

2 Corinthians 4

Title ideas:
Looking into the face of
Jesus!
Having Gospel Vision!

2 Corinthians 4:1-18 - Having Gospel Vision!

Scriptures:
1 Timothy 1:12-13 - And I
thank Christ Jesus our Lord
who has enabled me,
because He counted me
faithful, putting me into the
ministry, 13 although I was
formerly a blasphemer, a
persecutor, and an insolent
man; but I obtained mercy
because I did it ignorantly
in unbelief.

¹Therefore, since **we** have this ministry, as

we have received mercy, **we** do not lose heart.

1653 – ‘To be or
become the
recipient of
leniency and
compassion.’

Notes:

In chapter three Paul compared the glorious ministry of the gospel to the fading glory of Moses' ministry.

Paul is specifically referring to the Damascus Road experience ([Acts 9:3-17](#)). He refers to it in a letter to Timothy ([1 Tim. 1:12-13](#)).

The fact that Paul was in ministry was because of God's mercy. Paul deserved God's judgment. Instead, God put him into ministry serving Him. The same can be said of anyone in ministry. It is not an act of God's grace that we are in ministry, but an act of mercy.

It is because of this mercy and the glorious nature of the ministry that caused Paul to 'not lose heart'.

Discouragement is a great risk in ministry, but two things will keep our hearts grounded: God's merciful call and the surpassing glory of the gospel ministry.

"He stands in Christ's stead; his message is the Word of God; around him are immortal souls; the Savior, unseen, is beside him; the Holy Spirit broods over the congregation; angels gaze upon the scene; and heaven and hell wait the issue." Matthew Simpson (Hughes, 2006) page 83

Scriptures:
2 Timothy 2:15-16 - Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16 But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.

² But we have renounced the hidden things

550 – disown, denounce – ‘To express strong disapproval of; especially to distance oneself from the thing disowned.’

2927 - secret

Notes:
‘hidden things of shame’ – the things we would be ashamed of if they were revealed.

‘craftiness’ – to Paul, the ‘ends justify the means’ was an ungodly approach to ministry.

This was a slap to the face of Paul’s critics who were doing the very things Paul said he would never do

of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling

152 -

3834 – treachery, cunning, duplicity

‘handling the word of God deceitfully’ – watering it down or misrepresenting what it says. One of the dangers of liberalism is that it usually interprets the Bible based on the interpreter rather than upon God and His will.

the word of God [⚠]deceitfully, but by [⚠]manifestation

‘manifestation of truth’ – Just tell people what God’s Word says and means and help them to respond in obedience.

of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s

‘commending ourselves to every man’s conscience’ – Paul knew that by speaking the truth, honest truth-seeking would recognize that his ministry was true.

‘in the sight of God’ – Paul knew that the ultimate judge of his ministry was God.

conscience in the [⚠]sight of [⚠]God.

Scriptures:

Acts 26:17-18 - I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, 18 to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

³ But even if **our** gospel is veiled, it is veiled to

2572 -

Notes:

It is not the person who is preaching or the method they are using to preach that causes someone to reject the simple message of the gospel – it is willful unbelief!

“...the blindness of unbelievers in no way detracts from the clearness of the gospel, for the sun is no less resplendent because the blind do not perceive it.” John Calvin (Hughes, 2006) page 85

those who are perishing,

622 – die – ‘To be or become without spiritual life under the condemnation of God.

Paul knew what it meant to be ‘veiled’ to the gospel and had made it his mission to help others see (Acts 26:18).

Scriptures:

Colossians 1:15 - He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

⁴ whose minds the god of this age has blinded,

5186 – make to not understand

Notes:

Jesus is the image of God and shines forth with His glory (Col. 1:15, Heb. 1:3).

Hebrews 1:1-4 - God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of

the glory of Christ, who is the image of God,

should shine on them.

Scriptures:
Philippians 2:9-11 -
Therefore God also has
highly exalted Him and
given Him the name which
is above every name,
10 that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bow, of
those in heaven, and of
those on earth, and of those
under the earth, 11 and that
every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord, to
the glory of God the Father.

⁵ For **we** do not preach **ourselves**, but Christ **Jesus**

the **Lord**, and **ourselves** **your** bondservants for

Jesus' sake.


Notes:
'Christ Jesus the Lord' summarized
the entire gospel message.

'Jesus' = the Lord saves from the
penalty, power, and presence of sin
'Christ' = Messiah, the Anointed
One from God – fulfillment of OT
prophecy regarding God's promise to
send a Savior



'Lord' = crucified Christ was exalted
by God through the resurrection to
the position of lordship in heaven
and is ruler of all the universe.



'your bondservants for Jesus' sake' –
Paul considered himself a servant of
the church rather than a ruler of it.

Scriptures:

⁶For it is the  God who commanded light to shine

out of darkness, who has shone in  our  hearts to

 give the light of the knowledge of the  glory of

 God in the face of Jesus  Christ.

