



Intro to 2 Corinthians 4:1-6

Sunday, July 21, 2019

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When we think about the ministry of the local church, two of the key places to start in the Bible are Paul's letters to the Corinthians. Providentially, though Paul had to suffer the frustrations of chaotic and skeptical churches, we get the benefit of Paul explaining his ministry methods. In his explanations, we see that Paul's primary commitment is to preach Christ crucified (1 Cor. 2:2). That was contrary to what the Jews wanted and what the Greeks wanted, but nevertheless, that was Paul's calling and that is what he was committed to.

So, in the spirit of imitating Paul (1 Cor. 11:1), we ought to consider the fundamental principles that guided his ministry as we consider our own. Many of those fundamental principles are found right in this passage: recognition of the ministry as being received purely by the mercy of God, perseverance under trial, maintaining integrity, proclaiming Christ alone, trust in God's sovereign grace in the salvation and sanctification of sinners. All these things are crucial for us to examine our own hearts and churches to see whether or not we are living faithfully according to Scripture or if we have deviated in any way.

Context

This section comes immediately after Paul has explained the difference between the Old (Mosaic) Covenant and the New Covenant. The key difference is the presence of the Spirit (3:6). This highlights the prerogative of God in salvation. The reason for integrity in ministry and confidence of assured outcomes is because the power for effective ministry comes from God and not from us (4:7). So, when we think about the description of ministry in 4:1-6, we must remember that the reason for our perseverance, integrity, and confidence is not our reputations or our smooth talking, but is simply God at work through the Spirit.

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

Read 2 Corinthians 4:1-6

“A Biblical Philosophy of Ministry”

Ministry (serves the interest of others)

not

Manipulation (uses others to serve one’s own interest)

I. Communicate with Integrity (1-2)

II. Compassion for People (3-4)

III. Commitment to Christ (5-6)

Scaffolding the Gospel

1. Prayer (Matt. 9:35-10:1)

2. Entry Points: “Cultivating” (2 Cor. 5:17-21)

3. Gospel Conversations: “Sowing” (John 1:40-42; 1 Pet. 3:15)

4. Bible Study/Sharing: “Harvesting” (Rom. 10:17; 2 Cor. 5:20)

5. Conversion (Acts 2:37-47)

Discuss

- 1) What are some ways that conservative, evangelical churches might be tempted to use “disgraceful, underhanded ways” or “tamper with God’s word”?
- 2) Would you say you have a biblical sense of compassion for people who are perishing? How do you know?
- 3) As you examine your life, do your actions and priorities reveal more of a concern for Christ’s reputation or your own? How do you know?
- 4) Who are some people on your list that you are praying will come to know Christ? What is your relationship to them? And have you seen God working in their lives?
- 5) Of the people on your list, in which relationship would you say you are closest to “crossing the pain line” or talking with about Jesus? How can we pray for you as you aim to do that?