy stoned him and dragged him out of the city thinking that he was dead. But as the disciples stood around him he rose up and entered into the city, and on the next day went on to Derbe. See Acts 14:19-20.

always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus.—The Jews were constantly seeking to kill Jesus. See John 5:18; 7:1. When they could not meet the logic of His wisdom in open debate, they took up stones to cast at Him. See John 8:59; 10:31. They would have done it too, except for the fact that it was not His hour to die. He had the right to lay down His life and the right to take it again. See John 10:18; 7:30. But they were determined to put Him to death; their only problem was how to get it done. Judas gave them the opportunity they had been looking for when he offered to betray Him into their hands. Their charge of blasphemy on which they agreed that He was worthy of death meant nothing to Pilate, and they knew it. Therefore they brought such charges as insurrection against Caesar that they might force the governor to sentence Jesus to die on the Roman cross. But He arose in triumph from the dead and "ever lives to make intercession for us" (Heb. 7:25). As an apostle of Christ, Paul was always facing death at the hands of his persecutors. They finally succeeded; but for Paul, death simply meant being absent from the body and at home with the Lord. See also Col. 1:24 for further information on Paul's attitude toward suffering for Christ. *that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.*—The life of Jesus is His life which survived the experience of death, for God raised Him up.

So then death worketh in us, but life in you.—The earthen vessel was subject to death and persecution. But it held the glorious message of eternal life for the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul was their servant for the sake of Jesus Christ.

the same spirit of faith.—Defending his courage to speak even in face of death, Paul turned to the message of Psalms 116:8-11 to show that he had the same attitude of faith as the Psalmist who faced the threat of death. Paul's confidence was in God and in the

power of the gospel to save. He knew that God had raised Jesus Christ from the dead, for he had seen the risen Lord. He was also certain that God would raise him up from the dead and present him to Christ along with the saints at Corinth. See Eph. 5:25-27.

For all things are for your sakes.—All that God had done through the Lord Jesus Christ was for the sake of the believer. All that Paul had suffered in order to bring the gospel to them was for their sakes. God's grace multiplied by the many who were brought to life in Jesus Christ caused thanks to abound unto the glory of God. *Wherefore we faint not.*—Paul declared again his courage to carry on the ministry of the gospel of Christ. He had faced hardships, even death itself, in fulfilling his ministry. He courageously continued on his course knowing death would overtake him some day. He develops this thought beginning in 4:16 and continuing through 5:10.

our outward man is decaying.—By "outward man" Paul meant the physical body in which he had endured so many hardships. See the list in 11:24-28. It leaves us wondering how any man could have endured all this. But it was a different story with the man who lived in that body, that is, "the inward man." While the body was subject to death, the inward man was being renewed day by day. Paul said, "For which cause I suffer also these things: yet I am not ashamed; for I know him whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day" (II Tim. 1:12).

our light affliction.—As we think of the affliction suffered by Paul, we wonder how he could have called it light. It was light as compared to the eternal weight of glory which he anticipated at the close of his faithful ministry. The affliction was for the moment, but the glory will be forever, eternal in the heavens. The afflictions could be seen, but the glory cannot be seen with the physical eye. The things that are not seen, however, are eternal. Paul discusses these things in 5:1-10.

Summary

Explaining his attitude toward the ministry of the New Covenant, Paul showed why he preached Christ, even though his gospel was obscured in the minds of some.

He had obtained this ministry through God's mercy, not by any merit of his own. He was determined not to act like a fainthearted coward in discharging his obligations to it. He renounced methods and motives not in harmony with the gospel and rested his case on the

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presentation of the truth. He refused to resort to the secret things that belonged to the shameful practices of false teachers. He did not resort to craftiness, nor did he deceitfully use the gospel. By making the truth clear to his hearers, he commended himself to the consciences of men before God.

Paul had said that some were blind to the true nature of the Old Covenant, and he readily admitted that the gospel might be obscured in the minds of those who were blinded by the god of this age. The sin of unbelief kept the glorious light of the gospel from dawning on them. Even so, Paul was determined not to preach himself, but Christ Jesus as Lord. He was their servant for Jesus' sake. God caused the light of the knowledge of His glory to shine through the preaching of the apostle that it might bring enlightenment to the believer.

