

“How Is Our Message Different?”

2 Corinthians 4:5

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by

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I will be speaking to you today from 2 Corinthians, chapter four. 2 Corinthians 4. Our text specifically is verse five, but let's begin reading in verse one. 2 Corinthians 4, verse one says, "Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, "as we have received mercy, we faint not." Everything that we do in God's ministry is based on the fact that we have received mercy. Everything is built on mercy. Grace and mercy. We don't do anything in order to receive mercy. Everything that we do is because we have already received mercy. Everything that we do in the ministry is because of God's mercy. And what is mercy? What does the word mercy mean? It means not getting what we deserved. That's what it means. Not getting what we deserved. Because of our sin, we deserved God's wrath. That's what I deserved, because of my sin against Him. I deserved His wrath, and you deserved His wrath as well, for your sin. We deserved wrath. Because of our sin, we deserved judgment, God's judgment, God's punishment. We deserved death. That's what we deserved, eternal spiritual death. Not just a physical death, but an eternal, spiritual death. We deserved to be forever separated from God, just like when Adam and Eve sinned against God, and God said, "Cast 'em out. "Separate them from us, Father, Son, and Spirit." That's what we deserved for our sin, the very same thing. But God did not give His chosen people what they deserved. God did not

give His chosen people what they deserved. God gave Christ what they deserved. Everything they deserved, He gave it to Christ. That's mercy. That's mercy. Not giving us what we deserve, but giving Christ what we deserve. That's mercy. So verse one says, "Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, "as we have received mercy, we faint not, "but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty." Now, we're gonna come to some words and I'm gonna give you the definition of 'em. You can look 'em up in a Concordance. You can get one yourself and look 'em up, if you want to, but the word dishonesty means lies. It means shame, and that shame is because of the lies. Paul said, "We have renounced "the hidden things of dishonesty." God's people want the truth. They do, they don't want lies. Some are okay with being lied to. They prefer the lies, but not God's people. They want the truth alone. Only the truth. Is that you? That's me. I pray that's you. God's people know that the truth can be shocking. It can be. It can be very shocking. God's people know that the truth can hurt. But they also know that, in the end, the truth is the only thing that's gonna stand. Only the truth shall stand. So this is what all of God's people cry, "Give me the truth. "Give me the truth." If we know the truth, it will make us free. Truth will make us free, and that's a person. Christ, our truth. Verse two says, "We have renounced "the hidden things of dishonesty, "not walking in craftiness." That means trickery, false wisdom. He said, "We don't try to use big words "to make you think that we're smarter than we really are." Paul was always telling people that. Verse two. "We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, "not walking in craftiness, "nor handling the Word of God deceitfully," telling people that it says what it doesn't say.

And telling people that it doesn't say what it says. That's deceitfully, which, that happens all the time. People say, and you've heard people say this. They'll come up and say, "Well, now, you know the Bible says." When it doesn't, whatever comes next out of their mouth. It doesn't. It doesn't say that. Somebody made that up and passed it along and they believed it, and now they're trying to pass it along deceitfully, handling the Word of God deceitfully. If we don't know what the Bible says, then let's not say, "Well, now, the Bible says." We need to see it with our own two eyes. We need to know what it says and what it does not say. Verse two says, "We've renounced "the hidden things of dishonesty, "not walking in craftiness, "nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, "but by manifestation of the truth." The word manifestation means bestowment. It means revelation, making known, showing the truth. Verse two, he said, "We are commending ourselves "to every man's conscience, in the sight of God." Verse three, he said, "But if our Gospel be hid." The fact that he said our Gospel tells us that there are some out there who preach something else, not the same thing we preach, not the same thing Paul preached, and he tells us right here that it's a very dangerous thing to do. Verse three, he said, "If our Gospel be hid, "it is hid to them that are lost." To preach or to believe anything other than exactly what has been written in this Word is to be lost. That's what it is. Let me show you how Paul worded that to the Galatians. If you look at Galatians chapter one, verse six, he said, "I marvel that you are so soon removed "from Him that called you into the grace of Christ "unto another Gospel." Which is not another. There's not another. "But there be some that trouble you, "and would pervert the Gospel of Christ. "But

