

# The Highest Good of The Gospel

*Non Series – 2 Corinthians*

By Dr. John Piper

sermonaudio.com

**Bible Text:** 2 Corinthians 3:17-4:6  
**Preached on:** Sunday, October 27, 2013

**Founders Baptist Church**  
24724 Aldine Westfield  
Spring, TX 77373

**Website:** [www.foundersbaptist.org](http://www.foundersbaptist.org)  
**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/smbconline](http://www.sermonaudio.com/smbconline)

If you have a Bible, I would invite you to turn to Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, chapter 3. Thank you so much to the leaders of Founders Baptist Church for inviting me. It's an honor to be here, to stand in this pulpit. What a privilege. And I love to preach the gospel in the context of corporate worship so you have ministered very powerfully to me already. It's a thrilling thing. My heart just sitting there sings, I get to do this in that setting. So much easier than doing it on the street. So thank you for inviting him to come and praying him, singing him in. He's already done significant work in this room and I'm just going to try to join what he's doing.

Chapter 3, I'm going to start at verse 17 of 2 Corinthians. I'm going to read down through chapter 4, verse 7, and then we'll probably focus mainly on verses 4, 5, and 6 of chapter 4. But let's get the whole context before us.

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

1 Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. 2 But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

Let's pray.

*So Father, once more, I join the chorus of the songs and prayers we have prayed and ask that You would come, and I pray that the God of this world would be frustrated, that his blinding purposes would be undone in this hour and that those who are laboring under the blindness of his demonic effects in their heart so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, would be set free, and that they would see tonight, perhaps for the first time, the glory of the gospel. So come, I pray, and do this stunning, supernatural, liberating work and open the eyes of your people more widely than ever, that they might behold the glory of the Lord and be transformed from one degree of glory to the next into the image of the glorious Christ, for the sake of their homes, their marriages, their singleness, their parenting, their work. Lord, do this Christ-revealing work, I pray now, by your word. In Jesus' name, amen.*

There are four questions that are answered by this text. I mean, a lot more than that, but four that I see that I want to answer, and they are all massively relevant for your life, who you are, what has happened to you, your role in the world. And here are the four questions. I'll give you the questions, and then we'll just take them one at a time and see the answer from this text. Question number 1: what is the sweetest highest, best, final good of the good news that makes the good news good and without which all the other goods of the good news wouldn't be good? That's a long question. I can tell. Let me shorten it. What's the sweetest highest, best, final good of the gospel? That's number 1. Number 2: what obstacle prevented you from enjoying that because there was a season when you didn't, and it may still be the case that you don't. You don't love it, enjoy it, savor it, treasure it. Why? Why? What's in the way? That's question number 2. Number 3: what has to happen to remove that obstacle so that you did or can now enjoy this highest, best, sweetest, final good of the good news? What has to happen? And then finally, number 4: is there anything you can do to help others escape that obstacle, get over it, and have and enjoy the sweetest, highest, best, final good of the gospel? Those are the four questions that we'll tackle in this text.

So let's take them one at a time. What is it? What is the sweetest, highest, best, final good of the good news called the gospel? Is it justification by faith? Now all this list I'm going to give you, I'm going to list ten possibilities. They are all infinitely valuable, okay? There's no belittling of these, and none of them is the right answer, all right? So just know this is intended to make the right answer shine the more brightly, not to diminish these, okay? Is the sweetest, best, highest, final good of the gospel justification by faith? Is it forgiveness of sins? Is it removal of the wrath of God? Is it redemption from guilt? Is it liberation from slavery to sin? Is it salvation from hell? Is it entrance into heaven? Is it eternal life? Is it deliverance from pain and sickness and conflict and the oppression of this world? Is it the new heavens and the new earth? The answer is no. And those are, as you can see, of infinite value. These are things we would die for. These are the most precious things in our life, almost. They are the gospel gifts. They're what Jesus died to get for you and I'm asking, are they the highest, the sweetest, the best, the final gift of the gospel? Is that what he died to procure for you finally, ultimately? And my answer is no, it's not. Those are not the final, best, highest, sweetest good of the gospel. The answer, I think, is given in verses 4 and 6, so let's read them and as we read them, notice the

similarity in structure of verse 4 and 6 and we're going to lay them on top of each other and let them illumine each other. So verse 4, "In their case," that is the case of those who are perishing, "In their case the god of this world," that's Satan, "the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing," and here's the decisive phrase, I think, "the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." Now drop to verse 6, "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give," here it comes again, "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Now lay those final phrases of verse 4 and verse 6 on top of each other and compare them and see how they shed light, amazing light on each other. So verse 4, the light, that corresponds in verse 6 to, the light of the gospel, in verse 4 corresponds to, of the knowledge, in verse 6, of the glory of Christ, verse 4, corresponds to of the glory of God, verse 6, who is the image of God, corresponds to in the face of Jesus Christ.

