

“WE DON’T LOSE HEART – PART 1”
2 Corinthians 4:1-7

INTRODUCTION

Paul was criticized that he was not a legitimate minister and that he really didn’t care about the Corinthians! They claimed he lacked results. This second letter was intended to clear up the lies about him. Paul gave more instruction about what makes a legitimate minister. This is something that was anticipated by the Holy Spirit. It is mentioned in **Matthew 7, 2 Peter** and **Acts**. Why is this important? 1) All Christians are ministers, 2) You want to know what ministry to trust, and 3) You want to see results. In the previous chapter Paul rejoiced in how he was participating in the ministry of the glorious transformations of human beings!

THE GIFT OF MINISTRY

Ministry is a gift. That’s what Paul was called to. It was not his ministry, or his idea, cf. **1 Timothy 1:12-17**. This is one factor that kept Paul from losing heart. We all have a ministry, a gift from the Lord! In our own areas of ministry, more people will reject what we have to say, than receive it. That can be discouraging and at times keep us from reaching out.

We all want to be credible ministers of the gospel. We serve the Lord at home, at work, or in public. It’s important that: 1) We are not dishonest. (*Renounce or “bid farewell to” the hidden things that would cause shame*), 2) We don’t walk in craftiness or handle the word of God deceitfully, as did the false teachers. (*Handle it with integrity. Explain the text and context*), and 3) We remember that we serve “in the sight of God”. (*God’s opinion is the only one that matters*).

BLINDED!

Paul did what he was supposed to do in the ministry, but many didn’t understand it. Why? The god of this age (Satan) blinds people! He tries to make other things more attractive than God’s Word. Satan knows what the light of the gospel does for people. The problem is not with the Scripture, or the light, but with the receptors... the hearts of people.

John the Baptist said that Jesus must increase, but that he must decrease. That was the proper perspective right from the very beginning. No matter what, we need to still preach Jesus and not ourselves! That’s what legitimate ministries do. Don’t focus on the messenger!

THE LIGHT

Believers have had the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shine in their hearts! That’s what caused our transformations! Moses looked at God; we look at Jesus, cf. **3:18**. In **Hebrews 1:3** it describes God’s Son, “**who being the brightness of His glory and the express image (or character) of His person...**” Cf. **Matthew 17:1-3, Numbers 6:25, Psalm 80:3**.

CONSIDER

Be sure to recognize your life as a ministry. Most of your service may be outside of the church building in ways you didn’t anticipate! It is critical that we each spend daily time with Jesus. We want to receive and reflect His light! When we receive His light, we have something to share with others. Don’t lose heart because you don’t see results. Keep sowing! Don’t quit! Keep sowing that precious seed! *(Scripture references are from NKJV)*

PRAY.....

- * Pray for the mission trip to Serbia and the safe return of the team.
- * That we would follow the Lord’s leading in the August outreach at Jefferson Park in Canandaigua.
- * That God’s Spirit would refresh the pastors at our East Coast Pastors’ conference in September.