

Displaying the Gospel

Believers can face life with confidence, knowing that the power of the gospel will be revealed.



The Transformation for Adult LifeGroups

2 CORINTHIANS 4:5-18

March 3, 2019/ March 6, 2019

TODAY'S TEXT

Text: 2 CORINTHIANS 4:5-18

For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ. ⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. ⁸ We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰ We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹ For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. ¹² So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you. ¹³ It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." Since we have that same spirit of [c] faith, we also believe and therefore speak, ¹⁴ because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. ¹⁵ All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. ¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

FIRST THOUGHTS

- What is something you like to display in your home? Perhaps a shelf with collectables, pictures of your family, etc.? What is something you have seen displayed in someone else's home? What does it tell you about them?
- Have you ever thought about the fact that you actually display something each and every day? Or more accurately, Someone? Today we are going to talk about how we display the Gospel – through our attitudes, our lives and where we put our focus.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Christianity was not tolerated as a legal religion anywhere in the Roman Empire of the first century. Thus, when Paul and other apostles wrote to encourage believers who faced persecution, he was dealing with a much more challenging cultural situation than any of us has faced.

Paul began his letter by reminding the Corinthians of the afflictions he had endured for the sake of the gospel (2 Cor. 1:3-11). Such afflictions, he said, actually benefited the Corinthians and brought them comfort and encouragement in their troubles. Paul's purpose was broader in scope, however. He was defending his apostleship and authority against some people who were criticizing him on account of his persistent sufferings (chaps. 10-11).

Although false teachers were fleecing the Corinthian believers financially through deceitful means (11:5-15), Paul reminded them how he labored among them "free of charge" (11:7) so that it wouldn't appear as if he was peddling the word of God (2:17). He had no need to seek a commendation from them, to prove himself to them again, since they themselves were his "letters of recommendation" (3:1). His apostolic ministry was adequate because God had made him competent as a minister of the new covenant in Christ (3:5-6).

In this week's Scripture passage, Paul was still dealing with these two interconnected issues: his sufferings and the question of his apostolic ministry. Indeed, he would commend himself and his collaborators "by setting forth the truth plainly" (2 Cor. 4:2). Paul's main agenda in these verses was to call the Corinthians to join him in displaying the gospel in their proclamation, their lives, and their focus for the glory of God in Christ.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

PROCLAIM

- Why is a person's attitude important when having a conversation with another person?
- What would you say is an important attitude to display when talking to someone about Christ? (Then put that red paragraph here that starts with "Humility is the proper attitude for believers of Christ.....")

> Read 2 Corinthians 4:5-6

- Sharing the gospel with power is one of the principles Paul taught. What did he express as the essentials for sharing the gospel?
- What made the difference in Paul's preaching?

LIVE**> Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-15**

- The use of paradoxical situations helped Paul to convey the nature of Christ's ministry. What hope do believers have despite human frailties and weaknesses?
- What risks might today's believers need to overcome as they share the gospel of Christ?
- Why did Paul continue to preach the gospel of Christ despite the dangers?
- Do you think you could continue preaching the gospel in the face of danger? Why or why not?

FOCUS**> Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18**

- How may Paul's sufferings cause some believers to be discouraged?
- Our sufferings can cause discouragement. What are some practical ways we can stay focused on the eternal and not on the temporary when facing trials? Brainstorm together.

SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE

- How can we faithfully proclaim Christ and His Good News instead of ourselves as we share the gospel? What are you displaying to a hurting world?

Personal Challenge: This week write down your personal testimony, and evaluate whether it focuses on Christ or you. Make necessary adjustments, and then prayerfully seek an opportunity to share it. A good outline to follow is to share a minute or two on what your life was like before Christ, then how you met Christ and spend the bulk of your time on how your life is different today because of that. Let's be prepared to share the good news!

PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK

- Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; 6:1-2
- We are all drawn to before/after images and stories. Why do you think that is?
- How would you characterize your life before Christ/after Christ?

READ THROUGH THE BIBLE

3rd – Numbers 32-33; Mark 10 | **4th** – Numbers 34-36; Mark 11 | **5th** – Deuteronomy 1-2; Mark 12 | **6th** – Deuteronomy 3-4; Psalm 36; Mark 13 | **7th** – Deuteronomy 5-6; Psalm 43; Mark 14 | **8th** – Deuteronomy 7-9; Mark 15 | **9th** – Deuteronomy 10-12; Mark 16