Now, here's what I see. The content of the gospel here is called the glory of Christ. You see that in verse 4? The gospel of the glory of Christ. If you ask me, what's the good news? I'd say it's the glory of Jesus. That's the good news. It says so. The gospel of the glory. And if you're stumbling over the word glory, we use this. I mean, we use this. In sports you even use it, right? That was a moment of glory. I could give you illustrations and you could off the TV this afternoon between Texas and Detroit. That last minute was glorious. At least, I don't pull for anybody, I just enjoy glory. I'll take it anywhere I can get it. Glory is beauty, it's wonder, it's awe. Everybody knows what glory is. So if you prefer the word beauty because it's less religious, that's just fine. Use the word beauty. So the gospel is the beauty of Christ, the magnificence of Christ. That's what it is. Now, the question is, when you drop down and do the parallel in verse 6, and it says, the glory of God instead of the glory of Christ, is that a different glory? It's not. And the way you know it's not is because as soon as Paul says in verse 4, the glory of Christ, he qualifies with, who is the image of God, and as soon as he says in verse 6, the glory of God, he says, in the face of Christ. So you see what he's doing with those quick qualifiers, glory of Christ, he's the image of God, glory of God, in the face of Christ, we're dealing with one glory here. One divine, magnificent streaming out of the radiance of the beauty of God in the events called the gospel. Jesus died. Jesus was buried. Jesus rose for our sins. Glory is streaming out from that. Beauty of God, beauty of Christ is streaming out from that. That's the highest, sweetest, final, best good of the gospel. Everything else in the gospel is going there. There isn't anything after it to which it is a means. Once you arrive at the seeing, the savoring, the enjoying, the treasuring, the being wrapped up in and being transformed by that glory, you're home. There is no place else to go. That's not a means to anything. Everything is a means to that.

So that's my answer to the question, what's the sweetest, best, highest, final good of the gospel? Now bring it back and let's relate it to a few of those other infinite goods because this is the one that makes the others good. Why would you want to be justified by faith? Well, so that you can stand accepted and loved by the one who in his glory satisfies your soul. Why would you want to be forgiven for your sins? This is really important for you to answer. Why do you want forgiveness of sins? You say, "Well, I don't want to go to hell." That's a bad answer. It's a true answer. I don't either. But what about God? You just

want to get out of hell and go play golf? Fish? Whatever? No! Let me give you an illustration. I've got one for adults, I've got one for kids. So, here's the adult one. Kids, you can just listen if you want. I get up in the morning. Now, I'm answering the question right now, why should I want to be forgiven for my sins? There's a bad answer and a good answer for that because everybody does want to be forgiven. I mean, you do not want guilt hanging on you, but why don't you? I get up in the morning, it's dark, and I stumble over a pile of laundry that I happened to ask my wife to move last night. She didn't move it. I'm making this up. This doesn't happen. So I trip over it, and I turn around, and I snap at her. Just snap. She's not hardly awake yet. First thing she hears in the morning is, "I asked you to move that. What's wrong?" All right. Now it's 15 minutes later, 20 minutes later in the kitchen. Ice in the air, right? She's standing at the sink with her back manifestly to me. I know what I need. I need forgiveness from her. I sinned against her. Doesn't matter whether she should have moved the laundry. That's irrelevant. I sinned. That's my issue. I need to be forgiven. I'd love to go off on a big marriage tangent here and talk about this issue of feeling like you've got a right not to forgive because she didn't do this and that. Boy, that's not it. You need to be forgiven, man. So why do you want to be forgiven at that moment? Here's some bad answers. Number 1, I hate going to work with a guilty conscience. Bad answer. Number 2, if I don't get forgiven, she might not fix supper. Bad answer. What's the right answer? You want her back, and not that kind of back. You want her to come back to you. You want the ice to melt. You want the hurt face to smile. You want the hug. You want her. That's what forgiveness is for. That's all it's for. And so with God. Sure, we want out of hell. For God, we want the ice to go away. We want God's smile. We want God's embrace. We want God's acceptance. We want to have a relationship with the infinitely glorious, all-satisfying God. If that's not your answer, you don't know him.

