

The Supremacy Of Christ In Preaching***Mukama yebazibwe*****The Light of the Gospel!
2 Corinthians 4:1-6**

Introduction: You who preach the Gospel will be able to connect with these words of a fellow Pastor from over 130 years ago (1875) that Charles Spurgeon wrote in his book, Lectures to my students about the temptations and pressures of a Pastor to “lose heart” in a chapter entitled “The minister’s fading fits.” In it he writes:

- ✓ Our work, when earnestly undertaken, lays us open to attacks in the direction of depression.
- ✓ Who can bear the weight of souls without sometimes sinking to the dust?
- ✓ Passionate longings after men's conversion, if not fully satisfied, consume the soul with anxiety and disappointment.
- ✓ To see the hopeful turn aside, the godly grow cold, professors abusing their privileges, and sinners waxing more bold in sin—are not these sights enough to crush us to the earth?
- ✓ How can we be otherwise than sorrowful, while men believe not our report, and the divine arm is not revealed?
- ✓ All mental work tends to weary and to depress, for much study is a weariness of the flesh; but ours is more than mental work—it is heart work, the labor of our inmost soul.
- ✓ Such soul-travail as that of a faithful minister will bring on occasional seasons of exhaustion, when heart and flesh will fail.

It would not surprise me to find out that you have an intimate acquaintance with many of the sentiments that Spurgeon has listed, but you will soon see that they pale in comparison to the list of difficulties faced by our brother the Apostle Paul.

Let us consider for a moment just one list of the struggles that he encountered in ministering the Gospel **2 Corinthians 11:23-28**
imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. 24 Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea; 26 on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers; 27 in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. 28 And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches.

It is good of our God not only to give us the list of some of the things that would cause us to “lose heart” in Gospel Ministry but also to give us the medicine to revive and encourage us. **2 Corinthians 4:1-6**

Prayer:**I. As Ministers Of New Covenant Gospel Ministry You Need Not Lose Hope!****A. 2 Corinthians 4:1-2 Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart.**

1. Paul lets us know that in spite of all the difficulties and his enemies abounding in the Corinthian church he does not lose heart.
 - a. To lose heart as Paul speaks about it here is more than dealing with the normal difficulties and depression associated with ministry but to actually to be overcome with fear so that you would give up and abandon the ministry itself.
2. Paul now gives you two reasons not to lose heart in the ministry.
 - a. Firstly: That you are ministers of God with the privilege of having this New Covenant Gospel ministry.
 - i. The therefore points you back to remember God's promise that work of ministry is not ultimately up to you as He will fulfill His promise to turn hearts of stone to hearts of flesh by the power of His Spirit.
 - ✓ **Ezekiel 11:19-20 And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I (God) will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, 20 that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.**
 - b. Secondly: He calls you to look to and remember the great mercy that God has shown in calling you to the ministry.
 - i. Remember that the Apostle started off as a persecutor of Christ and His Church was acutely aware of the mercy that he had been shown.
 - ✓ **1 Timothy 1:12-17 I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, 13 though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, 14 and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 15 The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. 16 But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. 17 To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.**

B. 2 Corinthians 4:2 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.

1. Paul did not give himself up to the tricks of the trade to draw a crowd but trusted that in faithfully preaching the word as God's chosen means of grace will draw men to Himself.
 - a. Paul's concern in mentoring Timothy that he would be careful not to tamper with God's word and preach a gospel that was similar in sound but different in substance.
 - i. **2 Timothy 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.**
 - ✓ As Kent Hughes said about Paul's direction to Timothy and God's word "that he must get it straight and give it straight."
2. Paul had seen and heard the false teachers in Corinth use disgraceful underhanded ways and cunningly tamper with God's word.
 - a. Later in this same letter Paul expressed his concern that the Corinthians had begun to succumb to the message from the false apostles that had come from Jerusalem.
 - i. **2 Corinthians 11:3-4 But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. 4 For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.**
 - a. Al Mohler has reported this about the sad state of the Church in the USA by repeated statements from Joel Osteen a pastor of "America's largest church" from as recent as April 25, 2012.
 - i. On Mormonism, Osteen said: "I believe that [Mormons] are Christians . . . I don't know if it's the purest form of Christianity, like I grew up with. "The Washington Times"
 - a. As Mohler rightly observes: Osteen seems not to know that their beliefs concerning Jesus Christ are not those of historic Christianity, and their understanding of salvation differs radically from the message of the New Testament.
 3. Remember brothers that word of God presented in a straightforward way in reliance upon the Spirit, the word of God will always achieve the results for which God sends it forth!
 - a. **Isaiah 55:10-11 "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, 11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.**
 - i. Some it will harden
 - ii. Some it will soften

II. As Ministers Of New Covenant Gospel Ministry You Have An Enemy Who Bring Blindness To Your Family And Friends!

A. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 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.

1. I am not planning on spending much time on this section as the Apostle is repeating a theme that we dealt with yesterday as unbelievers naturally have the gospel veiled to them as they are blinded by the Devil.
 - a. Revelation 12:19 ... the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world.**
2. While the Devil is called the god of this world in the Scriptures note that he is not the God of the Cosmos or Universe and he is as John Piper as said "on a short leash."
 - a. Jesus is victor and has freed us from our slavery to sin and Satan.
 - i. Hebrews 2:14-15 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he (Jesus) himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.**

Conclusion: As Ministers Of The New Covenant You Have The Privilege Of Introducing Family And Friends To The One Who Brings Sight!

A. 2 Corinthians 4:5 For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

1. You who are ministers of the Gospel have as your calling to be God's servants, literally a slave of Jesus to proclaiming His message.
2. The false teachers were preaching, proclaiming and lifting up themselves while Paul continued to lift up Christ.
3. The message that you proclaim to the world is the Gospel, "**Jesus Christ as Lord.**"
 - a. Here we have a short summary of the good news
 - i. Jesus: His name at birth – "the Lord saves"
 - ii. Christ: The Messiah – the one anointed to die for our sin
 - iii. Lord: The One risen to rule and reign at the right hand of God, King of Kings

B. 2 Corinthians 4:6 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.

1. The Apostle points back to creation where God spoke and light was created which enabled men to see and it is by His word that He gives His supernatural light enlighten our darkened hearts.
 - a. That is Paul’s testimony of what God did in his own life.
 - i. **Acts 26:12-18 “In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. 13 At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me. 14 And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ 15 And I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 16 But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, 17 delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you 18 to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith.**
2. Brothers do not “lose heart” but rejoice as you are God’s servants proclaiming His glorious message of the Gospel that frees Men, Women, Boys and Girls from the Kingdom Of Darkness and brings them into His Kingdom of His Light.
 - a. **Colossians 2:11-13 May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. 13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**