though we or an angel from heaven "preach any other Gospel unto you, "than that which we have preached unto you, "let him be accursed. "As we said before, so say I now again. "If any man preach any other Gospel unto you, "than that you have received, let him be accursed, "for do I now persuade men or God, "or do I seek to please men? "For if I yet pleased men, "I should not be the servant of Christ." So Paul said back in our text, 2 Corinthians 4, verse three, he said, "If our Gospel be hid, "it is hid to them that are lost, "and whom the god of this world," that's the adversary, the devil, "hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." If a person does not believe the record of the Gospel, that God has given, that person is under the captivity of the adversary. If a person does not believe this Gospel, he's under the captivity of Satan. Verse four says, "Lest." It goes on to say, "Lest," or if they weren't blinded, "the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, "who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Verse five says, "For," for that reason, "Because of that," because this is the means that God has chosen, and because we have received mercy. "Because the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ "has shone unto us," he said in verse five, "We preach not ourselves, "but Christ Jesus, the Lord, "and ourselves, your servants, for Jesus' sake." Now, there are two words in verse five that I'd like for us to dwell on. Two words, here they are. We preach. Those two words. We preach. Clearly he has established that there is a difference in those that have received mercy, and those that have not received mercy. There's a difference in those that preach truth, and those that preach lies, dishonesty, craftiness, handling the Word of God deceitfully. There's a difference in those that are saved and lost, captive

and free, blind and seeing. There's a difference. There's a difference in what we preach and believe, Paul said, the writer of these words, and all of God's people say the same thing. There's a difference in what we preach and believe, if we belong to God, if we're God's people. There's a difference. There's a difference. There is a difference in our message, and the other message, which is no message at all, no message at all. Now, what is it? What is the difference? What do we preach? That's what we're getting to. What do we preach? Well, let's start right here. Let's start with what we don't preach, okay? Let's start with what we don't preach. Verse five says, "We preach not ourselves." Let's start with that. We don't preach ourselves. What does that mean? What does it mean to preach ourselves? Preaching ourselves would be preaching our word. Well, now you know what the Bible says. Preaching our word. It would be preaching our work, the things we do, have done, will do, and preaching our glory. Look at everything I've done for God, everything I've done for Christ. Paul said that's not what we preach. We don't preach that at all. Paul said in verse five, "For we preach not ourselves, "but Christ Jesus the Lord." We preach Christ. Christ Jesus the Lord. Now what does that mean? What does it mean to preach Christ? If somebody's gonna preach Christ, you say, "Well, does your pastor preach Christ down there?" "Oh, yeah, he preaches Christ." How do you know, how do you know? What is it to preach Christ? Here it is. It's to preach His Word. His Word. Whatever it says. It's to preach His work. His work, His work. And it's to preach His glory. That's what we preach. By God's grace, that's what we preach. Look with me at Acts chapter five. In Acts chapter five, verse 42 says, "And daily in the

temple, and in every house, "they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." Jesus Christ, that's what we preach. We have a very specific message, and that message is a person. A person. I pray God might make that clear as to what that means. We preach a person. Look at Acts chapter eight. Over in Acts chapter eight, verse five, it says, "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, "and preached Christ unto them." Preached Christ unto them, that's what he preached. Verse 35 right here in this chapter, it says, "Then Philip opened his mouth "and began at the same scripture "and preached unto him Jesus." The Lord Jesus Christ. Our emphasis is not a thing. What's the difference in what we preach and others preach? What's the difference in what the Word truly says and what others may say the Word says? What's the difference? Here it is. The Word does not preach, and God's people do not preach a thing. We don't preach a thing. We do not preach a mindset. We do not preach a doctrinal position. We don't preach a doctrinal position. We preach a person. We preach a person. It's all about a person. We're telling me about a person. We preach Christ. We preach Christ, in everything that the Scripture deals with. The Scripture deals with everything. Any subject known to man, the Scripture deals with it, but we preach everything in light of Christ. Everything. Over in Colossians chapter one, if you look with me at Colossians 1, it says in verse 27, "To whom God would make known "what is the riches of the glory "of this mystery among the Gentiles, "which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." We're talking about Christ. That's who we're talking about, Christ. Now, look at verse 28. "Whom we preach. "Whom we preach, "warning every man and teaching every

man in all wisdom, "that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Not perfect in himself. Perfect in the Lord Jesus Christ, in the work, in the blood of Christ. All of the warnings are in light of Christ. All of the warnings. The Scripture says, "He that hath the Son hath life, "and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. "The wrath of God abides on him." All of our teaching is in light of Christ. All the warning is, all of the teaching is. The Scripture says, "Husbands, love your wives, "even as Christ also loved His wife, the church, "and gave Himself for it." We don't love our wives so that Christ will love us. We love our wives in light of the fact that Christ has already loved us. Our work and doing is only a response to His work and His doing. He gave Himself for her first. Everything surrounds, everything looks to, everything is in light of this person, this person, the Lord Jesus Christ, whom we preach. We preach Christ. We preach Christ. We preach His Word. We preach His Word. Only His Word. Not our own. Not our own. His. His. Really think about this. We preach His Word. Over in Mark chapter two, the Gospel of Mark chapter two, it says in verse one, "And again, He entered into Capernaum after some days, "and it was noised that He was in the house, "and straightway many were gathered together "insomuch as there was no room to receive them. "No, not so much as about the door, "and He preached the Word unto them." The Word, the Scriptures. He held the Scriptures, and He preached the Scriptures, He preached the Word to all who listened. When Christ preached. If we wanna know how we oughta be preaching, then we need to look to Christ. What did He do? Well, when Christ preached, He preached the Word unto them. The Word. The Apostle Paul told