Okay, here's the one for the kids. Same point, but a different setting. I grew up being afraid to hit anybody, like with my fist, and not because I was afraid of a fight, but because I didn't want to hurt anybody. I mean, I watched so many fights on television, I thought, that's impossible that they could swing that hard and not break the jaw. And it is. I mean, it's all fake. It's just fake. When Matt Dillon, you ever heard of Matt Dillon? You've got to be 60 to know who Matt Dillon is. Matt Dillon's arms were eight feet across, and he's eight feet tall, not really, just looked that way, and when he went like this, and hit the guy right here from like 180 degrees, the guy goes... I said, you've got to be kidding me. He just knocked his head off in real life. So I just never would do it. I never, ever would hit anybody. But I got really mad at Ronnie Jordan. He became a policeman. He's a policeman now in Charlotte, North Carolina. He lived down the street and I got so mad at him. We were playing together. We were good friends. And instead of hitting him, I squeezed him as tight as I could and I got his feet off the ground, threw him down like that, and I stomped off and went home. Didn't talk. Now, I like Ronnie Jordan. I wanted to play with Ronnie. He's my friend and I just wrecked it. I wrecked it. So I need to be forgiven. I need to call him. Hard calls. I need to call Ronnie and say, "I was stupid. I didn't, I'm not that mad anymore. Can we be friends again? Let's go play." Why did I need to be forgiven? Because I want to play with Ronnie. It's real simple. That's what forgiveness is for.

So, when I make this list of 10 glorious things that were purchased by the blood of Jesus for me, I'm asking at every one of them, is that the end or is that a means to the end? And all 10 of those were means to the end of the light of the gospel of the glory of Jesus Christ who is the image of God. The end of my line, the end of creation, is that we might see and savor, reflect, embrace, treasure, enjoy, be changed by God's beauty. That's my answer to the first question. My answer now to the second question, I mean, here is the second question: what is standing in the way for your enjoyment of that sweetest, best, highest, final good? Or what was standing in the way? If you're born again, if you're a Christian, I assume you've at least tasted and know what I'm talking about because otherwise, you don't. You're not a Christian. To be a Christian is to embrace, receive the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. That's what it is to be a Christian. So what's standing in the way? And the answer is given in verse 4 like this, "In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ." The reason some of you may not be enjoying the beauty of Christ is that you're blind to it because Satan is conspiring with your unbelief, it says he's blinded the minds of unbelievers, he's conspiring with your unbelief to keep the veil over your face. So, when the gospel is spoken to you by your mom, or a friend over pizza, or by Billy Graham, or by the pastor of your church, or by a friend, when gospel events, the work of Christ, are spoken to you, it's boring. Paul said it's a stumbling block, or it's an offense, because there's a veil. You're looking at the back of the veil. Beauty is out here and you're saying, "I don't see anything." We all know people like this, and it's terrifying, especially if they're in your family. I've sat with sons over that pizza table, pouring out my best effort to describe Christ as compelling and beautiful and everything a human could want in eternity and in this world, and have the most blank face come back at me. It means nothing. Nothing. That's terrifying. Don't scoff at those people. You were one. Weep. Plead. And when we get to the fourth question I'll ask is there anything you can do?

So that's my answer to question number 2. What was wrong is blindness to glory. To be lost, to be perishing, is to be blind to glory. We are dealing with a Houston full of blind people, to glory. They can see glory in football, they see echoes of glory in stars, they see echoes of glory in their kids, they see echoes of glory in art, echoes of glory all over, but when you present the greatest glory, a haze goes over their eyes. It's nothing. It's just nothing. No sweetness, no beauty, no love, no joy, no treasuring, no satisfaction, just blank, or worse than blank.

