

# *Great Commission*



Baptist Church

*Dr. Douglas E. Brown, Pastor/Teacher*



Defending The Gospel

II Corinthians  
Life Group Curriculum  
September – November 2023

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## **Lesson I**

**Date:** September 3, 2023

### **Lesson Scriptures**

This Sunday will be a recap of the Book of 1 Corinthians.

What did you learn that you did not know about the book of I Corinthians?

Share what you have learned during this letter, what you may have known or what you have learned during this study. Share this with the class.

## Lesson II

**Date:** September 10, 2023

**Lesson Scriptures:** 2 Corinthians 1 :1-11

### The Suffering of Saints

**Lesson Aim:** To teach the student to place their hope in God who can comfort and deliver them from all their troubles.

#### Open It

1. Looking back on some of your trials, do you now know why you went through your sufferings?
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#### Explore It

1. What church did Paul write in this letter?  

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2. When we feel that we are in troubled, who can comfort us?  

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3. Whether we be comforted during our trials, it is for?  

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4. Paul wrote that he would not have them be ignorant of what?  

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#### Word Study:

The New Testament teaches that the Holy Spirit is our *Comforter* or our *Parakletos*. This word *Comforter* comes from the Greek word *parakaleo*, a verb which means *to encourage*.

The Greek word for advocate is *parakletos*. The word *para* means *alongside* and *kaleo* means *to call*. John was the only one who used this term in the New Testament. The *parakletos* was the one called alongside to assist, help, defend, or intercede on the behalf of another or to give counsel. The advocate counseled, coached, and championed the cause of another in court. He was a helper, supporter, and a witness giving favorable testimony. In Rome, boys of good families replaced their toga with a purple stripe at the age of seventeen and put on a white toga of a man. They were then presented as speakers or advocates in the courts. Our Lord is our advocate and defends us against the accusations of Satan.

**Summary:** Paul, poised in Macedonia, about to travel to Corinth for a third visit, prepared for his coming by sending this letter. His description of himself was not unusual. He defended the fact that he was an apostle of Jesus Christ, called by God, which occupied the heart of his letter. Unlike the false apostles who opposed him in Corinth, Paul was sent by Jesus Christ (Acts 9:15). This was not by Paul's own choosing; apostleship was pressed upon him by God. (Acts 22:14). Timothy was a much-loved associate in the ministry. He joined Paul on his second missionary journey to Corinth and proved himself to be an invaluable colleague, (Acts 16: 1-3).

In this pericope (section), there were concerns about the immediate destiny of the Church of God in Corinth, (2 Cor. 11:3). Paul was confident that those who were born again belonged to God, and that no power could wrest (take by force) them from Him (Jn. 3:3; Acts 18:10; Rms. 8:38-39). This was true not only for all the Corinthians but also for all Christians living in the regions surrounding Corinth, as well as true for us today. We are all saints set apart by God for service to Him. But they, nor we are immune to controversy. We as Christians must remember that the grace of God is not always expressed in the best times, but in what seems to be the worst times in our lives. No matter how much we long for exaltation, (1 Cor. 4:8); grace is often found in humiliation (2 Cor. 12:9). The English word *troubles* in the Greek New Testament is *thlipsei* which means pressures, distress, and hardship; and mentioned nine times in this letter. Paul wants the believers in Corinth as well as believers today to know that troubles are experienced by all Christians, even though he endured more than all of us. Christians must shift their perspectives from external and temporal to internal and external (2 Cor. 1:9, 4:17-18).

The source of all comfort in the midst of trouble is the Almighty God. It was God who sustained Paul through all his suffering and delivered him from it (2 Cor. 1:8-10). God showed Paul greater mercy the more he endured suffering. The English word *compassion* in the Greek New Testament is *oiktirom* which means to render mercy. Mercy is a grace gift from the God of our Salvation. Paul placed his hope in God to sustain him through all his hardships, pressures, and troubles regardless of what he faced. It was his hope in God that kept him, as well as his relationship with the saints at Corinth. Paul trusted that God would deliver him from the peril of death and would deliver him from the dead once his course was run. He trusted in the prayers of the righteous.

Lesson aim and summary by Glendoria P. Boyd, AdvDip.TH.  
Bible Knowledge Commentary  
New King James Bible  
Life Application Bible  
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### Lesson III

Date: September 17, 2023

Lesson Scriptures: 2 Corinthians 1:12-24

#### An Answer for Your Attackers

**Lesson Aim:** To teach the students that when they are attacked, trust the Word of God to sustain them.

#### Open It

1. How did you feel when your integrity was attacked?

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#### Explore It

1. Instead of going to Corinth, what city did Paul say he traveled to?

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2. Who did Paul say was true?

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3. What did Paul preach to the Corinthians?

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#### Word Study:

The word *rejoicing* is derived from the Greek word *kauchesis* {kow'-khay-sis} which means "act of glorying, boasting, proud confidence, or rejoicing." Paul frequently used this word *kauchēsis*, and the related noun and verb forms in this letter. Twenty-nine of their fifty-nine uses in the New Testament are found in 2 Corinthians. Negatively, *kauchēsis* describes unwarranted boasting in one's achievements and merits.

