

# THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

2 Corinthians 4:1 - 6

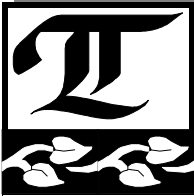
At times we may be tempted to think that we can bring people to Christ or change their minds about spiritual things simply by using the newest “technique” or program that comes along. But in this passage Paul reminds us that ultimately it is God who opens hearts, and that there is a spiritual battle going on for people’s souls.

*I. Honesty - the best policy 4:1-2*

*II. The prince of darkness 4:3-4*

*III. The Son shines in 4:5-6*

## WHAT DOES IT SAY?



herefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.

<sup>2</sup> Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

How does "God’s mercy" encourage and motivate Paul? (See his use of the concept in Rom. 12:1)

Is this what motivates you to serve God, or is it something else?

What tends to make you “lose heart”?

Contrast Paul's description of his ministry versus that of his opponents: (you may use the previous passages)

New Covenant	False teachers

Verse 2. Why was Paul secure enough to simply “set forth the truth plainly” instead of using slick gimmicks?

## WHAT DOES IT SAY?

<sup>3</sup> And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. <sup>4</sup> The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. <sup>5</sup> For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. <sup>6</sup> For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Who is "*the god of this world*"?

(See Job 1:6,7; John 12:31; Ephes. 2:2, 6:12)

If Satan blinds people, then how does anyone come to Christ?

(Read **John 9:1-7, 35-38** for an illustration of this.)

*"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 its light."*

John Calvin

Why do you think Paul emphasizes that he is not the one on whom people should focus?

*"In this grand perspective of redemption the abiding, permanent character of "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" is displayed, in contrast to the transient and fading glory of the old covenant from Moses' face."*

Philip Hughes

Verse 6. What is Paul alluding to in the phrase "*Let light shine out of darkness*"? (See Genesis 1:3)

Compare verse 6 to 2 Cor. 5:17 - What is Paul saying?

## WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

In your own words, summarize the main point of this passage.



As you summarize this section, make sure you take into account Paul's instruction about spiritual warfare in *Ephesians 6:10-20*.

## LIFE RESPONSE

How is God asking you to put this into action in your life this week?



If we know that Satan is blinding people's minds and God is opening them up, how should this affect our evangelism?

*"The clinching reason why there is no place in a genuine evangelical ministry for self-proclamation is that in the believer's experience of salvation all is of God, nothing of self."*

Phillip Hughes