

Week 3 – Handout (2 Cor 4:1-5:10)

Summary of Key Theological Points So Far

- (1:1-11) Suffering & Comfort of Christ → Flow into our Lives → Others (mutuality)
- (1:1-11) Hardships teach us to *rely on God who raises the dead*, instead of self
- (1:12-22) Reliability of ministry and message are based in the promises of God not ministers
- (1:12-22) Paul conducts his ministry in a manner that spurs criticism and hardship...but is intentionally aimed at helping the Corinthians become mature (1:14) and help them to see that is God who makes them stand firm (1:22)
- (1:23-2:11) The Corinthians are competent to stand on their own (2:5-11)
- (2:14-17) The ministry and message of Christ will look foolish to some and glorious to others
- (3:1-18) The proof / certification of the message and ministry is if it changes hearts, not based on the form of ministry, the appeal of minister, or popular response.

(3:1-18) – Letters of Recommendation

- Focus on heart background texts of Ezek 36:26f; Ex 31:18f; Jer 31:31f
- Contrasting groups of words emerge in this section. Stone-law-death-condemnation-dull-fading vs. hearts-Spirit-life-glory-righteousness-lasting-increasing
- Three “IF” comparisons (vv. 7, 9, 11)
- What does Paul mean by saying “we are very bold” (3:12)?

(4:1-15) – Do not lose heart

- We do not lose heart
- (v1) Since we have this ministry (a “more glorious ministry”)...we adopt more glorious ways:
 - (1) we don’t distort or deceive
 - (2) we do not lose heart ...from the difficulty of the task
 - (3) we set forth the truth plainly. Contrast with a “veiled” ministry of Moses
 - (4) we commend ourselves to every persons open assessment (not secret)
- (v4) Christ = image of God, the glory (aka of the ministry ala Moses) = Christ’s glory as the image of God
- (v5) We do not preach ourselves...but Jesus Christ as Lord (it is not OUR glory that matters...but Christ’s glory, we are servants for your sake)
- (v6) from Gen 1:3...applied following Jewish wisdom literature where God created the world through wisdom. In this case the wisdom is Christ. So in this verse Paul is using a complicated literary image where:
 - Christ’s face (not moses) reflects God’s glory (actually IS God’s glory)
 - The light shines in our HEARTS, not just on us
 - The understanding that the light that “shines out of darkness” = Christ was “given” to Paul as a ministry to preach
 - “jars of clay” image
 - We carry around in our body the death of Jesus...so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

Discussion

- What hints do we see about how the Corinthians are complaining about Paul?
- Why is it important that God made “the light shine in our hearts...” in order to spread the gospel?

2010 Cycle 2 – “Love Compels Us”

- What is communicated in the “more glorious ministry” carried in jars of clay?
- How do vv. 8-12 reinforce Paul’s main points to the Corinthians?
- What role does resurrection hope play in this depiction of the gospel?

(4:16-5:10) - Do not lose heart

- We do not lose heart
- Outwardly / inwardly, seen / unseen, temporary / eternal, faith / sight
- Earthly tent = earthly body, Building / eternal house = heavenly body, Unclothed = dead
- Spirit as guarantee of what is to come
- Not on what is seen...but what is unseen

“Now we know that if we die we have a resurrection body in heaven. But for now we groan, longing for our new body, because then we will not be just dead and forgotten. So for now we groan and feel the burden because our desire is not for death but for a resurrection body....then we can say that our mortal body has been swallowed up by life.”

- Mortal swallowed up by life ... not mortal replaced by immortality....but mortal swallowed up by immortality...one is connected to the other
- Desire for resurrection body presses us forward...because there will be a judgment and a resurrection.

Discussion

- This section speaks to Paul’s motives in ministry. What moves him to work so hard?
- What role does the Spirit play in the work of Ministry in this section?