Boasting in the form of human arrogance is sin, for our God must receive all glory and honor. Human pride must be banished, and God is to be glorified. Christians, therefore, should never glorify or extol themselves but only glory in the Lord Jesus.



**Summary:** Paul, now finds himself defending the accusations that he is fickle and unreliable. He states that he has a clear conscience before God and trusts that the Corinthian Christians will understand this. Paul knows the importance of holiness and sincerity in word and in action. So, he did not come with impressive human knowledge (worldly wisdom). See, God wants us to be authentic and transparent in all of our relationships. And, when we are not, we leave ourselves open to spreading rumors, gossiping, and second-guessing. These Corinthians had become cynical, believing that people are motivated purely by self-interest. They believed that everyone had terrible motives and was out for his own personal gain and power, and they thought Paul was cynical as well. In verse 13; Paul wanted these Corinthian Christians to know that he had no hidden agenda or hidden meaning in his letters. His meaning was right out on top, (made public) for all to see. Paul assured these Corinthians that his letters to them were “truth” and did not hold or communicate any hidden meaning.

However, they still accused Paul of being unreliable and untrustworthy because he said he would come at a certain time and did not. (1Cor. 16:5-7). Sometimes, our plans don't line up with God's plan. Amen! Paul says that as God is faithful, they are faithful in what they say to the Corinthians. He says he does not say yes and means no. Nor, do he say no and mean yes. His words are not fickle. Paul was such a man of integrity that he could liken/compare, his truthfulness to God's faithfulness. The reason for Paul's trip was to bring joy to them, but this could not be accomplished with their present crises. He knew their accusations were wrong based on spiritual reasons. He wanted them to know that just as they could trust God to keep His promises, they could trust him as God's representative. All of God's promises of what the Messiah would be like are fulfilled in Christ. Jesus was completely faithful in His ministry, He never sinned (1 Pet. 3:18). He faithfully died for us (Heb. 2:9) and now He faithfully interceded for us, (Rms.8:34 and Heb. 4:14-15). Paul and his associates were commissioned by God and filled with the Holy Spirit. Understanding this should have made the Corinthian Christians reject hasty and unfounded accusations against Paul.

Paul refers to three aspects of the Holy Spirit's work within us. 1.) Anointed us. - The idea behind anointed is that we are prepared and empowered for service. The fact that we are anointed means that believers share something with the Old Testament prophets, priests, and kings who were the anointed ones. 2.) Sealed us- In the old days, a seal was used to identify and protect. God's seal is upon us through the Holy Spirit identifying us as God's property. Finally, 3.) a guarantee- is a word used for a down payment. It shows the owner you will make good on the sale. We have been given the Holy Spirit as a down payment for the fullness of what God will do. The Holy Spirit is a pledge of greater things to come, (Eph. 1:13-14). The Holy Spirit guarantees that salvation is ours now and that we will receive so much more when Christ returns.

However, with the privilege of belonging to God comes the responsibility of identifying ourselves as “*faithful servants*”. We should not be ashamed or afraid to let others know we belong to God. We should, like Paul, defend our faith with the Word of God.

Lesson aim and summary by Glendoria P. Boyd, AdvDip.TH.  
Bible Knowledge Commentary  
New King James Bible  
Life Application Bible

## Lesson IV

**Date:** September 24, 2023

**Lesson Scriptures:** 2 Corinthians 2: 1-11

### Church Discipline and Forgiveness

**Lesson Aim:** To teach the student that when the sinner repents, our job is to not only forgive, but to restore.

#### Open It

1. When have you confronted conflict?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Have you ever avoided a conflict? Why?  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Explore It

1. What kind of heart did Paul have when he wrote this letter?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why do people find it so difficult to forgive those who have hurt them?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Based on the context, what schemes was Satan plotting in the Corinthian church?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What is the result of unforgiveness? Why should believers forgive?  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Word Study:

The word “affliction” is from the Greek word *thlipsis* {*thlip’-sis*} which means “pressed or squashed together, distress, or tribulation.” It was a traumatic time for Paul. The word “anguish” is from the Greek word *sunochē* {*soon-okh-ay*}. It carries the idea of being surrounded by pressure, squeezed, or imprisoned. The root word *sunecho* {*soon-ekh’-o*} was used to describe the attack of a city, the pressing of your hands together or holding your ears.

It was also used to describe a cattle squeeze that forced the cattle into a position where they could not move so the rancher could administer medication. This is how Paul felt in dealing with this problem. It was stressful but he had no choice. Sometimes, you have to face the same type of situation in trying to help or restore someone. Restoration can be rigorous.

**Summary:** In this pericope, Paul's phrase "another painful visit" indicates that he had already made a difficult trip to Corinth, (1:1, 1:15-17) since founding the church. Paul had gone there to deal with those in the church who had been attacking and undermining his authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ, thereby, confusing other believers. Paul's last letter referred to here was not the book of 1st Corinthians but, was believed to be a letter written between 1st and 2nd Corinthians. Some bible scholars believe that at least one letter Paul wrote to them before 1 Corinthians has been lost to history (see 1 Corinthians 5:9), and there was possibly another letter he wrote between 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians (see 2 Corinthians 7:8. Paul did not enjoy reprimanding his friends and fellow believers, but he cared enough about them to confront them with their wrongdoings. Proverbs 27:6 says "wounds of a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiply kisses".