Timothy, preach the Word. We're gonna go to church and we're gonna listen to a man preach. He's gonna have a sermon. What's he gonna preach on? Well, he's preaching on this subject or he's preaching on that subject or how we can be a better this or a better that or a... Preach the Word. Preach the Word. Paul said, preach the Word. Be instant, in season, out of season, whether it's popular or not. He said, "Reprove, rebuke, exhort "with all long-suffering and doctrine," meaning do it with all patience. That's what long-suffering means, patience, and do it with the Word. Preach the Word with the Word. He didn't say read one verse. Paul didn't tell Timothy, "Here's what I want you to do, Timothy. "You get up there and read one verse "so that you can say you did it, "and then go off on a rant for 45 minutes about something," which is what a lot of men do. No. He said preach the Word to people, fill the message with the Word. Show people this is what God's Word says. He didn't say preach Doctor So-and-so's thoughts on it. Well, this, you know, brand new doctor written a book on it, and we're gonna preach his book. No. No. He didn't say preach this particular denominational opinion on it. No. He said, "Preach the Word." Whatever it says, preach it. Whatever it says, preach it. Preach the Word, hear the Word. "The Father cried, "This is my beloved Son. "Hear Him." Christ is called the Word of God. Hear Him, believe His Word, preach it, believe it. Whatever this book says, preach it, believe it. Whether we understand it or not is irrelevant. It's irrelevant. There are things in here that I don't quite understand, but if this is what God's Word says, by His grace, I believe it. Preach the Word, believe the Word. Let me give you an example of that. The Scripture says He is our Creator. We are His

creation. Jesus Christ, everything was made by Him. Without Him was not anything made that was made. All right, so it says He's our Creator. The Scripture says He's our King and we're His subjects, we're His servants. The Scripture says He's our brother, our elder brother. It says we are joint heirs with Him. He's the Son of God, and in Him, we are sons of God. He's our brother. The Scripture says He's our husband, and we're His bride. Now, here's the question. Which one is it? Which one is it? Creator, King, brother, husband? Scripture says He's our friend. Which one is it? Which one are we gonna preach? All of them. All of them. If that's the way God says it is, then that's the way it is. The Scripture says that we're going to approach, and we are going to bow before the throne. The Scripture also says that we are already seated with Him in the throne. Which one is it? Which one are we gonna preach? We're gonna preach both of 'em. If that's what God said, then that's the way it is. We preach His Word, whatever it says. Over in 1 Corinthians 1, verse 23 says, "But we preach Christ crucified. "We preach Christ crucified." We preach His work, only His work. 1 Corinthians 2, verse two, the Apostle Paul said, "I determine not to know anything among you, "save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." That's it. The Scripture says the Father chose an elect people to save. That's what the Scripture says. What are we gonna do with that? We're gonna preach it. We're gonna preach it. This Word says the decision was in God's hands and not our hands, and we're gonna preach that. The Scripture says that Christ redeemed all the souls, and only the souls that the Father gave to Him. It was a particular redemption, it was a full redemption, a complete redemption. What are we gonna do

with that? We're gonna preach it. We're gonna preach that. The Scripture says that God's Holy Spirit will call every elect, redeemed child to Christ. What are we gonna do with that? We're gonna preach it. By God's grace, we are going to preach Christ. We are gonna preach His Word, we are gonna preach His work, and we're gonna preach His glory. We're gonna preach His glory. David said, "Not unto us, O Lord. "Not unto us, but unto thy name give glory." Not unto us in any way, shape, or form. Never do we turn His grace back into our work, and back into our glory. Never. John said, "The One who's coming after me, "I'm not worthy to stoop down and tie His shoes." He said, "He's the bridegroom, "I'm just the friend who's standing by. "I must decrease," that's what John said. "He must increase." John said, "I've done nothing, I deserve nothing. "You don't even need to know my name. "I'm just here to give all the glory "and all the credit to the Lord Jesus Christ." He cried, "Behold the Lamb of God." Not me. "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." That's what it is to preach Christ. That's what it is to preach Christ, and that's what Paul meant when he said, in 2 Corinthians 4, verse five, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord "and ourselves, your servants for Jesus' sake." It's all unto Him, all unto Him. 'Til next week, may the Lord bless His Word to our hearts.