**2 Corinthians 4**

*Paul contends the preaching of Christ brings light into the world. Though his preaching led to persecution, hope in Christ trumps despair. (Synopsis by Stan Cox)*

1. Paul’s Ministry, Appeals, and Admonitions **(1:3-7:16)**
2. Suffering and Comfort **(1:3-11)**
3. Paul’s Plans and Charge of Fickleness **(1:12-2:2)**
4. Purpose for the Former Letter **(2:3-11)**
5. The Ministry of the New Covenant **(2:12-7:16)**
   1. Apostolic Conduct and Character **(4:1-5:11)**
      1. The Approach of Paul’s Ministry **(vv. 1-6).**
         1. Shameful things renounced **(vv. 1-2).**
            1. Does not lose heart because of the glorious nature of the ministry received by God **(v. 1).**
            2. Does not preach the gospel with a dishonest approach, but straightforwardly before God **(v. 2).**
         2. The gospel is veiled to the perishing **(vv. 3-4).**
            1. The gospel is not veiled, but if it seems to be veiled it is only veiled to the perishing **(v. 3).**
            2. Their minds are blinded by the god of this age **(v. 4a).**
            3. This is so the light of the gospel cannot shine on them **(v. 4b).**
         3. Preaching the glory of God in Christ **(vv. 5-6).**
            1. Paul does not preach himself, but Christ. He is a mere servant for Jesus’ sake **(v. 5).**
            2. God is using them to give the light of His glory in the face of Jesus **(v. 6).**
      2. The Suffering of Paul’s Ministry **(vv. 7-18).**
         1. The Purpose of the Suffering **(vv. 7-15).**
            1. The treasure (glorious ministry leading to life) is in inferior vessels (human ministers) so the glory goes to God **(v. 7).**
            2. Suffering *“earthen vessels:”* **(vv. 8-9)**

Hard-pressed – NOT crushed.

Perplexed – NOT in despair.

Persecuted – NOT forsaken.

Struck down – NOT destroyed.

* + - * 1. This *“dying of the Lord Jesus”* carried in the body is so the *“life of Jesus,”* i.e. spiritual life as a result of the glorious ministry, can be manifested, and work in those who believe **(vv. 10-12).**
        2. Paul is confident of the resurrection, so he preaches the gospel, enduring the suffering, knowing that it will benefit both he and those who submit to the gospel preached, causing many to thank God **(vv. 13-15).**
      1. The Hope in Suffering **(vv. 16-18).**
         1. Because of the hope of the resurrection, Paul does not lose heart **(v. 16).**

His outward man may be perishing *(“the dying of the Lord Jesus”*) **(v. 16a).**

But his inward man is being renewed (*“the life of Jesus”*) **(v. 16b).**

* + - * 1. The suffering for the sake of Christ is considered as *“light affliction”* by Paul, because the promised glory is far better **(v. 17).**
        2. This glory cannot yet be seen, but by faith Paul knows it is sure and eternal **(v. 18).**

**Questions**

1. Explain the veiling of the gospel in **verses 3-4.** How does the *“god of this age”* blind men? Do they have a choice? If they do, why do they choose to be veiled **(v. 4b)?** What does this say about how God operates in the realm of salvation and man?
2. What is the *“life of Jesus…manifested in…mortal flesh”* **(vv. 10-12)?** **(cf. 2:14-16; 3:2-3)**
3. How is it that the *“inward man is being renewed day by day”* **(v. 16)?**