Sometimes, our friends/family members make choices that we know are wrong. If we ignore their behavior and allow them to continue in it, then we are not showing them love. We show love by honestly showing our concerns in order to help our friends and family members do and be their very best for God. And, Child of God, when we don't make any move to help, we show that we are more concerned about being well-liked than about what will happen to those we say we love. Amen!

Paul explained that it was time to forgive the man who had been punished by the church and had subsequently repented. The man needed *forgiveness, acceptance, and comfort*. Satan would gain an advantage if they permanently separated this man from the congregation rather than forgiving and restoring him. Regardless of who this man was, this sorrowful letter had finally brought about the repentance of the Corinthians (7:8-14). And, there discipline of this man had led to his repentance. Church discipline should always seek restoration. There are two mistakes that should be avoided in church discipline, 1.) being too lenient and not correcting the mistakes and 2.) being too harsh and not forgiving the sinner. Church discipline should be used to help keep the church pure and to help the sinner repent. When I sinned and left the church, God brought me back. The church forgave me and restored me to my former position. That's what the church is supposed to do. Had it not been for the graciousness of the church, I may have lost my way. But I was restored! Hallelujah!!!

Satan tries to harm the church by tempting it to use discipline in an unforgiving way. This causes those who are exercising the discipline to become proud of their purity, and that causes the person who is being disciplined to become bitter and perhaps leave the church entirely. We must remember that our purpose in discipline is to restore a person back to the fellowship, not to destroy him or her. We must be cautious that our personal anger is not vented under the guise of church discipline. Remember, Child of God, there is a time to confront and a time to comfort. There is a time for everything under the heavens. (Eccl. 3:1-8)

Lesson aim and summary by Glendoria P. Boyd, AdvDip.TH.  
Bible Knowledge Commentary  
New King James Bible  
Life Application Bible

## Lesson V

**Date:** October 1, 2023

**Lesson Scriptures:** 2 Corinthians 2:12-17

### We Triumph in Christ

**Lesson Aim:** Students can have concern for one another and experience some unrest, but whatever his or her lost is, we can have confidence and assurance of the ultimate victory in Christ Jesus.

#### Open It

1. What happened when you experienced smelling a bad fragrance? How did it affect your attitude?
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#### Explore It

1. Where is Troas?
- 

2. What does verse 14 mean that God “always leads us in triumphal procession?”
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3. How can believers be “the aroma of Christ?” What is this “aroma” like?
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4. How can believers be “the aroma of Christ?” What is this “aroma” like?
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#### Cultural Concept:

What is a Roman Triumph? The highest honor which could be given to a victorious Roman general was a Triumph which was something like an American ticker-tape parade, yet different. To receive this fantastic honor, certain requirements had to be met.

1. He must have been the actual commander-in-chief in the field.
2. The war must have been completely finished, the region pacified and the victorious troops brought home.
3. A minimum of five thousand of the enemy must have fallen in one engagement.
4. A positive extension of territory must have been gained for Rome, and not merely a disaster retrieved or an attack repelled.
5. The victory must have been won over a foreign foe and not in a civil war.

**Summary:** Paul went to Troas to preach the gospel. Troas was a seaport on the Aegean Sea in western Asia Minor which is Turkey today. It was about ten miles from the famous city of Troy, for which it was named. Troas was founded in 300 B.C., and Emperor Augustus had granted it the coveted status of a Roman colony.

The apostle wanted to go to Corinth, but there were unresolved problems in that church which kept him from going. That, however, did not stop Paul from preaching. He made the decision to take the treasure of God's Word somewhere else. Where one door closed, another door of opportunity to serve Christ opened up. He had a passion to make his life count for the Lord and share with others the message of Jesus Christ.

God opened the door of opportunity to preach in Troas, but there was a problem which distracted Paul and made him very uneasy and stressed. He had no rest, no ease or freedom in his spirit. He could not find Titus and was very concerned about his welfare. So, he decided to leave Troas and look for his dear friend in Macedonia. This is what he felt the Lord wanted him to do. Even though a door may open for you, it does not necessarily mean you are to walk through it unless God leads you to do so. For example, the door was open for Jonah to get on a ship going to Joppa, but it was not the direction the Lord wanted him to go.

Who is Titus? Who is this guy? Titus probably gets the Pauline service award with 20 years as Paul's co-worker. He was born a Gentile, and when he became a Christian, he did not get circumcised. When Titus accompanied Paul on a visit to Jerusalem, some Jewish Christians insisted Paul's companion be circumcised according to Jewish law. As Paul put it, he "did not submit even for a moment," and Titus remained uncircumcised. Titus thus served as a powerful symbol of justification by grace, not by the law. He served with Paul during his extended stay in Ephesus as a "partner and fellow-worker," and from there, Titus tackled his toughest assignment which was to combat grave immorality in the Corinthian church and mediate their reconciliation with Paul.

People may sense the fragrance of the Lord in your life, but they may still reject Him. The same sun that softens the wax will harden the clay. The same rose that brings joy from its beauty and fragrance may cause an allergic reaction in others. Throughout the Bible, individuals responded differently to the fragrance of the Lord. When we look at the sons of Abraham, we find that Isaac became a believer, the son of promise, and Ishmael became a rebel. Ruth and Orpah both married Elimelech's sons and were exposed to the truth of Jehovah. Ruth went on to follow Naomi and her Lord while Orpah returned to her land of idolatry.

