

## 2 Corinthians 4:1-6

Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. <sup>6</sup> 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.

—2 Corinthians 4:1-6 (ESV)

v 1 – Therefore, having this ministry...

This ministry of the Spirit, the new covenant, far surpassing the glory of the old  
“by the mercy of God” – to be ministers of the new covenant is a blessing of God which  
no one deserves and for which no one is, himself, adequate.

“we do not lose heart” – although one would think, judging by externals, that they had  
every reason to do so

v 2 – “But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways”

more lit. – But we have renounced the secrets (hidden things) of shame

This included immoral behavior and unethical financial dealings. Also, religious fakes  
who “put on a front” and manipulated people for self-gain and who were very  
different people in private.

The apostle were not perfect men, but they led lives of integrity, commitment, self-  
sacrifice, love for God and others, and complete sincerity.

“We refuse to practice cunning...”

More lit. “not walking around in craftiness, nor corrupting the word of God”

Craftiness, sneakiness, scheming – this is of the devil and has no place in the church and  
no place in the ministry

We, like the apostles, are to renounce it utterly

“Nor corrupting the word of God”

A messenger who twists and corrupts the message of his Master to suit his own  
purposes will face the consequences from his Master (cf James 3:1)

Paul is addressing the willful (or sinfully delusional) falsifying of God’s word in  
order to gain advantage for oneself.

“[not walking around in craftiness]...but my manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to  
every person’s conscience in the sight of God.

The apostles strove to teach the truth of God, the truth of the Gospel, the truth of God’s  
word

The truth was manifested—made plain, made clear, nothing to hide, every effort expended to make it understood

“commending ourselves to every person’s conscience”

This through the complete integrity and transparency with which they lived  
Their lives were the proverbial “open book.”

“in the sight of God”

There can be no higher standard, no more fearful and awesome recognition and declaration than that all is done “in the sight of God.”  
And it is.

v 3 – “And even if our gospel is veiled...”

Paul returns to his mentioning the “veil,” a metaphor that some cannot perceive the glory of this new covenant with God  
“those who are perishing” – a reminder of the condition of those who are rejecting Christ, the world’s only hope of salvation

more lit. “[to those who are perishing it is concealed] in whom the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, so that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ cannot shine forth, who is the image of God!”

A reminder that there is a “god of this age” – the devil – who with his demonic forces actively opposes the truth and the people of God and seeks to ruin and devour every person.

There are definite, spiritual reasons why those who are perishing cannot perceive the glory of Christ—even though He is the very image of God!

Then what hope is there for them? They must repent of their sins and place their faith in Christ. If and until they do so, this need for salvation and God’s invitation to repent and be saved is the only matter at hand.

Christ is the door to further understanding. Repentance and faith bring people to Christ. It’s not “seeing is believing,” but “believing is seeing.”

v 5 – “For what we proclaim is not ourselves...”

The messenger must have integrity, and the message must be true—but it is not about the messenger!

The point of it all is the person of Jesus Christ and His glory and His gospel.

“with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake” – *this* was the role of the apostles!

This verse could be inscribed above the door of the office of a minister.

v 6 – “For God, having said...”

It is all from God—it is His doing!

When He created the world, He said to the darkness “Let there be light” and when he creates new life in people He shines His light into the darkness of their hearts.

That light is the “radiance of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

This—this—is the essence of our lives and faith and love: the “radiance of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

All of creation receives its glory from Christ in a way that we only understand now dimly but which one day will be made manifest.

Jesus is Lord—and it is all about Jesus.