Third: what happened to you if you're a Christian, or what needs to happen? What's the answer to that, and you know where I'm going. I'm going to verse 6. "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." What's he doing? He's comparing God's creation of light at the beginning. That's what it means when he says, the God who said once upon a time at the beginning of creation, "Let there be light. Let light shine out of darkness." And then he compares it to what needs to happen in your heart. The God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has done it again, shone into our hearts to give that light, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. So, our problem is blindness to glory, and the answer to the problem is God, as sovereignly as on

the first day, strikes light into our heart. He says, "John Piper, let there be light," and there was light. That's how I got saved. That's how all of you saved people got saved. You know, it is possible to know that you're saved and not know how you got saved just like a baby has to be taught at about age four, how you got born, right? Has no idea how you got born. And a lot of you, a lot of people, have not been taught well about how you got born. Like a stork brought you to church. That's not the way it happened. Or, I brought myself. That's not how it happened either. One day, while you were listening to Billy Graham, or listening to your pastor, or listening to your mom, or praying over your Bible, or reading some existentialist novel in college, or whatever, God shone and suddenly, what had been boring, what had been mythological, what had been irrelevant, what had been a stumbling block, was suddenly unbelievably real, unbelievably relevant. Whoa! What have I been doing all this time with regard to this person, Jesus Christ, who has just stood forth from this sermon, or this text, or this novel, or wherever he's standing forth, and he's real at this moment. That's how you got saved. It didn't have to be a big emotional thing. It could have been like a still, small voice and you just knew something's changing, something's different. "Let there be light" happened. God spoke light into your life.

We love stories like that and I want to read you one. It's an email written to Desiring God, the ministry I work for now that I'm finished with my pastoral ministry after 33 years. I'm full time with Desiring God and trying to just make as many truths as I can known by as many people as I can. And this is a Jewish man in the Netherlands who was listening to a sermon called Education for Exaltation. This just makes me so happy, and I want to encourage pastors at this moment. I preached this sermon in a building program, okay? You're not expecting people to get saved in the Netherlands when you're trying to raise money for a building program. But we were putting up an education building, and I got the idea we should call this campaign Education for Exaltation. I thought that was clever. Education, horizontal, we're gonna build Bible into people's lives, adults and kids, and we're doing it so that they will exalt in God. That's what I'm about. So I preached that sermon to stoke the engines of our church to build that building, and several years later, on the web, a Jewish man in Amsterdam is listening. I'm gonna read you what he says. "God bless everyone who reads this. I can't believe it took me two whole years to understand what is said in the audio sermon, Education for Exaltation in Christ. I am a Jew, a Christian Jew, as of two minutes ago. I believe that Jesus is God. Jesus is Elohim. He who has the Son has life. God used that audio sermon to crush the mind of this stubborn Jew. I must say that I had trouble with the Father's name being pronounced as in Jewish culture, it is not common to pronounce the Father's name since we don't know how it is pronounced. But I decided to go on and listen. My eyes went open." That's the line I underlined. It's not good English, but it's beautiful. "My eyes went open. Just today, I was angry with God. I said to him, why are you letting me search without finding answers? Well, I found it now. Jesus is Elohim. I will make sure that this message will get spread out here in Europe. I'm from the Netherlands. I can't believe it. Well, actually, I do believe it. Jesus is Elohim. Praise Jesus. Praise Elohim, your brother in Christ, Michael," or Michel, or however they say it.

Now what's gorgeous about that is my eyes went open. Why? He said he'd been battering for two years on this. Why not earlier? He didn't decide, "Now's the time. I'll turn the switch now." He didn't turn any switch. God turned the switch on. God said, "Let there be light," and there was light in Michael's heart and a Jewish European secularist becomes a follower of Jesus. That's what has to happen. That's the answer to question number 3. So question number 1, what's the sweetest, best, highest, final good of the good news? The answer, the glory of Christ or the glory of God shining brightly, beautifully, satisfyingly out from the gospel as the apex of God's self-revelation. That's number 1. Number 2, what kept you from enjoying that? You were blind. Number 3, what needed to happen? God Almighty just as at the beginning needed to say, "Let there be light."