Let me ask, "Have you responded to the fragrance of Christ?" In other words, "Have you put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to save you?" This is the only way you will be allowed to go to Heaven.

Lesson aim by Bobby J. Williams Sr, Dip.TH.  
Summary by Rev. Terrence Howard, M.T.S.

## Lesson VI

Date : October 8, 2023

Lesson Scriptures: 2 Corinthians 3:1-9

### The Glory of the New Covenant Part 1

**Lesson Aim:** The believer will learn how the Letter kills, and how the New Covenant gives life.

#### Open It

1. Has anyone tried to destroy your name with their tongue? What was the result?
- 

#### Explore It

1. Was Paul confident? In what??  

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2. What is Paul recognizing when he says, “our sufficiency is from God?”  

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3. What does Paul mean that “the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life?”  

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#### Word Study:

The word *commend* is from the word *sunistano* {soon-is-tan'-o}. One of its meanings is *to introduce*. Paul was basically asking, “After all they had gone through together, did he really need to reintroduce himself to the Corinthians? Did they not know him well enough by now?” He has already lived among them and ministered to them for eighteen months. Was it really necessary for Paul to start all over again and prove to them what kind of man he was? These folks already had firsthand knowledge of his virtuous, godly, sincere life and powerful preaching.

For the Corinthians to demand letters of commendation from Paul was absolute stupidity, absurdity, and totally unnecessary. He was not a stranger here. That they could be so foolish and deceived as to doubt what they knew was true about Paul was tragic.

**Summary:** The Apostle Paul writes this letter to the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia (2 Cor. 3:1). He starts chapter three by making a statement, and then following it up with two rhetorical questions. This technique was employed by Paul to make his point forcefully. He writes in verse 1, “Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?” The point that Paul is emphasizing is that the Almighty God has validated him and the others who have struggled in preaching and teaching God's message. The proof is in the changed lives of all the believers in Christ. They are written on Paul and his co-laborers' hearts to be read by all men. This has been made possible by our Triune God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit). The Scriptures are silent on exactly what prompted Paul to ask these questions. A contrast is made in the next two verses that shows the differences between writing with ink or by the spirit, and not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human heart. The prophet Jeremiah writes, “But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people (Jeremiah 31:33).” The believer in Christ receives this promise by of the New Covenant by application because of the finished work of Christ at the Cross.

Paul writes in verse 5 - 6, “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” The King James Version translated the English word *sufficiency* in verse 5 from the Greek word *hikanotés* which means sufficiency bringing competence (ability). Even though this noun is only used in 2 Cor 3:5, the word as an adjective is used 39 times in the Greek New Testament (including this verse) and carries the meaning of sufficient in ability, i.e., meet, fit. The biblical principle presented in this verse teaches us that we are nothing without our Creator. King David writes, “Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture (Psalm 100:3).” The LORD have commissioned Paul and his co-laborers to be ministers of the New Covenant. Once again, Paul contrasts the New Covenant against the letter. The New Covenant by the Spirit of God gives life, and the letter kills. The Greek verbal tense and action for the words *gives life* and the words *the letter kills* implies a continuous action. Why does the letter kill? Because no one is righteous, not even one (Psalm 14:1-3; Romans 3:10-12).

Lesson aim and summary by Joseph Ellzey, Jr., PhD

## Lesson VII

Date: October 15, 2023

Lesson Scriptures: 2 Corinthians 3:10-18

### The Glory of the New Covenant Part 2

**Lesson Aim:** The Believer will learn how the New Covenant is more glorious than the Letter.

#### Open It

1. How do you reflect God's glory to people around you?

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#### Explore It

1. What comparison does Paul make in these verses?

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2. How is the new covenant more glorious than the old?

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3. Why does Paul want to tell the Corinthian church about the glory of the new covenant?

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#### Word Study:

The word Paul uses for *new* when he speaks of the New Testament is the same as Jesus used and it is very significant. In Greek there are two words for *new*. First, there is *neos*, which means *new in point of time and that alone*. For example, a young person is *neos* because he is a newcomer into the world.

A second word for *new* is the Greek word *kainos* {ki-nos} which means *not only new in point of time, but also new in quality*. It is the word *kainos* that both Jesus and Paul use of the new covenant. The significance of this word is that the new covenant is not only new in point of time; it is quite different in kind from the old covenant. It produces between man and God a new relationship of a totally different kind than the Old Testament.



**Summary:** This week's lesson is a continuation of the previous week's lesson, which provided Christians with insight into the majesty of the New Covenant. It is because of the New Covenant that both Jew and Gentile can enjoy all of the eternal heavenly blessings mentioned in Scripture (Hebrews 8:1-13). These blessings include forgiveness of sins, peace of conscience, the ability to obey God and do what pleases Him, direct fellowship, and inward knowledge of the Triune God. The New Covenant was given to Israel and Judah, but the Church that Christ built starting in Acts chapter 2 are recipients of these eternal blessings by believing in the person and redemptive work of Jesus Christ (Jer. 31:34; Jn. 3:16; Lk. 22:20; Heb. 7:22). This glory is contrasted with the glory of the letter. As discussed in earlier verses in this chapter, the letter was glorious but it was called a ministration of condemnation. The New Covenant is called the ministration of righteousness.

