

"The New Ministry"

2 Corinthians 4:1-7

Part 2

Introduction: Tonight in our study of 2 Corinthians we are going to look at 5 verses which contain an abundance of spiritual Truth. The verses are 2 Corinthians 4:3-7 and in these verses we have the privilege of looking into the spiritual world to see the spiritual battle which takes place in the lives of the unsaved of this world.

Here in the passage before us Paul is defending his message of the New Covenant which is the Ministry of Life. There were many false teachers of Paul's day who took the Scriptures and twisted them to say what they desired for them to say. Peter wrote concerning these false teachers.

2 Peter 3:15-17

¹⁵ And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

*¹⁶ As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, **which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures,** unto their own destruction.*

¹⁷ Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.

Paul therefore explained in the verses which we looked at last week that he was not like the false teachers who distorted the Word but instead he preached the word of God plainly.

Notice 2 Corinthians 4:2

But there were many who could not grasp the message which Paul preached and for that reason the false teachers accused him of not preaching a clear message. So Paul is about to explain why some could not understand his message.

I. **The Lost**

Notice 2 Corinthians 4:3

The "Gospel" which Paul speaks of here is the very Gospel which is defined in 1 Corinthians 15.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

² By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

³ For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures:

⁴ And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

Getting back to our verse, the word "hid" means to "be veiled" and the word "lost" refers to those who "are perishing". Those who are not saved are unable to understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To you and I who are saved the message is a beautiful message of Light but to the lost it is veiled in darkness. This is pictured in the Old Testament.

Exodus 14:19-20

¹⁹ And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them:

²⁰ And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.

The Shekinah Glory of the Old Testament was a light to Israel but it was darkness to the Egyptians. The message of the Gospel has the very same effect today.

Why is it that some can understand the Gospel and others cannot?

Notice 2 Corinthians 4:4

Here we see that Satan has blinded the minds of those who BEVIEVED NOT. Those who are blinded by Satan are not innocent victims whom Satan has singled out. These are people who have rejected the Truth by personal choice. Let me show you some verses that will support man's ability to reject or accept Jesus Christ.

Genesis 4:1-7

And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.

² And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

³ And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

⁴ And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

⁵ But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

⁶ And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

⁷ **If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.**

Here is the example of Cain. He had come to the cross roads and he needed to make a choice. He rejected God's way and was forever lost.

2 Thessalonians 2:8-11

⁸ And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

⁹ Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; **because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.**

¹¹ And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

Here is a passage describing those of the Great Tribulation who will reject the Gospel.

The point I want you to see is that man has the ability to choose or reject Jesus Christ. Let me show you the Words of Jesus Christ.

John 3:17-20

¹⁷ For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

¹⁸ He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

¹⁹ **And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.**

²⁰ **For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.**

Here in John 3 it is verse 19 which holds the key to understanding why the lost are blind and it is because they have loved the darkness more than the light.

In John 12 we get a detailed explanation of what happens to those who reject the Gospel.

John 12:35-41

³⁵ Then Jesus said unto them, *Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.*

³⁶ While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

³⁷ But though he had done so many miracles before them, **yet they believed not on him:**

³⁸ That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

³⁹ Therefore **they could not believe,** because that Esaias said again,

⁴⁰ He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

⁴¹ These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

Let me show you the words of Warren Wiersbe on this passage:

*"First, John explained the unbelief of the people. **They would not believe** (John 12:37-38, with a quotation from Isa. 53:1); **they could not believe** (John 12:39); and **they should not believe** (John 12:40-41, with a quotation from Isa 6:9, 10)."*

So the point is that when anyone hears the Gospel and they reject the Gospel they are causing their own spiritual blindness. Notice the words of Wuest:

"The penalty of living in the darkness is not merely that one does not see, but that one goes blind. The neglected faculty is atrophied."

Now this raises a question in my mind that others also may think of, "What about those who have never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ?" These people also have been given the Truth that God exists and they are accountable to that Truth.

Romans 1:18-20

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

¹⁹ *Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.*

²⁰ *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:*

Every person has been given within them the knowledge of God. The way they respond to that knowledge has much to do with what happens to their hearts. If they act upon the Light given to them then I believe God will bring someone into their life that will share the Gospel. If they suppress the Light I believe they sink deeper into darkness.

Acts 8:26-31

²⁶ *And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.*

²⁷ *And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,*

²⁸ *Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.*

²⁹ *Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.*

³⁰ *And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?*

³¹ *And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.*

Here was a man who did not suppress the Truth given to him and therefore God sent Philip to share the Gospel with him.

Now let us get back to our verse again.

Notice 2 Corinthians 4:4

I want to raise a question here again. "How does Satan blind the minds of those who are lost?"

He presents to them some kind of false religion in which they are then given a false sense of security.

Today we see the Mormons, the Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, Hinduism, Islam and the list goes on and on. God has designed man so that we have a desire to worship.

Therefore, man will find a god that he can worship and Satan is glad to introduce man to any god he desires. This always leads to idolatry and that opens up a very powerful danger.

1 Corinthians 10:14-20

¹⁴ *Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.*

¹⁵ *I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.*

¹⁶ *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*

¹⁷ *For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.*

¹⁸ *Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?*

¹⁹ *What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing?*

²⁰ *But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.*

Here is something which we studied a while back and that is that Demons attach themselves to idols and then they can control the minds of the unsaved.

This is some of the ways in which Satan blinds the minds of the lost.

Conclusion:

For anyone who is listen to the cd or watching on the live stream you need to know that if you are not saved you are walking on very dangerous ground. You cannot see where you are going and at the same time you are contributing to your blindness. Satan has sold you a false religion and if you continue on that path you will die in your sins and burn in the Lake of Fire.