

Sermon: "Authentic Ministry" (2 Corinthians 4:1-6)

Date: May 26, 2019

We're taking a break from our Matthew series this week to look at this passage in 2 Corinthians 4:1-6. This passage teaches us how we can persevere in authentic ministry for the Lord Jesus Christ. Sometimes in ministry it may feel like we're making little progress. Perhaps we've been sharing the gospel with lost loved ones and are still waiting to see any fruit come of it. Or maybe we've been serving in the church but it feels as though our service might not be worth the effort. Sometimes we're left tired and weary as we seek to serve King Jesus. This is what our focus in ministry is on fruitfulness. When we see a lack of fruit and when we fail to look at the situation through the eyes of faith, we will be left discouraged. In order to fight this temptation, we need to understand what true, effective, authentic ministry is. We need to recognize the importance of integrity. We need to know the spiritual nature of the lost people we are trying to reach. And we need to be faithful to preach and exalt Christ in season and out of season, leaving the results to God.

What you need for this study: Bible, Notebook, Pen

Individual Bible Study

1. Please read 2 Corinthians 4:1-6 and ensure that you've listened to Sunday's sermon.
 - a. In verse 1, Paul says, "having this ministry by the mercy of God." What kind of *ministry* is Paul talking about? Does this ministry come from us or from God? Explain.
 - b. What does it mean to "lose heart," (v. 1)? Why are we sometimes tempted to lose heart in ministry?
 - c. According to verse 2, what sorts of things are we to reject and avoid doing in ministry? Instead of doing these things, what are we supposed to do instead?
 - d. How are Christians sometimes tempted to alter or water-down the gospel? In contrast, what does it mean to give an "open statement of the truth," (v. 2)?
 - e. What does it mean that our gospel "is veiled to those who are perishing," (v. 3)? Why is it veiled? How does this inform our thought process when we seek to evangelize the lost?
 - f. How is the veil removed from someone's eyes? Who removes it?

- g. According to verse 5, what are we *not* to proclaim? What might it look like for someone to proclaim themselves?
- h. Instead of proclaiming ourselves, what is the message that we are to continually proclaim as Christians?
- i. Explain verse 6 and how this relates to what Paul has already taught us about the veiling of the gospel.

Group Discussion Questions

- 1. How did the Holy Spirit speak to you through the sermon and the Bible study this week?
- 2. Why are we sometimes tempted to lose heart in ministry? What sorts of things might cause us to lose heart?
- 3. When we're tempted to lose heart, what can we do to persevere with integrity? How can we be faithful to the ministry and service that God has called us to even when it's hard and may even seem fruitless at times?
- 4. Why do some people reject the gospel? How should this affect our own disposition toward them when we seek to evangelize them?
- 5. What does it mean to give an open statement of the truth? What is the message that we proclaim?
- 6. How is someone won to Christ? What is our role and what is God's role according to this text?
- 7. How can we proclaim Christ as Lord in our daily lives?