The Apostle Paul writes in verse 11, “For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.” The King James Version (KJV) translated the English words *done away* from the Greek verb *katargeó* which means 'to make completely inoperative' or 'to put out of use' according to the HELPS Word studies. The letter has been made inoperative by the initialization of the New Covenant. Was the law bad? Absolutely not! King David writes, “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple (Psalm 19:7). It is the heart of man that is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9). Even if man was able to live a perfect life, he is born and shapen in iniquity (Ps. 51:5). Therefore, all is in need of salvation. This salvation was made available through faith in Jesus Christ. This is the goodness presented to all of humanity. This is the glory of the New Covenant. The minds of men were blinded until the day the veil was taken away in Christ. This to be in Christ is only accomplished by faith. This is contrasted by the veil that was upon their hearts when Moses (Old Testament) is read. This is proof that the New Covenant is more glorious than the letter. Paul closes this chapter by reflecting on the glory that believers in Christ will be changed into. He writes in verse 18, “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” The KJV translated the English word *changed* from the Greek verb *metamorphoó* which means transformed into the same image (of consummate excellence that shines in Christ), reproducing the same image. This transformation is accomplished by the Spirit of the Lord (Matt. 17:2; Mk. 9:2; Rom. 12:2).

Lesson aim and summary by Joseph Ellzey, Jr., PhD

## Lesson VIII

**Date:** October 22, 2023

**Lesson Scriptures:** 2 Corinthians 4:1-7

### Treasure in Clay Vessels

**Lesson Aim:** The student will learn how to survive spiritually in the face of adversity.

#### Open It

1. How do some false teachers cunningly tamper with God's word?
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#### Explore It

1. The gospel is hidden from who?  

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2. Paul says that we do not preach ourselves, but who do we preach?  

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3. What did God Command?  

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4. What do we have in earthen vessels?  

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#### Word Study:

The Gospel is hid or veiled to those who are *lost*. This word is from the Greek word *apollumi* {ap-ol'-loo-mee} which means "destroyed, to put out of the way entirely, rendered useless, to be in the process of being ruined, corrupted, and put to death." The lost are in the process of being ruined and spiritually destroyed unless they turn to Christ. They are lost to virtue, to piety, to happiness, to hope, to God's salvation.

Men without Christ have turned away from God and are traveling in the opposite direction along the road that leads to perdition. Therefore, the unsaved person cannot see God, nor the things of God. His face and eyes are not turned toward the Gospel, but toward the world that perishes. This is not the fault of the Gospel. It is not the fault of the sun where men shut their eyes and will not see the light of day. It is not the fault of a running stream, or a bubbling fountain, if men will not drink of it, but rather choose to die of thirst.

**Summary:** Many believers have shared that same on the road of Damascus experience, in which they were blessed in receiving God's grace and compassion in their lives. Their personal experience of receiving God's mercy, is what enabled them to overcome feelings of despair or resentment for past life decisions. In our text today, we find Paul, in spite of his past efforts to eradicate Christians from the face of the earth, now has been redeemed by God for his stance against hypocrisy and false teaching. Because of Paul's steadfast demeanor and faith in God, his ministry was blessed, even though it was not immune from enduring many painful episodes of deception from false apostles in the church and the passivity of the Christians. Paul had been blessed by God even though he personally attributed to the destruction and expulsion of so many Christians lives, but God saw within him the necessary attributes that was required because of his steadfast belief in God's word, to not loose heart. Even though Paul was faced with false apostles whose intent was to sow, seeds of discourse, Paul and his companions had no intentions of acting deceitfully or distorting the word of God.

In the book of Matthew, Chapter 5:15-16, the word of God says that, "No one after lighting a lamp puts in under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house". In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. In other words, the gospel, which is the light and the truth, when hidden, is similar to placing a veil over it, which causes spiritual darkness in the life of unbelievers thereby denying them to receive the gospel of the glory of Christ. This is a reminder that we do not struggle against flesh and blood, but against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens. Paul's implications were that this was not his fight, but the Lords. Paul knew that his efforts would be fruitless against the satanic attacks that was being waged against God's people by Satan, but only God could cause light to shine out of darkness.

In the book of Genesis, Chapter 1: 26-27, we find where in God's creation he made man in His own image, after our likeness. And also in Chapter 2:7, that man was formed from the dust of the ground where God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. This goes without saying that once we accept our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that immediately we are endowed with the treasure (clay jars) of his presence within us. So, just as Christ dwells as part of the triune God head, Christ also dwells within us. The closer we get to Jesus, the more we can experience the goodness of God in our lives. Amen!

Lesson aim and summary by Kenneth E. Wilson, D.Div.

## **Lesson IX**

**Date:** October 29, 2023

**Lesson Scriptures:** 2 Corinthians 4:8-18

### **The Suffering of The Believer**

**Lesson Aim:** Believers will be led to understand, that even in the midst of our suffering, that His grace is sufficient. That our comfort when suffering is found in God's word, and that He has promised to never leave nor forsake us

#### **Open It**

1. What is the difference from the outer man and the inner man?
- 

#### **Explore It**

1. Describe each of the problems and advantages Paul had in 4:8,9?  

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2. In what sense did Paul bear or manifest the dying and the life of Jesus – 4:10-12?  

