

Avon Park Campmeeting
Feb. 10, 2012

II Cor 4:3-18

1

Chapter Titles

1. **Comfort with sincerity**
2. **Aroma: Victory in consistency**
3. **Veiled Faces: Commended/Transformed**
4. **Tested Vessels**
5. Compelling Love
6. Trials and Temple
7. Godly Sorrow
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8. Call to Give
9. Godlike Giving
10. Proper Perceptions
11. Apostle's Defense
12. Vision and Thorn
13. Test Yourselves

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“Placing” ch. 4

- Chap. 1 Preparation – Implicit theology
Comfort through sincerity
- Chap. 2 Paul's relationship with Corinth
Comfort through consistency
based upon victory
- Chap. 3 Corinth's relationship with Paul
Commendation by transformation
- Chap. 4 Apostle's basic stance:
The Glory of Christ outweighs all

3

2:14-7:4
in relation to the book

A sustained defense of “pure” apostle-ship

A second line of thought:
glory in the midst of trial
thlipsis
forgiving
victorious life in midst of dying

4

Paragraph Titles

- Manifesting Christ the Image of God
4:1-6
- Manifesting Christ in Real Life
4:7-4:15
- The Weight of Glory
4:16-18

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Manifesting Christ the Image of God
4:1-6

- vv. 1-2 Glory prompts openness
- vv. 3-4 Glory veiled to blinded minds
- vv. 5-6 Glory is known in the gospel of Jesus

6

4:2

- BUT – contrast to giving up
- Lit. “to speak forth or from” –renounce, disown
Three hidden things of shame or secret ways of acting
- BUT – radical contrast to 3 preceding actions
- Setting forth the truth openly – open proclamation
- Commended to every single conscience in God’s sight

7

Conscience – the deepest level?

- Inner voice enabled by grace in every person
- Internal sense of right and wrong – a gift of prevenient grace
- Conscience must be educated by the Cross

8

4:3

- **Veiled:** Not every conscience received
- **Perishing:** No way out of this lostness apart from the mercy of God and His transforming grace 3:15-16 (cf. Aroa 2:15)
- Cf. here with reading of the Law as salvific (3:14) a veil drops when the Gospel is preached
- Veil of a hardened heart (3:15)
- A “blindness” which comes

9

4:4

- Reason for veiledness: **Activity of Satan**
- Rabbinic division – this age and age to come
- **Blinded** – prevent from understanding, minds
- **The Unbelieving** – Enables, causes to be unresponsive

10

The ‘god’ of this world and us

- Chambers: the floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims and aspirations current in the world
- Peter and the Mt of Transfiguration:
–Self-reliance, self-pity, self-governing, self-realization (Mk 8/Matt 18)

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World

- Any organization, system, or life that is constructed without the central Fact that is Jesus Christ

12

4:4

- **To prevent them from *seeing***
(His aim is that they do not perceive)
1:24 faith, 3:16 turns,
- ***Seeing the Light (only once in NT) to gaze upon the illumination***
- ***Of the gospel of the glorious Christ:***
 - *The outshining of God's glory*
 - *Image of God (eikon) – eternal, precise, visible expression (Col 1:15,19; 2:9; Phil 2:6)*

13

Contrast of “ministries”– early Christology 4:5

- (Messiah Acts 2:36/Lord (Rom 10:9; I Cor 12:3))
- Jesus of History is the Christ to believe in (Ac 2:34)
 - He is God (Jn 20:28)
 - He is Lord of all (Acts 10:36)
 - Triumphant over all powers (Rom 14:9)
 - He is the Gospel (here and Rom 10:8-9)
 - He is the Judge of all (here and 2 Tim 4:1-8)
 - He must be proclaimed (1 Cor 12:3)
 - The absolute Lord of the believer's life (I Cor 8:5-6)

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Lent (begins Feb 22): One-sixth of our year

- To focus on the Cross of our Lord
 - Central Fact of all human history
 - It is at the heart of all revelation
 - It is at the heart of our deepest need
 - God is most clearly seen here = glory
 - It is at the center of the mind of God

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4:5

- Interesting parallelism:
 - Theology has immediate ethical implications
- To say He is Lord is to say I am your slave!
- Serving His Lord like his Lord
- Only one Lord
- A life of unstinting service
“the one who has the Light must share the Light”

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Chambers on Service

- We are the servants of men, says Paul, not primarily because their needs have arrested us, but because Jesus Christ is our Lord; not because we feel the clamant needs of our age or any such sounding timbrel, but that the Lord Jesus Christ has saved and sanctified us and now He is Lord of our lives and makes us unconsciously the servants of other men, not for their sakes but for His own.

