

## "IT'S NOT THE PREACHER'S FAULT IF MEN ARE LOST..."



**TEXT:** 2 Corinthians 4:1-5

**INTRO.:** A. Paul saw himself as an **ambassador** representing his King.  
Paul saw himself as a **statesman** speaking for his Savior.  
Paul saw himself as a **missionary** serving his Commander-in-Chief.  
Paul saw himself as a **citizen of heaven** speaking for the Creator.  
Paul saw himself as a **humble preacher** entrusted with a great mission.

B. The word "therefore" in v.1 connects this chapter with the previous one. There Paul spoke of the wonderful brightness of God's glory which was reflected on the face of Moses. But since Moses represented the fading glory of the Old Covenant, he saw himself as one with an even more glorious ministry of preaching the Gospel of the New Covenant.

**I. ...IF THE PREACHER IS DILIGENT: V.1**

A. Paul's Past: *"...received mercy"*

1. He speaks in this verse of the great mercy of God showed to him as a former persecutor of Christ and His church.
2. He knows that he is a most unlikely candidate to be called to be the Apostle to the Gentiles (or for anyone else!).

**1 Timothy 1:12-16** *And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.*

**ILLUS.:** The same mercy extended to Paul was likewise extended to every hell-bound sinner!

B. Paul's Present: *"...this ministry...we faint not"*

1. Paul never went back, slid back, failed, fooled around, got side-tracked, became entangled or quit the ministry.
2. Paul didn't *"faint"* i.e., he didn't allow things to discourage him, defeat him, distract him or depress him.

**ILLUS.:** When others like Demas quit, Paul kept going. When the intellectuals, philosophers, religionists, etc. said wicked things about him, he kept going. When he was slandered, he kept going. When he was misunderstood, he kept going. He just kept going, and going, and going...!!!

Preachers (& all believers) need not become weary in well-doing when they know they have a perfect Savior, a divine mission and are living right. The fact that others are lost & fail to respond to their message of salvation, should not discourage them or cause them to quit. They must remain faithful & trust the Lord for whatever results He chooses to give. **"IT'S NOT THE PREACHER'S FAULT IF MEN ARE LOST...IF THE PREACHER IS DILIGENT!"** And **"IT'S NOT THE PREACHER'S FAULT IF MEN ARE LOST IF...**

## II. ...THE PREACHER IS NOT DECEITFUL:

### A. What Paul Could Have Done:

1. He could have been dishonest (like others around him, e.g. Hymaneus & Alexander – 1 Tim.1:19).
2. He could have walked in "craftiness..." (i.e., used trickery or psychological or worldly methods in his ministry, e.g., the faith healers of today or used the ministry to seduce people, like the Catholic priests who sexually molest young men or women!).
3. He could have handled the Word of God "deceitfully..." (i.e., making it teach things which are false or corrupt to dip into men's pockets! Like Creflo Dollar, Benny Hinn [annual salary bet. ½ - 1 million dollars!], etc.!

**ILLUS.:** I can hear someone thinking: "There he goes again, mentioning names or religions negatively! Why does he have to do that?!"

Bultema: *"Many Christians today have a sentimental dread of all controversy. This is generally the case when they are themselves so empty that they have nothing to fight for, so wavering in their convictions that they cannot fight for anything positive, so indifferent that they do not care for truth or falsehood, and so blurred in their vision that they cannot differentiate between good & evil. These people would condemn all the prophets, all the apostles, and even the Lord Himself, for they all were great controversialists...Truth is intolerant & will never share her place with falsehood. Justice is intolerant & will never share with injustice."*

### B. What Paul Did Do:

1. He **"renounced the hidden things of dishonesty..."** i.e., he spurned, disowned & scorned them (like every believer *should* do!).
2. He commended himself to "every man's conscience in the sight of God", i.e., he did everything he could to make his ministry so squeaky clean that no one would be able to honestly accuse him of any of the negative things above.

- a. Most preachers attempt to just reach the intellect.
- b. Others attempt to speak to the emotions.
- c. Others address the will of man.
- d. Others appeal to the imagination.
- e. Paul spoke to the whole man by speaking to his conscience so the Holy Ghost could convict them thru his faithful preaching of the Word.

**TRANS.:** Paul is free from the blood of all men and has demonstrated it by showing that **"IT'S NOT THE PREACHER'S FAULT IF MEN ARE LOST...IF THE PREACHER IS DILIGENT, IS NOT DECEITFUL AND IF..."**

## III. ...THE PREACHER DECLARES THE TRUTH: v.3-5

### A. Paul's Ministry Was to Reach Men:

1. Those who were lost. V.3
  - a. We must first take notice that these people are lost because they refuse to believe the truth of the Gospel.
  - b. First they harden their hearts, then they become blinded.
2. Those who were blinded. V.4a
  - a. Satan, **"the god of this world"** takes advantage of their unbelief and shuts their spiritual eyes completely to the light of the Gospel.
  - b. Preaching the Gospel of Christ is a spiritual activity & when it is preached cleanly and clearly, it can penetrate the blindness of the heart of man.
3. Those who were ensnared. V.4
  - a. When people reject truth, they become targets of lies.
  - b. They will accept anything, e.g., cultic mentality, corrupt leadership, moral depravity, intellectual deception, etc.

**ILLUS.:** Paul warned the Colossian Christians to “beware philosophy...vain deceit...the tradition of men...the rudiments of the world...” Satanic deception is rampant. Men are deceived into idolatry & superstition, into a distorted view of the true value of things, into amusement & entertainment, into passion and vice, into immorality and addictions.

B. Paul's Ministry Was to Preach Christ: v.5

1. Preaching is the one thing that can penetrate the blindness, release the captives and save the lost.
2. Paul states his priority here: 1) to preach Christ 2) to become a servant.

**CONCL.:** **“IT’S NOT THE PREACHER’S FAULT IF MEN ARE LOST...IF THE PREACHER IS DILIGENT, NOT DECEITFUL AND DECLARES THE WORD!** It IS the preacher’s fault, if he is lazy to his calling, distorts the Word of God and fails to preach faithfully the Gospel and become a servant to the people to whom he is called.

It is collectively *our* fault (preacher and people), if we fail to do what we can to reach the lost around us.