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3. What helped Paul to avoid fainting or losing heart – 4:16?  

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#### **Cultural Concepts:**

These pots that Paul refers to in our passage were called ostraca, which is from the Greek word for "pottery." These vessels were made of shells which are very brittle or clay that was fired in a kiln. No one took note of clay jars any more than we would of a plastic container. They were simply there for convenience. They were, in a way, "servants" to the ones who used them. It was no great tragedy when such vessels were broken. These jars were cheap and easy to replace.

Paul compares us to these simple clay pots that were many times chipped and cracked. When they were used, the focus was not on the clay pots, it was upon the splendor of what was within them, especially if the contents of the earthen vessels were treasures or delicious foods.

**Summary:** Paul is expressing the many trials and tribulations that they were experiencing as God's glory and power were being manifested through them. He expresses these trials in such a way that those who are without faith would be crushed under the pressures of affliction, persecution, and abandonment. He highlights that even though we are fragile in nature, Christ's presence within us gives us the fortitude to withstand and sustain our existence in a lost world. Paul states with precision how we overcome the heavy weight and pressures that our adversaries can attack us, but we are not crushed. How the complex and diverse approaches of those who desire to destroy us, but we are not left in despair. How we are persecuted and struck down, but yet we have overcome. Noting but the power of God!

Some might question, why a loving God, allows such atrocities to befall those who have truly devoted their lives to him and exist through Him. This thought could take us back to the very reason why Jesus gave his life on Calvary's cross to begin with. That because Jesus died and was resurrected, that we too will experience that same glorious renewing of life as promised in God's word upon His return. That we carry the death of Jesus in our body, so that the life of Jesus may also be displayed in our body. But the fact still remains that until that glorious day when those who lived and died in Jesus shall be caught up with him in the sky, we are still impacted within the mortal flesh of humanity. In other words, God lets us experience problems so that the divine life of Jesus is manifested within our "mortal flesh"! So, when everything seems to be in disarray, to the point that you seem out of touch with reality, and the walls of despair seem to be closing in on you, think back to the words of Paul where he says, that you will be afflicted, but not crushed, that you will face turmoil, but you will not sink into despair.

There are those who are entitled to being "Babes in Christ". They are the believers who on their faithful journey are at the beginning of their walk with the Lord. They trust and believe but maybe they do not understand. Then there are those who may consider themselves to be "Seasoned Saints". Those who have been well versed in "Thus says the Lord". They consider themselves as believers who are connected with Christ. They have experienced difficulties and have endured and have humbled themselves and have remembered (James 1:9), which says to let the brother of humble circumstances boast in exaltation. This doesn't mean that they deny their earthly circumstances, but that because they know where their assurance lies in Jesus, they have succumbed to the belief that Jesus will supply all their needs and that His grace is sufficient. Those who proclaim to be connected to the Lord in Spirit and Truth should act upon their faith as a living testimony, thereby allowing God to utilize them to strengthen those who have fallen so that they can have a spiritual impact on the lives of others. Amen!

Lesson aim and summary by Kenneth E. Wilson, D.Div.

## Lesson X

**Date:** November 5, 2023

**Lesson Scriptures:** 2 Corinthians 5:1-10

### The Revelation of the Future

**Lesson Aim:** The student will learn to develop confidence in knowing that we will one day be fully clothed with a heavenly dwelling through our reconciling ministry.

#### Open It

1. What is the significance of “walking by faith”?
- 

#### Explore It

1. What dwelling did Paul prefer- vs.3-4?  

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2. What has God done about our eternal habitation – 5:5?  

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3. Explain the two “homes” in 5:6-8? Which do we have now? Which did Paul seek?  

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#### Cultural Concepts:

Paul describes two things the Lord has done for us. He has “wrought” us. What does this mean? This word is from the Greek word *katergazomai* {kat-er-gad'-zom-ahee} which means “to perform, accomplish, achieve, to prepare or fashion one fit for a thing.”

God prepared Paul for missionary service by giving him an education, a conversion experience, faith in Christ, and numerous hardships and trials. He does the same for you. God has prepared you throughout your life to serve Him in one way or another. The experiences you have had and the people you have encountered can be used by the Lord to serve Him. There are so many different ways to serve Jesus Christ and reach the lost.

The Lord has guaranteed that we will be changed and have a new body. The Holy Spirit is His guarantee. God calls it the “earnest” of the Spirit. This word is from the word *arrhabon* {ar-hrab-ohn'} which means “money which is used in purchases and is given as a pledge or down-payment that the full amount will subsequently be paid.” It has also been translated “engagement ring” which is a pledge or promise to a woman, that you will marry her. The Holy Spirit is our engagement ring from the Lord.

**Summary:** Our present body is a temporary and flimsy abode, frail, vulnerable, and wasting away. Verses 1-10 detail the thought expressed in Ch. 4:16-18. In the first five verses of chapter 5, we find a discussion about the nature of our hope. Paul marvelously gives us an essence of hope, in knowing that this present flimsy tent, this old faltering body, the flesh and bones that we live in will be glorified by the power of the Spirit of God. We will be more fully clothed, more so than what we are presently. Our experience will be this: “As believers, you’ll be fully clothed with a heavenly dwelling; you’ll have a new body. Currently, we are living in these vulnerable bodies that grow and hurt and break down. One day, what we have which is mortal will be swallowed up by life. That is a weight of glory beyond all description that will come instantly, for the one who has prepared us for this divine eventuality is God.

