**2 CORINTHIANS CHAPTER 4**

CHAPTER 4 VERSES 1-6

**Verse 1** – “we do not lose heart” or “we do not give up” (**HCS**)

**Verse 2** – The truth will set you free (**John 8:31-32**).

**Verse 6** – God commanded light to shine out of darkness in **Genesis 1:3**. Before the sun, the stars, or the moon, God created light. This first Creation event was pointing to the Light of Jesus (**John 1:1-5, Ephesians 5:7-14**). And that Light is what had shone in the hearts of Paul and the disciples.

CHAPTER 4 VERSES 7-15

**Verse 7** – Man is described as earthen vessels. In the Greek, this vessel is fragile. We can see in our lives how fragile physical life can be. More importantly spiritual life is fragile. It does not take much for a man or a woman to get off the narrow path of Jesus (**Matt. 7:13-14**). We need to protect our fragile earthen vessel and keep it safe from the dangers of sin and the devil (**Romans 12:1**).

**Verses 8-15** – Paul speaks of a spiritual battle going on. In this battle, he and the disciples know that God has a plan for them. Even when they risk their safety and lives in spreading the gospel, they are not forsaken. A Christian may fall, but every time he falls he gets up. Many times in the midst of spiritual battles, though one may suffer physically, one is can be growing closer to the Lord spiritually. But we will not experience this spiritual growth unless we are really engaged in the spiritual battles.

[**Illustration of Samantha wrestling Daniel, and Jessie would be on the outside looking in**]. Sometimes we may be deceived into thinking if we are a good person and go to church once or twice a week that we are engaged in the spiritual warfare for the cause of Christ. Paul realizes that if we are to share the life of Christ, we must also share the risks of Christ (**Luke 9:23, Galatians 2:20,**

**1 Timothy 6:11-12, James 1:12-15, Jude 20-23**). No cross – no crown. No pain – no gain. We need to battle Satan and evil to protect our fragile earthen vessel because in this vessel we hold the treasure that can save the lost around us (**Acts 8:4**). We see in **verse 13** a reference to David from **Psalm 116**; “I believed therefore I spoke”. Though David was hounded by his enemies, he continued to serve God. Paul and other disciple’s believed and therefore spoke because their faith was grounded in the fact that just as God raised Jesus from the dead, all the faithful will be raised in the same way.

It is a temptation not to risk anything for Christ. Not to say anything when we have a chance, not to make opportunities to tell others about Jesus, not to stand for God’s truth, not to shine His light to others, and not to really engage ourselves in the spiritual battles for the lost souls we interact with. But we can see from these passages that we are to be warriors and soldiers for Jesus, trying to save anyone we can. We will endure persecutions, but in those persecutions the grace of God will be spread to others (**verse 15**). Paul knew that through his sufferings and trials, others were being led to the Light of Jesus and the Love of God.

CHAPTER 4 VERSES 16-18

**Verse 16** – We are encouraged not to lose heart or “not give up” (**HCS**). Christians all face the reality that our bodies weaken over time. Sufferings of various kinds weaken our bodies, but in the midst of physical weakening, our souls can keep on growing stronger.

**Verses 17-18** – Paul was convinced that any suffering He and other disciples would suffer was nothing compared to the future glory they would have in Heaven. They viewed their sufferings as “light momentary affliction” (**ESV**). When we remember what was said earlier in this chapter and other places in the NT, we know that these Christians suffered many things we will never experience. Paul lists what his light momentary afflictions were in **2 Corinthians 11:23-28**. They were able to view these severe trials in this way because they kept their eyes focused on Heaven. Our problem is we many times fix our eyes on the things in the world. How did Jesus go through what He did? He kept His focus on Heaven (**John 17:5 - ESV**). Notice **Hebrews 12:1-2** (**NASV**). Let us not fix our eyes on the worldly things that tempt us to sin, but rather fix our eyes on Jesus and Heaven!

CLOSE

Maybe you have not been the Christian soldier you know Jesus expects you to be. You can change that direction right now and be determined to do better. I know I need to improve in that regard and maybe you do as well.

If you are not a Christian this morning, we encourage you to come out of darkness and into the marvelous Light of Jesus. He will forgive you of all your sins, provide for you in this life, and lead you to the eternal place called Heaven. This is what motivates Christians to give their lives to Him. Believe in Him, acknowledge that He is the Son of God, turn away from your sins and submit to Him by being baptized to wash away all your sins. Deciding to let Jesus save your soul and to live for Him is the most important decision you will ever make in your life. Please come to Him now. Come forward if we can help you as we stand and sing.