

We Need Not Lose Heart in the Face of Rejection

Small Group Follow-up Study for 2 Corinthians 4:1-6

RE-READ

[1] Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. [2] But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. [3] And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. [4] In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. [5] For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. [6] For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

RECAP

Notice how our text begins with Paul talking about how he does not lose heart. That phrase, "we do not lose heart," appears not only here but in verse 16 as well which means that this idea of not losing heart is the theme of chapter 4. Paul invites the Corinthians to share his triumphant faith that does not lose heart in the face of rejection (2 Cor. 4:1-6), suffering (2 Cor. 4:7-15), and even death (2 Cor. 4:16-18). For now, notice the rejection Paul has in mind—verse 3: "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing." It's the kind of rejection that comes as we preach the gospel.

Have you ever been there? Maybe you've shared your faith with a family member, a friend, a neighbour, a co-worker and you've been ridiculed. What do you do to keep from losing heart, to keep from retreating into your cocoon never to share the gospel again? You consider the things Paul considers here in our text.

- Don't lose heart because your ministry is glorious and cannot fail.
- Don't lose heart because your ministry is an undeserved mercy that God has given to you anyway.
- Don't lose heart because any rejection you face is due to blindness not to you.
- Don't lose heart because God is able, at any time, to overcome the rejection you face by shining the light of his gospel into your listeners' hearts.

RESPOND

1. What caught your attention from Sunday's sermon? What are you still thinking about/mulling over?
2. What are the discouragements you meet as you try to share the gospel with others?
3. Talk about the state of your heart as you face resistance and discouragement in this world. How close are you to losing heart? How does this text help you to not lose heart as you walk in this world and share the gospel of Christ?
4. This text assigns a sweeping amount of influence to Satan (2 Corinthians 4:4; cf. 2 Timothy 2:26, Luke 4:5-7, and 1 John 5:19). Some people fixate on Satan too much, while others ignore him too much. How do we find the proper balance on this topic? What should guide both the content (what we say) and frequency (how often we say it) of what we say when we discuss Satan?