Paul answers the question: “What is there to live for?” Looking back at the 1st century, times were bleak, but as you read the New Testament, instead of bleakness, we often hear a cry of triumph and hope running through its pages. Paul declares “We are always confident,” and while we are here, we are absent from the Lord. Our confidence should come from knowing that we are in touch with the Lord by faith and not by sight. We don’t see him, and He doesn’t come down and sit beside us and put His arm around us, but nevertheless, He is present and will remain present with us. He puts it very clearly in v. 9: "So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it." That's an eternal principle; it's not something that's going to change when we leave this earth. We're on earth to please God, to be a delight to him. That's the sole purpose for living, and that's what Paul's saying here. There is more than this life that awaits us.

Lesson aim and summary by Victor Kirkpatrick, Dip.TH.

## Lesson XI

**Date:** November 12, 2023

**Lesson Scriptures:** 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

### We Are God's Ambassadors

**Lesson Aim:** The ministry of reconciliation is the message that God, through Christ, reconciled Himself to the world.

#### Open It

1. What are some ways that we can live for God?
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#### Explore It

1. What work did Paul do (5:11) and what motivated him?
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2. What does verse 13 mean to you?
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3. How can the love of Christ control you?
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#### Cultural Concepts:

The word *terror* is from the Greek word *phobos* {fob'-os}. It forms our English word *phobia*. It means "fear, dread, apprehension, and also reverence." Paul is referring to a deep reverence and respect for the Lord which results in worship, adoration, submission to Him, and service.

The apostle had a holy fear that relates to the Judgment Seat of Christ (v. 10). He is not speaking about overwhelming dread but rather a reverent, sobering fear of divine judgment and accountability. He was awed by the thought of standing before a person so holy, so morally superior, so removed from evil, that in His majestic presence, all human boasting, pride, and arrogance would vanish like mist as he stands in speechless humility before the Lord, and with trembling lips gives a full account of himself. We too, are to have the same type of reverence for the Lord and a sober attitude about the accounting of our life at the Judgment Seat of Christ. When you are gripped by a great God, you will have this kind of attitude.



**Summary:** Paul knew the fear of the Lord, just as we know the fear of the Lord. Since we know the fear of the Lord, we should persuade others because what we are is known to God. We are His. Our fear is not terror of condemnation, rather it is a fear of reverence toward Christ and His displeasure at the choices we make, and the things done “in the body.” This is a healthy fear, a corrective fear from living a careless life.

Paul was not trying to present credentials to the Corinthians, he was hoping to give the Corinthians something they could use to recommend him to others for the purpose of kingdom building. While trying to give the Corinthians a way to answer his critics, who were looking to outward appearance rather than what is in the heart. What really matters is that the love of Christ controlled Paul and that his excitement was for God. This was due to knowing Christ died for all and all who have died. Christ died so that those who lived would no longer live for themselves but for Him. It is for the sake of those who live and die that He was raised. Since Christ did die for all, all have died. Anyone who is in Christ is created new, the old person is gone, and the new person has come, and being created new is a gift from God. God reconciled us to Himself through Christ, giving us the ministry of reconciliation. We are ambassadors for Christ and God makes His appeal to the world through us. God made Christ sin for our sakes and Christ did not know sin. God made Christ know sin so we might become the righteousness of God.

Lesson aim and summary by Victor Kirkpatrick, Dip.TH.

## Lesson XII

**Date:** November 19, 2023

**Lesson Scriptures:** 2 Corinthians 6:1-10

### The Service of Consecration

**Lesson Aim:** The student will know that God has given us a partnership in His ministry.

#### Open It

1. Do you think sharing the gospel is important? Why?

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#### Explore It

1. Who is the “him” in verse 1?  

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2. What qualities or blessings did Paul need for his work – 6:6,7?  

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3. List the contrasting circumstances Paul faced in 6:8-10.  

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#### Cultural Concepts:

Paul begins his checklist with a powerful and triumphant word ... patience. What does he mean by this? This powerful word is from the Greek word *hupomone* {*hoop-om-on-ay*} which means “steadfastness, endurance, diligence or triumphant patience” It describes the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings. It does not describe the frame of mind which can sit down with folded hands and bowed head and let a torrent of troubles sweep over it in passive resignation. It describes the ability to bear things in such a triumphant way that it transfigures them.

*Hupomone* is the courageous and triumphant ability to pass the breaking-point and not to break, and always to greet the unseen with a cheer. It helps one to endure the shock of battle and remain steadfast in the face of death. It changes tribulation into strength and glory.

**Summary:** “That ye received not the grace of God in vain...” There is no hint here that the salvation of the Corinthian believers is in jeopardy. The grace of which he speaks is referenced in verse 5:21. That they have received this grace clearly indicates that the people to whom he is speaking are genuinely born again, but judicial pardon does not guarantee practical Christian living. Paul sees himself as a coworker with Jesus Christ. We are partners and Jesus has given us the ministry of reconciliation. (2 Cor 5:18) Since Paul is among the ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor 5:20), he works with Jesus. It isn't that God needed Paul or any of us for that matter. It is that God wants us to be workers together with Him for our good. Working with God benefits us and blesses us. Working together with the Father means submitting to the will of the Father.