Last question. Well, if it's that sovereign, if it's that God, like he says, "Let there be light," is there anything you can do because you've got people you care about who aren't there. They're blind. And I'm just so eager to be biblical rather than superficially logical. Like, lots of people draw out logical inferences. They think they're logic, they're not. But they say, "Well, if they're blind and it takes God to open their eyes, I'll just wait. I'll just wait, because he's doing it. And nobody helped him create the world, so nobody's going to help him create people." That sounds logical, doesn't it? It's stupid. It's stupid. It's irrational and it's unbiblical. So I'm going to spend the last few minutes showing you why from this text and from a couple of others, and then we'll all go out and do it with somebody, right? Okay. In this text right here in 2 Corinthians 4, what happens between verse 4 and verse 6? You wonder why I skipped over it? What happens between verse 4 and verse 6? You wonder why I skipped over it? What happens between verse 4 and verse 6? Here's what happens, "For what we proclaim," we human beings who can't do anything, "what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ," the glorious one, "as Lord, with ourselves as your servants," we're just getting down low and trying to get under you and be your servant and lift you up so we're proclaiming Jesus as Lord, we're offering ourselves as your servants "for Jesus' sake." That's what's sandwiched between blindness and sight. Why? Because that's the way God does it. Nobody anywhere in the world has their heart opened savingly without some human being presenting the gospel either in a tract, or on the internet, or in person. There's no point in you praying that some totally isolated person in the middle of a tribe in Papua New Guinea who has never had access to the gospel, there is no point in you praying they'd be born again today. There is a point in you praying, "God, get them the gospel! Send someone with the gospel! Be preparing them for the gospel!" Because when the jet of the gospel flies, the Holy Spirit, awakening and giving light, flies in tandem with it. If the gospel lands, the Holy Spirit lands. The Holy Spirit was sent into the world to glorify Jesus. If Jesus is not being lifted up in the gospel in front of people, if their eyes go open, there's nothing to see. The Holy Spirit doesn't open eyes to see nothing. I'm making a case here for how utterly essential you are in people's seeing. You don't make the miracle happen. God just uses you to make the miracle happen.

Now, let me give you two other texts to support that so you can see this is really not a misuse of verse 5, it's really the way Paul thinks. The next text, Acts 26:17, and 18. The situation is that Paul is on the Damascus Road. Jesus Christ, the Lord, has appeared in glory, right? Knocked him off his horse, blinded him. All kinds of interesting stuff going

on here. And he wonders, what does all this mean? What am I supposed to do? And Jesus gives him a commission. It's an amazing commission. It's an impossible commission. It's crazy. So let me read it to you. This is Acts 26, middle of verse 17 to verse 18. "I am sending you, Paul," this is Jesus talking to Paul. "I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan," sound familiar? Blindness to light being overcome and Satan being overcome by Paul's going. "I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me." I find it to be an amazing correlation that he would mention they need light and they need freedom from Satan, go make it happen. And I'm sure Paul could have said, "I can't make that happen. Only God says, 'Let there be light.' Only God is as strong as the devil. What do you mean you're sending me to open their eyes?" Another kind of logical stupidity. What Jesus means is, "You go, you open your mouth, you declare the Lordship of Jesus and the facts of the gospel, you plead and pray with people, and I will come with thunderbolts through your life and raise the dead. I will give light to the blind. I'll lift the veil. I'll do that through you." I planted, Apollos watered. God gave the growth. So he who plants and he who waters is nothing but only God who gives the growth. Nothing by comparison, but essential. Farmers are essential to crops, and they don't make the seed grow. They just watch it. The parable says they go to bed at night, they get up in the morning, the ear comes up, have no idea. To this day we have no idea. Scientists put names on those miracles and a little seed becomes this big stalk of green corn with lots more ears, they put names on that, they don't have a clue what's going on there. That's just all miracles, magic.

Well, it takes a farmer to plant the seeds and so Paul went and he opened eyes. Last text. This one's even more amazing, I think. This is 2 Timothy 2:24-26. 2 Timothy 2. This text, for 33 years in my ministry, was profoundly influential in the way I counseled, the way I considered demonic possession and oppression. Have you ever been involved in an exorcism? I mean a real one? I've been involved in one, I think. Others were kind of like it, but just one. I believe in the devil. He's real, he's ugly, he's powerful, he's the god of this world, and he can't stand before the gospel. He can't stand before God Almighty who made him, rules him, governs him. He's like on a leash. So, if I've only been involved in one, did I only liberate one person from the devil in 33 years? I think God used me to liberate hundreds. Well then, if it doesn't happen by exorcisms, how does it happen? That's what this text is about.

2 Timothy 2:24, "the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone." Now pause there and just realize what he's doing. He's naming some attitudinal or moral qualities, not yet the content of the message, just kind of person. He's not quarrelsome, he's kind, and now comes some content, "able to teach," all right? So I'm going to be a teacher of truth, of gospel, and in the context of kindness and non-quarrelsomeness and now he comes back to moral qualities, "patiently enduring evil." So you start teaching and people rough you up, verbally maybe or worse, and you endure it patiently. That's part of the process that we're going to see here of liberating people from the devil. "Patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents," so there's some more content, but here's some more moral trait, "with gentleness." All right, now there you've got the



