

2 Corinthians 4:1–6

- ¹ Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart.
- ² But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.
- ³ But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,
- ⁴ whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.
- ⁵ For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.
- ⁶ For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

How We Do the Ministry 2 Corinthians 4:1-6

INTRO:

Pastors are often asked, *“What is your philosophy of ministry?”* Paul answers this question for his detractors in Corinth. His three part answer challenges us to consider the ministry we each have received. Are we looking at the ministry in same way the Apostle Paul did?

- I. Because the Ministry is Glorious (v. 1-2)*
- II. The Challenge of the Ministry (v. 3-4)*
- III. How We Act in God's Service (v.5-6)*

I. Because the Ministry is Glorious (v. 1-2)

2 Corinthians 4:1-2 *“Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by [clear presentation] of the truth, recommending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.”*

A. Paul opens Chapter four with a conclusion drawn from his discussion of the surpassing glory of the life changing ministry of the Gospel. ***“Therefore,”*** because the glory of the Gospel ministry is ongoing and life changing, this is what I, Paul do.

1. Because God gives us mercy, we do not loose heart and give up. We keep going even when the going gets rough. We will see this in detail later in this letter.

2. We are careful how we present the Word of God. Paul lists three negatives and a positive. First, he turns away from the things hidden (because they are shameful). Paul strove to be transparent in his motives and actions. Second, he would not practice craftiness. The word meant to be willing to do almost anything to get a certain result. The third negative was Paul would not ***“handle the word of God deceitfully.”*** The word means to alter or change the message. Paul refused to take tucks and alternations to the truth.

3. Instead, Paul’s commitment was

v.2 *“... by [clear presentation] of the truth, recommending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”*

Paul strove to be clear and to reveal what God said in His word. He did this because he recognizes that as God’s messenger he had to be approved by people’s consciences and that he spoke literally, ***“in the presence of God.”***

II. The Challenge of the Ministry (v. 3-4)

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 *“But [de] even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.”*

A. You can almost hear Paul’s detractors react to this statement. ***“What if no one responds to your hardnosed presentation of the Gospel?”*** Paul’s answer is profound and also makes us understand we never present the truth without opposition. Satan opposes those who speak God’s truth in love.

B. What is this truth we must keep in mind when we share our faith with others? Satan openly veils the mind of those we evangelize. People who reject the Gospel are not intellectually challenged, they are only spiritually blinded. Remember **2 Corinthians 3:15-16?**

“But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.”

The Lord Jesus must work in the heart for folks to see their need of the Gospel.

C. Paul drew a word picture to describe the divine requirement for anyone to be saved.

v.4 *“Whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.”*

People must supernaturally understand the truth for salvation to take place.

III. How We Act in God’s Service (v.5-6)

2 Corinthians 4:5-6 *“For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus’ sake. [Because] it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”*

A. Because we have received this incredible ministry, God helping us, we don’t mess with His truth but try to preach it clearly. All the while, we recognize we have opposition from the god of this age, Satan. Satan is actively blinding the minds of those who are perishing. It sounds as if our job is impossible. In fact, unless the Lord Jesus works through us, people cannot be saved. How then do we live?

B. First, we approach the ministry in one way.

v.5 *“For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus’ sake.”*

This is Paul’s philosophy of ministry. It has three aspects to ministry.

1. The negative. We do not proclaim ourselves. Ministry cannot be self-centered. When it is self-centered it cannot be God centered.
2. It must preach Christ as He is. We present Him as Lord. That is, we proclaim that He is God in human flesh come to save us, and as the master of all.
3. It involves our slavery to others for Christ’s sake. We do not serve one another because the people we serve are worthy, they are not. We serve one another as a means of serving Christ.

C. Second, we rely upon the work of God in the hearts of the unbelievers. This is the only way sinners are saved.

v.6 *“For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”*

How does our personal ministry stack up next to Paul's?

1. Do we recognize our privileges to speak to others about our Lord comes through God's mercy?
2. Do we make it a priority to speak God's truth clearly and not adapt it to make it palatable to others?
3. Do we minister aware that the only way that people are saved is if God speaks through His Word?