

II Corinthians

Chapter 4:1-18

Plummer > The first six verses of this chapter belong to the preceding one, and the close connection between the two paragraphs is obvious: the opening verses of this chapter show how close it is, for the Apostle is still urging the claims of his office, especially against those who charge him with insincerity and self-commendation.

II Corinthians 3:17-18 > ¹⁷Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. ¹⁸But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

¹Therefore, since we have this **ministry**, as **we received mercy**, **we do not lose heart**,

Constable > Paul now returned to the theme of being a minister of the New Covenant (3:6). "Since we have a (this) ministry," in which the Spirit opens people's eyes and transforms their characters, we can be encouraged. Our job is not simply to lay God's high standards on people, as Moses did, but to provide God's grace to them as the Holy Spirit's agents.

Ministry > (Strong's) *diakonia* > service, ministry

Precept Austin > To the Greek mind, mundane service was not considered to be a proper purpose for a man's life. The formula of the sophist expressed the prevalent Greek philosophy -- "*How can a man be happy when he has to serve someone?*". Paul would likely respond "*How can a man be blessed unless he is a servant of all?*"

We received mercy > (Uteley) God's mercy for Saul, who was such a staunch, militant, anti-Christian (cf. 1 Tim. 1:13,16), on the road to Damascus (*Aorist* ... once and done; *Passive* ... action from the outside; *Indicative* ... statement of a fact) encouraged him to continue to preach the Good News in the face of adversity.

Wuest > *even as we were made the objects of mercy*

Lose heart > (Precept Austin) (*ekkakeo* > from *ek* = out of or intensifies meaning of... + *kakos* = bad) strictly speaking means to act or behave badly in some circumstance. On one hand, it can mean to give in to evil. On the other hand, it can convey the idea of to be weary in or become tired of doing something, to lose courage, to slacken their one's labor or exertion because of the weariness caused by prolonged effort. It can picture one who becomes fainthearted or despondent in the face of trial or difficulty.

Not > (Precept Austin) The Greek word for "h" (*ou/ouk*) indicates absolute negation. Paul says we absolutely in no way are losing heart, we are not becoming discouraged or despondent with fear and we are not becoming faint with weariness and exhaustion.

²*but we have **renounced** the things **hidden** because of **shame**, not walking in **craftiness** or **adulterating the word of God**, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

Renounced > (Robertson) to speak off or away from

Hidden > (Precept Austin) (*kruptos* from *krupto* = keep secret; English ~ cryptic, etc) means concealed, secret, hidden either to protect it or for self-serving purposes. *Krupto* describes something that is unknown because it is being kept secret or hidden.

Shame > (Barnes) The Greek word most commonly means shame, or disgrace.

Craftiness > (Helps Word studies) The source word for *craftiness* is one that has the sense of a person *doing anything* to get their way ("anything it takes")

Adulterating > (MacArthur) Adulterating is from *dolo*, a word used in extrabiblical Greek to speak of corrupting gold or wine with inferior ingredients

The Word of God > (MacArthur) On trial for his faith before the Diet of Worms, Martin Luther defiantly declared, "Unless I can be instructed and convinced with evidence from the Holy Scriptures or with open, clear, and distinct grounds and reasoning— and my conscience is captive to the Word of God—then I cannot and will not recant, because it is neither safe nor wise to act against conscience. Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me! Amen."

³*And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing*, ⁴*in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

And even if our gospel is veiled > (Wuest) *But if also, as is the case, our gospel has been covered*

It is veiled to those who are perishing > (Spurgeon) Paul explains in the next verse that the Gospel is veiled to those who have refused to believe (*The Cause*) and have subsequently been spiritually blinded by Satan (*The Effect*).

World > (Strong's) a space of time, an age

Precept Austin > More literally this is "*the god of this age*"

Blinded > (Precept Austin) There are only 3 uses (2Co 4:4, Jn 12:40, 1Jn 2:11) of *tuphloo* (*blinded*) in the NT and all are used with the figurative meaning referring to blinding of one's ability to understand something.

MacArthur > "Although God predestined such judgment, it was not apart from human responsibility and culpability"

John Piper compares verse 4 with verse 6 ...

- In verse 4 Satan blinds "... *the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*"
- In verse 6 the Lord "... *shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*"

The light of the gospel of the glory of Christ > (Matheson) Remember the Christ whom Paul first saw was the Christ of heaven. He never gazed upon the man of Galilee. His earliest vision was the vision of a Jesus glorified, not on the road to the cross did Christ meet him. He came to him panoplied in heavenly splendor

5For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord > (Vance Havner) It is not the business of the preacher to fill the house. It is his business to fill the pulpit.

MacArthur > Salvation is never the result of human persuasion; it is a sovereign act of God. In John 6:44 Jesus declared, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him." Lydia was saved when "the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul" (Acts 16:14) ... Only God can open the sin-blinded eyes of those who are "dead in [their] trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1; cf. v. 5; Matt. 8:22; Eph. 4:18).

6For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

For > (Precept Austin) asks us to stop and consider what message the "for" is trying to get across. Compare the previous verse > *5For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord*. To this one > *God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ*

Constable > Why had Paul conducted himself as he did? It was because God had dispelled the "darkness" in his heart, by illuminating it with the "knowledge" of Himself ("of the glory of God"), that comes though understanding Jesus Christ ("in the face of Christ"). Individual regeneration is a work of God as supernatural and as powerful as the creation of the cosmos (Gen. 1:3). Now Paul wanted to share that "Light" with others.