17

4:6

- Now He gives the reason that he preaches Christ and serves others
 - God dispels darkness (strong Creation focus) Gen 1:3-4; Is 9:1
 - NT – darkness to light –
Acts 26:18; Eph 5:8, Col 1:12-13
 - Satan blinds the mind
 - God illuminates the heart with an explosion of grace

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- Illuminates hearts – Paul’s old manner of doing has been radically transformed
- Gives knowledge of the Messiah
 - Heart = person
 - Now, face = person
- The only ‘face’ that truly shines is Christ (Ex 34!)
 - Paul climaxes the discussion begun back in chapter 3
- The person who receives this light must share it

19

Ex. 33 and a theology of ‘face’

- 14 ‘my presence’ ‘I myself’ ‘in person’
- 15 ‘thy presence’ ‘you’ ‘in person’
first is a promise already given
- 20 ‘my face’ ‘see me’
- 23 ‘my face’
second is reserved, requires trust whether ‘seen’ or not! (no idols)
He will be ‘known’ as He sees fit
He is subject and Israel object

20

The ‘face’ of God’s glory

- In Exod 33 Hidden because of glory
- In the passion Hidden because God is not recognized
- From transfiguration on – the ‘form’ of glory is humiliated, shamed, helpless, dependent, vulnerable, “de-glorify”
- His crucified face – a new form of Glory which the world will never recognize

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2 Corinthians

- 3:15-18 Trying to see through a veil
‘turn’ to the Lord
- 4:6 The Lord you see is the face of God- no other glory
- Glory is not ever ‘pristine’ ‘unhistorical’
- Hidden glory has been revealed
- Do we really want to see His glory?

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Summary

- Yes!
- Aroma
- Triumphant
- Living Epistles of the Spirit
- Mirroring His Glory
- Allowing the Light of His Glory to Shine

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Sections and Paragraphs

- **1:1-2:13** The Faithful, Burdened Heart of a Minister
- **2:14-4:6** The Privilege of Ministering a New Covenant – The Glory of the Gospel in the Face of Christ
- **4:7-15** The Actuality of Ministry seems “less” than glorious
 - 7-9 Trials always face us
 - 10-12 Death must be faced
 - 13-15 Fearless proclamation before God and man⁴

4:7-15 Laws of Structure

- V 7 Preparation for what follows
- vv. 8-14 Support for Paul's recognition of both weakness and strength
- V 15 Climax/Conclusion

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4:7

- Seems to be in contrast to 'glory of God' v.6
- Cf. v 1 'we have' - possessive - not ownership but guardianship of a priceless treasure
- Treasure, storeroom = "thesaurus" (only here and Col 2:3 in Paul)
Jesus often uses it (13t) mainly negatively

26

What is this treasure?

- Options:
 - Illumination due to the glory of God (6)
 - Gospel (4)
 - Or both (4)
 - "The ministry of the gospel of the glory of God"
 - Maybe better to ask what is the glorious gospel that we have in this earthen container?

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earthen

- 'ostrakon' - baked, clay formed as pots
- Israel is strewn with them - shards of fragile earthenware - expendable, cheap, relatively worthless, unostentatious
- Paradox: contain a priceless treasure
- Paul is not diminishing the body as many false prophets did
- He is emphasizing the grandeur of what it is to bear Christ's life to the world

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vessels

- Jar, container
- Here the whole person is referred to:
- Not a dualism of something deposited and the outer 'shell' has no meaning
- (important for later discussion 4:16-5:9)

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Purpose or result of the paradox

- In order to make clear the extraordinary power of God is from Him alone
- "*uperbole*" (abstract noun used as adj.)
 - Excess - exceeding
 - Great - Surpassing greatness
 - Immensity - Preeminent power
- Clear contrast: this overwhelming power is of God, from Him and NOT of us

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dunamis

- The dynamic, the power of the Triune God revealed in Jesus Christ and offered to us by the Holy Spirit in redemption in order that we, thoroughly mortal, might be rehabilitated into the mind and image of God in order that the world might see the gospel in its ever completing fullness through our actual lives

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4:8-9

- List of trials: (thlibo, thlipsis)
 - See 1:4 trouble, 6 distressed, 8 hardships, 2:4 out of great distress
 - Can be physical, psychological or physical
- Paul's lists: Rom 8:35-39; I Cor 4:9-13; 2 Cor 6:4-10; 11:23-28; Phil 4:11-12
- Here, a documentation of Paul's claim v. 7

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Paul's List in II Cor 4

- 4 Balanced antitheses:
 - In all places or, at all times, every way:
 - Constant, Intrinsic to ministry
 - They were evidences of his apostleship
- Here the Corinthians are included
- Second element is extreme form of first

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The List

Human Weakness	Divine Power
	but not
	never
Hard-pressed	cornered/crushed
Bewildered	desperate
Persecuted	abandoned
Thrown down	destroyed

34

4:10-11

- Forms a theological assessment of vv. 8-9
- Always carrying about the death of Christ = the experiences of being pressed, bewildered, persecuted and struck down.
- The life of Jesus = the sole reason why we are not totally desparate or destroyed

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The death of Christ

- Word is 'necrosis' only here and of Sarah's womb in Rom 4:19
- It is best interpreted as a **process of dying**
 - Paul faced this possibility continually but he is referring to the 'dying' experienced by Jesus throughout his ministry but especially in his passion.
- The last week of the life of Jesus is just the climax of the course of events leading up to His death.
- Similarly, we identify with His life and death

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The dying and the life of Jesus

- Vessels carry the glory of God
 - Always carrying the death of Jesus
 - Others have always tried to kill the Jesus that is before them
 - They don't hate you they hate him – Jesus to his disciples
- Preparation: 1:5 the sufferings of Christ
Paul is working this out

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4:7 and 15

- Frailty has two effects:
 - Treasure 7a: Power for transformation is God's alone as is strength to endure
- Thanks (15): spreading of the gospel brings gratitude

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