

**"The New Ministry"**

**2 Corinthians 4:1-7**

**Part 3**

**Introduction:** Tonight we are returning to our study 2 Corinthians 4 and as we do I need to remind you that in the section we are in Paul is defending his ministry against the attacks of his critics, namely the Judaizers. They held on to the Old Covenant and tried their best to pull the church under the Old Covenant. Paul made it clear that his ministry was a MINISTRY OF LIFE but the Old Covenant was a MINISTRY OF DEATH. Here in chapter 4 Paul has explained that he used no trickery, no deceit, and no gimmicks but instead he preached the Word of God straight forward.

**Notice 2 Corinthians 4:2**

Now there were those who could not grasp the message of the Gospel and therefore they blamed Paul for their confusion. But it was not Paul's fault.

**Notice 2 Corinthians 4:3-4a**

This is what we had looked at last week and we were able to see that Satan blinds the minds of those who will not believe the Gospel.

**John 12:37-40**

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

<sup>38</sup> *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?*

<sup>39</sup> *Therefore **they could not believe**, because that Esaias said again,*

<sup>40</sup> *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.*

Here we can see that because they WOULD NOT BELIEVE the result was THEY COULD NOT BELIEVE. But when someone is willing to turn from their sin and come to Christ then the vail is lifted.

**2 Corinthians 3:13-16**

<sup>13</sup> *And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:*

<sup>14</sup> *But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.*

<sup>15</sup> *But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.*

<sup>16</sup> **Nevertheless when it/they shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.**

**Application:**

There are many in our society today who are under the blinding power of Satan. They have bought into a false religion which Satan has sold to them and the longer they continue to reject Jesus Christ the deeper they sink into the darkness.

Remember 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."***

This now brings us to where we are in our study tonight.

I. **The Focus of Paul's Message**

Now we must understand that some of those who criticized Paul accused him of making his ministry all about himself. Therefore Paul is about to remind the Corinthians of what his message was all about.

**Notice 2 Corinthians 4:5**

Paul stated that he and those with him did not preach about themselves. The message was not about the Apostles. The message Paul preached was the Message of Jesus Christ the Lord. There are several thoughts which we need to consider here:

1. **It is the message of Jesus Christ that needs to be proclaimed today.**

Paul preached Jesus Christ which included His death, burial and resurrection. This was the message which had the power to set the prisoner free.

**Romans 1:16**

<sup>16</sup> **For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.**

There is POWER in the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Satan has blinded the minds of the lost and there is only one message which can penetrate the darkness in their minds and it is the message of Jesus Christ.

**1 Thessalonians 1:5-6**

<sup>5</sup> For our gospel came not unto you in word only, **but also in power**, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

<sup>6</sup> And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.

**Hebrews 4:12**

<sup>12</sup> For the word of God is quick, **and powerful**, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Paul could have told many stories about himself and others whom he traveled with but he knew that stories about himself would not save one person.

**Notice the words of Dave Guzik:**

*"Not everyone who opens a Bible and starts talking is preaching Christ Jesus the Lord. Many well-intentioned preachers are actually preaching themselves instead of Jesus. If the focus is on the funny stories or the touching life experiences of the preacher, he may be preaching himself.*

*Often, people love it when the preacher preaches himself. It is revealing, it seems intimate, and it is often entertaining. It is also tempting for the preacher, because he sees how people respond when he focuses the message on himself. But the bottom line is that the preacher himself can't bring you to God and save your eternal soul; only Jesus can. So preach Jesus!"*

The Pastor has been given the spiritual gift of Pastor-teacher and this gift is for the purpose of building up the body of Jesus Christ. This will only happen when the Word of God is taught. It will not happen through stories and entertainment.

**2. The message is Jesus Christ THE LORD.**

**Notice 2 Corinthians 4:5a**

I find it interesting that Paul does not say, "Jesus Christ the Savior". He does not say, "Jesus Christ the Son of God". The message is Jesus Christ the LORD. This title speaks of the Authority which Jesus has in the life of the believer.

Before we were saved we were under the authority of the flesh, the world and the Devil.

**Ephesians 2:1-3**

*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*

<sup>2</sup> *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*

<sup>3</sup> *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

When we came to Jesus Christ and were saved the GOVERNMENT changed. When Paul presents Jesus Christ as LORD he is speaking of the change which happens in the life of the believer.

**2 Corinthians 5:17**

<sup>17</sup> *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

**Galatians 6:15**

<sup>15</sup> *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.*

These 2 verses both speak of the change of GOVERNMENT within the believer after salvation. This is also what the New Covenant is all about.

**Jeremiah 31:33**

<sup>33</sup> *But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

The New Covenant is an inward covenant and not an external covenant. Let me remind you of the words of Jesus Christ.

**Matthew 7:21-23**

<sup>21</sup> *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

<sup>22</sup> *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*

<sup>23</sup> *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

There will be many who will perish who call Jesus Lord but the truth is they were controlled by the flesh, the world, and the Devil and they live like there is no Bible. Therefore there has never been a change within their lives because they were never truly saved. Jesus was NEVER the Lord of their lives.

3. **Paul did not lord over the churches but instead he was a servant to others.**

### Notice 2 Corinthians 4:5b

Paul had within him the heart of a servant. He did not rule over the churches but he was a fellow servant with them. Let me show you how Vines defines the word "servant".

- a. **a slave**
- b. **metaph., one who gives himself up to another's will those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing his cause among men**
- c. **devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests**

Let me show you what Jesus said to His disciples.

### Matthew 20:25-28

<sup>25</sup> *But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.*

<sup>26</sup> *But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;*

<sup>27</sup> *And whosoever will be chief among you, **let him be your servant**:*

<sup>28</sup> *Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

If we are going to win people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ we too must exercise the heart of a servant. Jesus had come to give His life as a ransom for many and therefore we too must be willing to sacrifice to reach others with the Gospel.

### Philippians 2:3-8

<sup>3</sup> *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*

<sup>4</sup> *Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*

<sup>5</sup> **Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:**

<sup>6</sup> *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:*

<sup>7</sup> *But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

<sup>8</sup> *And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

This servant attitude can be seen best in a verse which our Lord spoke in the Sermon on the Mount.

**Matthew 7:12**

<sup>12</sup> *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*

Let me show you an example of a believer who had the heart of a servant and was led by the Spirit.

**Philippians 2:25-30**

<sup>25</sup> *Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.*

<sup>26</sup> *For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.*

<sup>27</sup> *For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.*

<sup>28</sup> *I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.*

<sup>29</sup> *Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation:*

<sup>30</sup> **Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.**

Conclusion:

People need to hear the message of Jesus Christ in order to be saved. To enhance the message we are to live in a way that they also SEE Jesus Christ in us.