picture. You've got a speaker. He's teaching, he's correcting and his whole demeanor is one of patience and kindness and gentleness. He's not trying to punch people out here. He's not uptight with demonic people. "God may perhaps grant them repentance, leading to a knowledge of the truth," knowledge of the truth, "and they may escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will." I've read one really good writer about this issue of demonic reality distinguished between power encounters and truth encounters. A power encounter is like an exorcism that I experienced one time with a demon-possessed woman whose face was not her face, whose voice was not her voice, who walked around with a knife threatening people, and when we were finished, her face was another face, her voice was another voice, the knife was on the floor, and instead of knocking the Bible out of my hand for two hours, she held it and read all of Romans 8, and the next Sunday was sitting in the second pew, and I was terrified she'd have a demonic possession or something, because I had never in my life seen anything like this. That's not what's going on here. And this is real. This is just as real. They were taken captive by the devil to do his will. The way they were taken captive is by deceit and falsehood. God, through your teaching, and your patience, and your kindness, and your gentleness, grants them to repent, and truth floods into their hearts, and the devil flees because he's a god of lies, and a murderer from the beginning, can't stand before the light of truth, and that person is free. And it came through you. God did it. God gave repentance. It says so. God gives repentance. You don't make repentance happen. They don't make repentance happen. God makes repentance happen. And when they turn on their evil, truth floods in, and the devil, a liar from the beginning, flies in the face of truth, flooding into the soul. And so you see again the correspondence with 2 Corinthians 4:4. You've got devil blinding the minds of unbelievers, and you've got the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ, and that's what you've got here. You've got knowledge flooding in through repentance, and you've got the snare of the devil being broken.

So, my answer to the fourth question is, what can you do? You can teach, and by teach I don't mean anything formal. I mean sitting over pizza with somebody and asking them if you can share your story, share whatever you think would be appropriate for that moment. They need truth. They need truth. They need truth. You speak truth, and then you're loving them. You're a servant. You're not lording it over them. You're a servant, and you're not quarrelsome, and you're kind, and you're gentle, and you're patient and God Almighty may grant repentance. That means it's his to call. You cannot make this happen. But, oh, you can put yourself in the way of God's power. You can put yourself in front of somebody with truth coming out of your mouth. You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free from this kind of bondage. You can let truth be pouring out of your mouth. Whatever truth you know, you don't have any degrees at all, eighth grade education as far as I'm concerned, and you know some Bible, and they don't and so you're that step ahead and you just pour out some Bible truth, and God loves to touch with fire the kindling of the truth you lay on their lives. He does. He loves to do that.

So when you leave tonight, here's the four things. We'll just do a summary and then pray. What's the best thing that the gospel bought for us? Forgiveness of sins, justification, eternal life. Those are glorious. They're all means to the end and the end is the light of the

gospel of the glory of Christ, the beauty of Christ, the person shining forth. You were made for a person not just a world, or not just an experience, you were made for a person. And you all know your deepest joys come through people. Big joys come through beautiful sunsets, big joys come through food, big joys come through all kinds of things, but the biggest, deepest, most satisfying joys are the ones that come from the kind of friendships, the kind of relationships, or even admiring the kind of people you love to admire and they're all pointing to the one person for whom we were made.

2. Why couldn't you enjoy that once upon a time? Because the God of this world was blinding you. Lostness, unsaved-ness is blindness to glory.

3. What had to happen in order for you to enjoy the highest good of the good news? God had to say, "Let there be light." It happened while somebody, either in person or through a book or text, somebody was telling you about the Lord Jesus, what he did when he died for sins, what he did when he rose triumphant, what he did when he ascended to heaven, what he's doing today in reigning over the world, what he's going to do again when he comes in. You were just telling the story, the greatest story in the world. There's a glory in that story and if God is pleased to grant repentance, it will stream into their hearts. So that's what you do, be servants, be loving, be kind, be patient, and speak the truth no matter what it costs, and you will become, sooner or later, the instrument of the miracle of sight in people's lives.

Let's pray.

*So Father in heaven, I preach to myself here now, I want to increasingly be an instrument of illumination. I want lights to go on because I have lived. And I know that's what the vast majority of these people want. They just want to bear simple testimony to what they've seen in the Bible, what they've seen of you, and others can't see yet. That's why they're going to mock them sometimes and reject them and roll their eyes and think they're weird. God, I pray that we would be so confident in what we've seen, that the eyes of our hearts would be so bright with the glory revealed in the gospel, we wouldn't doubt you, no matter what they say, and that you would use us to boldly, humbly, servant-like speak the truth into people's lives. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.*