

It's About Focus!

Introduction: 2 Cor. 4:1-18

- A. 2 Corinthians shows us what it means to have good ministry.
• Integrity • Compassion • Dedication • Servant hood • Realistic • Hope
- B. **Story of the enthusiastic preacher**
- C. Most of us are enthusiastic-- until it gets uncomfortable (**To God, be the glory**)
“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.”
2 Timothy 4:7

From the road to Damascus to his prison in Rome, Paul was faithful to the end !

How? ...a moment by moment commitment to keep the right focus (motivation, determination and vision)

I. Realistic motivation

- A. Finishing the course isn't easy (Paul's critics had three charges against him)
1. Used devious practices
 2. Exercised deception/cleverness to get his way
 3. Distort/Adulterate the Word
- B. We do not lose heart (**Phil 3:14**)
1. 2 Cor. 4 is filled with nourishment to keep us going
 2. Holding this chapter together is vv. 1 & 16 (We do not lose heart)
 3. How?- Is it willpower, Grit... partly
- (2Cor. 4:1 Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry...)**
4. What ministry? Establishing the church in the world
 5. Realizing the weight of our task... **Winston Churchill-**
- C. Why did this ministry matter to Paul? V. 1 (mercy was shown to him)
- **The Host of Heaven watched Jesus pay our debt**

II. Enthusiastic Determination

- A. It takes determination to stay in the race- **2 Cor. 4:13** (*Faith comes from the heart not the intellect*)
1. “It is written” probably quotes Psa 116 (A hymn of thanksgiving for deliverance)
 2. Paul had experienced God's faithfulness even in times of trouble. (**4:7-12**)
 3. Paul had an enthusiastic determination to focus on God, regardless... **Joan of Arc-**
- B. How can we follow Paul's example?
1. **Enthusiastic determination** grows out of being delivered by the Lord
 - The Red sea and the Egyptians (Rejoicing when the hand of God moves!!)
 2. **Enthusiastic determination** grows when we focus on our future resurrection
(*2Cor. 4:14 because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence.*)
 3. **Enthusiastic determination** grows when we invest in the lives of others
 - The life that reflects Christ, lives to serve others. (Phil. 2:3-11)

III. Authentic Vision

A. Paul ends Chpt. 4 where he began it... **4:16-18**

B. The outer man is decaying

1. Without Xp the outer man is all we have (Discouragement)

2. With the Spirit we have the inner man who is being renewed everyday!

a. Therefore- our afflictions are light and only momentary... in this perspective.

b. If we only look at what is seen... we'll be in the dumps!

c. But the unseen things are eternal

C. Let's take our focus off where we are and place it on where we're going!-- **Look at life with a view on forever!**

Conclusion: Finishing well

A. What we do today is a thread woven onto the tapestry of a larger picture

• Every kindness • Thoughtful act • Mention of the Word • Forgiving attitude

• Encouraging word-- weaves the tapestry

1. If you could see the eternal results you would never stop weaving!

2. Keep weaving, keep investing and keep your focus on the unseen-- no matter how dark it gets!

3. Then you'll have the focus you'll need to keep running until the end!

If you have never accepted Jesus as your Savior... please come and be united with him in Baptism. We want His death, burial and resurrection to be the basis of your salvation.

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