Notes:

Paul knew what it meant to be blind, both physically and spiritually.

“The same spirit who opened Paul’s eyes opens the eyes of all who will believe.” (Hughes, 2006) page 87

The lifting of the veil is an act of God’s creational power. There is no on beyond the creative power of God, therefore there is no one beyond salvation.

Scriptures:

⁷ But **we** have this treasure in earthen vessels, that

2344 -

Notes:
'earthen vessels' were insignificant, throw-away containers for everyday use.

'this treasure' = the creational, transforming gospel power.

The gospel has been entrusted to everyday people who are simply vessels of God's power.

God does it this way so that there is no confusion about where the true power is.

It is through our weakness that the creative power of God shines forth. Embracing our weakness so that the power of God is manifested does not make us strong. A true servant remains weak and therefore a conduit for God's power.

The equation for power is: my weakness + God's power = God's power.

the excellence of the power may be of **God** and

5236 – beyond
measure

1411 -

not of **us**.

Scriptures:

⁸ We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not

2346 – ‘To be caused to be distressed.’

Notes:

crushed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair;

4729 – ‘to be distressed hopelessly’

639 – be at a loss, be puzzled,

1820 – ‘To lose one’s emotional or mental composure.’

Scriptures:

⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but

1377 – to systematically oppress and harass

1459 -

2598 -

Notes:

Even though Paul was regularly persecuted he was never forsaken by God.

“Paul’s weakness was the occasion for God’s power.” (Hughes, 2006) page 92

not destroyed—

622 -

Scriptures:

¹⁰ always carrying about in the body the dying of

Notes:

The suffering we endure for the gospel is a reflection of the suffering that Christ endured in the flesh, but the fact that we are not destroyed by those difficulties is a reflection of Christ's resurrection power in our lives. It also carries with it the promise of eternal life.

the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be

manifested in our body.

Scriptures:

¹¹ For we who live are always delivered to death

3860 -

Notes:

Christ died that we might live. It then makes sense that Christ's followers experience suffering so that others might live. This constantly shows the world through frail, fragile earthen jars the unsurpassed power of God.

for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be

manifested in our mortal flesh.

Scriptures:

John 12:24-26 - Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.
25 He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.
26 If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

12 So then death is working in us, but life in you.

1754 -
functioning

Notes:

Because Paul endured sufferings in the name of Christ, life was imparted to the Corinthians. Just as Christ chose to die for us, we must choose to die (to ourselves) so that others will experience the life-giving power of God. Jesus spoke about that ([John 12:24-26](#)).

Scriptures:

13 And since **we** have the same spirit of faith,

according to what is written,

"I believed and therefore I spoke," **we** also

Psalm 116:10

believe and therefore speaking,

Notes:

Paul now explained what sustained him in his ministry – faith in God.

Psalm 116 was written by King David after he had experienced God's deliverance from death. He believed God had delivered him and so he spoke about it.

Paul's gospel ministry rested on God's Word and his experience being delivered by God from his difficulties.

Scriptures:

14 knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus

1453 – raise to
life

Notes:

Paul was confident because he believed that Jesus had been raised from the dead and he believed the promise that no matter what happened in this life that he would be raised from the dead also.

will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present

3936 -

“Without faith in a future resurrection Paul’s present suffering would not only be intolerable, but also meaningless.” Tim Savage (Hughes, 2006) page 97

How certain you are about the future will determine confidently you will live in the present.

us with you.

Scriptures:

15 For all things are for your sakes, that grace,

Notes:

Paul saw that his suffering resulted in grace for the Corinthians and the expression of grace to them resulted in glory to God.

having spread through the many, may cause

thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

Scriptures:
Colossians 3:8-11 - But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

16 Therefore **we** do not lose heart. Even though **our**

Notes:
Paul's hope was in an ultimate, future transformation.

Outward man = the flesh
Inward man = soul/spirit

outward man is perishing, yet the inward **man**

1311 - decompose

is being renewed day by day.

341 - make new

Scriptures:
2 Corinthians 1:8 - For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.

17 For **our** light affliction,

1645 – not burdensome, easy, limited

1645 – trouble, distress, oppression, tribulation,

Notes:
Paul was quite well acquainted with affliction (1 Cor. 1:8).

“Affliction for Jesus’ sake, however crushing it might seem, is in fact light, a weightless trifle, when weighed against the mass of that glory.” Philip Hughes (Hughes, 2006) page 100

which is but for a moment, is working for **us** a far

3910 – temporary – ‘fleeting’

‘but for a moment’ – afflictions will pass, but the glory they produce will be forever.

more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory,

166 -

922 -

Scriptures:

18 while **we** do not look at the things which are

Notes:
Everything we see with our eyes is temporary. Even the earth and the stars in the heavens are temporary.

seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the

things which are seen *are* temporary, but the

4340 – lasting
only for a short
time

things which are not seen *are* eternal.

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