



"A Message for a World in Need"

Vision Series, #7 | February 18, 2018 | 2 Corinthians 4

Gathering

1. Think of your closest friends. Are they in the church or mostly outside the church? Who is your closest friend who does not share your faith?
2. Have you ever had a conversation with someone who does not believe about your commitment to Christ? What do you remember about it?

Looking at the Text

This is the last message in our series on the vision of Cornerstone Christian Church. We have looked at what it means to center your life on Jesus Christ, what it means to invest in the next generation and what it means to be generous with our money and our emotions. Today we ask a final question about how the church grows. We know that we are to pass the faith on to the next generation, but how do we reach people outside the church? To answer that we will look at 2 Corinthians 4. In this passage the Apostle Paul is defending his ministry against those who criticize him for not being very exciting or successful when compared to others. Paul tells us how he shares the message of Jesus, where the opposition comes from and how God changes lives.

Read 2 Corinthians 4:1-6

1. How does Paul describe his convictions about sharing the Word of God in vs 2? What doesn't he do and what does he do? What does he add in verse 5?
2. Why do you think Paul goes out of his way to say that he does not distort the word or deceive people?
3. Despite Paul's desire to share the word openly people often don't respond. What does he say about why people don't receive the gospel?
4. With such spiritual barriers how can anyone believe? What does Paul say about this in verse 6?

Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-15

1. Paul calls the ministry he has a "treasure." What do you think he means by saying we have this treasure in "jars of clay?" Why would God entrust his ministry to such fragile people?
2. Paul goes on to describe the opposition he has faced. What point is he making in verse 8-10?

3. In verse 11 Paul says he faces difficulties (death) over and over, but God use it. How? What is the result for the Corinthians church?

Read 2 Corinthians 4:13-18

1. Paul sums up his conviction about God working in him with the words "we believe." He believes so he shares the message of Jesus. What other motivation does he share in verse 14?
2. Why does Paul keep going despite troubles according to verses 16-18?

Applications

1. Have you ever been in a church or ministry situation where you thought the leaders were manipulative or deceptive? What was that like?
2. Have you ever seen "the light go on" for someone who did not believe but then understood the gospel?
3. What keeps us from sharing the gospel with other people? Is there anything that Paul says here that helps you with that hesitation?