This gospel was like a precious treasure which God kept in earthen vessels—his apostles and preachers of the Word. Paul trusted, not in himself, but in God for strength to endure the hardships of his ministry. He was hard pressed, but not to the extent that he could not move. He was perplexed, but never gave up. He was pursued by men, but never forsaken by God. He was struck down, but never left to die until his time to go home to be with the Lord. Paul, just as Jesus had done, faced death constantly at the hands of his persecutors. But he was delivered from death that he might continue to tell of the risen Lord; for this meant life for the Corinthians who believed.

As the Psalmist believed in God who delivered him from death, so Paul also believed that God would deliver him. He spoke with boldness and confidence about his hope that God who raised up Jesus would raise him also from the dead and present him in the resurrection with the faithful Corinthians. He reminded them that he had endured all these things for their sakes in order that God's grace which was multiplied by the many trials through which the faithful go might abound in thanksgiving on their part to the glory of God.

Paul was not afraid to face the hardships of his ministry, even the constant danger of death. He knew, of course, that his physical body was wearing out. But this was more than offset by the fact that his inward man was being renewed constantly. These afflictions were a momentary light load as compared to the eternal weight of glory to which he looked after patiently enduring the trials of this life. He did not look at these perils as one who keeps his eyes on things which can be seen, for he was thinking of things that cannot be

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seen with the physical eye, that is, the things that are eternal in the heavens.

Questions

1. Why did Paul again refer to his ministry at this point?
2. What merciful thing had God done for Paul in connection with his ministry?
3. In what way had Paul's conversion changed his Pharisaical views?
4. What might this suggest as to the teachers who were disturbing the church at Corinth?
5. What was Paul's attitude toward the hardships which he faced?
6. What were the hidden things of shame which Paul renounced?
7. What kind of a life had he lived as a Pharisee?
8. How do the practices of the false teachers in Galatia show what Paul meant by "hidden things of shame"?
9. What were some of the crafty, deceitful practices of some of the false teachers in Paul's day?
10. What did Paul say to the Ephesian elders about his own relation to the whole counsel of God?
11. How did Paul seek to commend his ministry?
12. Why did he speak of the possibility of the gospel being veiled?
13. Who is the god of this age?
14. How does he blind the minds of some to the truth of the gospel?
15. What will ultimately happen to the god of this age and to all who worship him?
16. On what does belief in Christ rest?
17. What experience did Jesus have with this kind of blindness?
18. What is the light of the gospel?
19. What did Paul mean when he spoke of Christ as the image of God?
20. What did Jesus say about His relation to the Father?
21. What did Paul mean when he said, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord"?
22. Why did he speak of himself as their servant?
23. Why did Paul refer to the fact that God said, "Light shall shine out of darkness"?
24. How had God enlightened the heart of Paul? How does he enlighten hearts of others?

II CORINTHIANS

25. What contrasts may be seen between the god of this world and God who sheds light on our minds through the gospel?
26. What did Paul mean by "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"?
27. What is the connection between this thought and that of the glory on the face of Moses?
28. What contrast may this suggest between the message that went forth from Sinai and the gospel that was preached on the Day of Pentecost?
29. What was the treasure in earthen vessels?
30. What were the earthen vessels?
31. What important view of Paul's ministry does this give?
32. Why did Paul mention the frailty of the human body at this point?
33. What experience of Paul had caused him to be pressed on every side, yet not straitened?
34. How did the failure to find Titus cause him to be perplexed, yet not unto despair?
35. How did Paul show that the Lord had never forsaken him?
36. When had he been smitten down, but not destroyed?
37. In what way was he always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus?
38. What was the purpose of this?
39. What did he mean by saying, "Death works in us, but life in you"?
40. To what spirit of faith did Paul refer? Why?
41. Why was Paul cheerful even though he knew that his physical body was wearing out?
42. With what did he compare his "light affliction"?
43. What is "the eternal weight of glory"?

For Discussion

1. What can be done to exalt the gospel today when so many are preoccupied with human systems of thought?
2. How can the unseen glories of heaven be made real to us?