Wuest Translation > *because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, shined in our hearts, resulting in an illumination being given of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

⁷*But we have this treasure in **earthen vessels**, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;*

Earthen vessels > (Wiersbe) God said of Paul, “He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles” (Acts 9:15).

MacArthur > How was he to defend himself and the gospel he preached without seeming proud? Rather than deny the false apostles’ allegations that he was weak and imperfect, he embraced them. The apostle declared that the priceless truth of the gospel was held in a humble container. In fact, his weaknesses, far from being reasons to reject him, were among his most convincing apostolic credentials.

⁸*we are **afflicted** in every way, but not crushed; **perplexed**, but not despairing;*
⁹*persecuted, but not **forsaken**; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰**always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.***

Verses 8-12 > A study in paradoxes

Afflicted > (Strong’s) to press, afflict

Perplexed > (Strong’s) from a compound of *a* (as a negative particle) and the base of *poreuomai*; to have no way out, i.e. Be at a loss (mentally)

Precept Austin > Note that all of the verbs in 2Co 4:8 and 2Co 4:9 are in the present tense picturing continuous action. In other words, Paul was continuously afflicted, perplexed, persecuted and struck down.

Forsaken > (Vincent) literally *left behind*

Dying > (MacArthur) *Dying* (is not the translation of) *thanatos*, Paul’s usual word for death, but *nekrōsis*. *Thanatos* speaks of death as a fact or an event, while *nekrōsis* describes the process of dying. As noted above, Paul constantly faced death, which led him to write, “I die daily” (1 Cor. 15:31).

Amplified Version > *Always carrying about in the body the liability and exposure to the same putting to death that the Lord Jesus suffered, so that the [resurrection] life of Jesus also may be shown forth by and in our bodies.*

¹¹For we who live are constantly being **delivered over** to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. **¹²So death works in us, but life in you.**

Delivered over > (Utley) The term "been delivered over" (*paranididōmi*) was used of Judas handing over Jesus to the authorities (cf. Matt. 20:18-19; Mark. 10:33). It is used by Jesus in a prophetic sense describing His followers in Matt. 10:17; 24:9; Mark 13:11-12.

Works > (Precept Austin) (*energeo* from *en = in + érgon = work*. English = energetic) means to work effectively to cause something to happen. To energize, to operate, to work effectually in. It means power in exercise and is used only of superhuman power. To work energetically, effectively and/or efficiently. To put forth energy. To be at work. To produce results.

Wuest Translation > *So that death is operative in us but the life is operative in you.*

¹³But having the same spirit of faith, **according to what is written**, "I believed, therefore I spoke," we also believe, therefore we also speak, ¹⁴**knowing** that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you.

According to what is written > (Barnes) This passage is found in **Psalm 116:10**. (Ken > See the Septuagint version below) When the psalmist uttered the words, he was greatly afflicted; see Psalm 116:3, Psalm 116:6-8. In these circumstances, he prayed to God, and expressed confidence in him, and placed all his reliance on him. In his affliction he spoke to God; he spoke of his confidence in him; he proclaimed his reliance on him; and his having spoken in this manner was the result of his belief, or of his putting confidence in God.

Psalm 116:10 (LXX) > *I believed, wherefore I have spoken: but I was greatly afflicted.*

Knowing > (Strong's) *oida*

Precept Austin > *Eido/oida* is distinguished from *ginosko* (*epiginosko*, *epignosis* - the other major NT word group for knowing) because *ginosko* generally refers to knowledge obtained by experience or "experiential knowledge". On the other hand, *eido/oida* often refers more to an intuitive knowledge, although this distinction is not always clear cut.

- *Eido/oida* is not so much that which is known by experience as an intuitive insight that is drilled into one's heart.
- *Eido/oida* is a perception, a being aware of, an understanding, an intuitive knowledge which in the case of believers can only be given by the Holy Spirit.
- And so *eido/oida* suggests fullness of knowledge, absolute knowledge (that which is without a doubt), rather than a progress in knowledge (cp *ginosko*)

¹⁵*For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.*

Spreading to more and more people > (Robertson) "making more through the more,"

Abound > (Vincent) is from the Latin *redundare* > *to surge back*. Therefore, primarily, of a fullness or overflow from the setting back of a tide.

Strong's > to be over and above, to abound

¹⁶*Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.* ¹⁷*For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,*

Therefore > Tie verse 15 to what is found here in verse 16 > *for all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.*

We do not lose heart > (Precept Austin) (Lists to mindset of famous individuals who persevered)

But though our outer man ... > (Wuest) *But and if, as is the case, our outward self is progressively decaying, yet our inward self is being changed into a new kind of life day by day.*

Far beyond all comparison > (Strong's) *hyperpole* > a throwing beyond, excess, superiority

Vincent > An expression after the form of Hebrew superlatives, in which the emphatic word is twice repeated. Lit., exceedingly unto excess.

¹⁸*while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

Look > (Precept Austin) (*skopeo* from *skopos* = distant mark looked at, goal or end one has in view; English "scope" as in microscope or telescope) means to "spy out", to look at, to observe, to contemplate, to mark (to fix or trace out the bounds or limits of). Contemplate, look into, examine, inspect, continue to regard closely, to notice carefully, pay attention to, keep one's attention on.

Temporal > (Strong's) from *pros* > *to, toward*, and *kairos* > *time, season* > therefore *for a time or season*