In the parenthetical verse 2, the sense of the Hebrew of this Old Testament passage (Isaiah 48:8) is somewhat lost here. Literally, the expression reads, “In a favorable time, I answer you.” In the day of salvation have I succoured (helped) thee. Consistent with Hebrew parallelism, this intended to echo the previous expression. In Isaiah, the two expressions constituted a promise to the servant of the Lord to sustain him in the time of his ministry. Paul was more concerned with defending the ministry rather than defending himself. He did not want to offend by self-serving conduct that would disrepute God or spiritual ruin to a fellow Christian. (Stumbling block) Paul's resume which gives his ministry legitimizing power included 27 categories divided into 3 groups and set as an example to follow. The first being his thoughts on his trials, then divine provisions, and his resultant victory over circumstances. Such a life would seem to lead to sorrow, but because of his trust in God, Paul was always rejoicing.

Lesson aim and summary by Victor Kirkpatrick, Dip.TH.

## Lesson XIII

**Date:** November 26, 2023

**Lesson Scriptures:** 2 Corinthians 6:11-18

### The Separation of Christians

**Lesson Aim:** The believer will learn how to separate themselves from unrighteous behavior.

#### Open It

1. Why are many people hesitant to widen their hearts and truly share with others what they feel?
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#### Explore It

1. What is meant by the open mouth (speech) and enlarged heart – 6:11?  

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2. What does it mean to be unequally yoked with unbelievers?  

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3. What are some of the practical reasons why it is dangerous for believers to marry or date unbelievers??  

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#### Cultural Concepts:

The phrase “unequally yoked together” is from the Greek word *heterozugeo* {het-er-od-zoog-eh'-o}. It is from the Greek word *heteros* which means “another of a different kind.” We are not to be yoked with another of a different kind. This word *heterozugeo* is a military term. The word signifies to leave one’s own rank, place, or order, and go into another. Here, it must signify not only that these Christians should not associate with the unbelievers in their idolatrous feasts, but that they should not apostatize from Christianity. The questions which follow show that there was a sort of fellowship that some of the Christians had formed with the heathen, which was both wicked and absurd, and if not speedily checked, would infallibly lead to final apostasy.

The principle of *unequal yoke* applies to marriage and business partnerships. Believers are not to date, court, or marry unbelievers. If you want a Christian spouse, then date one. Don’t use your dating to evangelize someone who is lost. Wait until they are already saved before you court them. Multitudes of Christians have gotten away from the Lord or out of church because they violated this principle.

**Summary:** Dr. Joel C. Gregory is the George W. Truett Endowed Chair of Preaching and Evangelism at Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary and the Director of Truett Seminary's Kyle Lake Center for Effective Preaching. On August 27, 2023, he exhorted that a believer's life is full of promises and problems while delivering a sermon titled "Here I am" from Genesis chapter 22 at the Times Square Church in New York City. As the Apostle Paul reflects over his life, he presents this biblical principle to the saints at Corinth. It is amazing how many Christians champion the God of our Salvation for his blessings, but later find themselves holding the same Creator in contempt when uncontrollable storms enter into their lives.

There are three biblical terms in verse 14 that Paul shares with his beloved brethren. He writes, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" The King James Version Bible translated the English words *unequally yoked* from the Greek verb *heterozugeó* which means different kinds of people joined together but unevenly matched; hence "unequally yoked" (not aptly joined). Often, believers only consider this verse to apply to marrying a person who does not believe in Christ. Marriage is included but the meaning on this verse is much broader because the Greek word for unbeliever is functioning as an adjective in this verse. Therefore, believers can find themselves unequally yoked in marriage, business ventures, secular organizations, and friends and family members. *Fellowship* is the English word used as the second word in this verse. The Greek word is *metoché* which means a close relation between partners, i.e., people sharing something held in common (used only in 2 Cor. 6:14); joint-activity. In this verse, Paul teaches that righteousness and lawlessness are not in partnership. The two words are detrimentally opposite. What can believers glean from this? Believers must not have a close relationship to evil, wickedness, and anything, person, or activity that dishonors the True and Living God. The English word *communion* is the third biblical word in this verse. The Greek term *koinonia* implies "participation" or "participation in something." In this verse, Paul exhorts the believers in Christ that there is no close relationship between light and darkness. Paul instructs them on the Triune God's eternal decree to be their God. Every Christian should take heart from this. He writes in verse 16, "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

The promise is found in the last clause of this verse. Jehovah, the Covenant keeping God, has promised to be every believer's Father. Paul concludes this chapter by issuing a strong command to every believer in Christ Jesus. He writes in verse 17, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you," The believer in Christ must separate themselves from the world and not involved themselves with anything unclean according to the Scripture. This will guarantee healthy fellowship with the Almighty God.

Lesson aim and summary by Joseph Ellzey, Jr., PhD

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**Resources:**

The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary faculty.  
The Preachers Outline & Sermon Bible, King James Version, New King James Version Bible  
Life Application New International Version Commentary & Strong's Exhaustive Concordance  
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