

2 Corinthians 4: Jars of Clay

Thinking about Evangelism...

...it's God's work!! It's not about you or me, it's about Him!

Evangelism isn't something you do... it's something God does... he just happens to use you in the process

1 st Session	-	God's work and God's call	2 Corinthians 4
2 nd Session	-	How can we be involved	1 Corinthians 9

PRAY

READ 2 Corinthians 4: 1-12

Structure: God Calls You God Gives Light God Shows Power

God Calls You - to 4 things

Check out v.1

Since through God's mercy we have this ministry...

Ch.3...this ministry is about revealing the New Covenant to people, showing them Jesus, a contrast between Moses, who brought the Law, which exposed people's sin and passed judgment on them... with Jesus, who brings righteousness and glory... and with the Spirit who doesn't write laws on stone tablets, but writes laws on our hearts...

"Best Job in world" - Ben Southall caretaker of Hamilton Island

...and it's only God's mercy, his undeserved patience and blessing that allows us to play a part in this.

We're all **called to be ministers of the New Covenant**, the good news of Jesus...

We're called v.2

To set forth the truth plainly

Conversely we're told, not to deceive or distort God's word

Why might we do that? Because people don't believe, they are veiled to the truth!

There were plenty of groups in Corinth who'd water down the message, it's implicit that some were distorting the word and deceiving... and of course that way you'd get more followers, more respect, more money!

As a CU... don't ever minimize the 'truth' and presenting that plainly in what you do...

Because that's not what ministers of the gospel are to do...

...there's one responsibility here, set forth the truth plainly

All other evangelistic endeavors flow out of presenting the truth

...and it's great to see that at the heart of what you guys stand for as a CU... I think your slogan is "Proclaiming Christ"

At the end of **Chapter 3**, we're called to do something else too...

3:18 We're **called to unveil our faces**... to show off his light and glory
There seems to be a sense here of living out, and showing off the truth that we present

We're called (**v.8-12**)

to suffer

God doesn't call you to an easy life...

...Jesus says, anyone who wants to live a godly life will be persecuted!

Paul and Timothy share their experiences; from v.8 hard pressed, perplexed, persecuted, struck down, given over to death

Don't be surprised when trials come!

But remember... not crushed, not in despair, not abandoned, not destroyed

...and why do we face death?

v.11 To reveal the life of Christ

v.12 To bring life to others

Your experience of death (suffering in general) points people to Jesus and opens the door for life to be received.

God Gives Light

What stops us losing heart?

How can we keep going, even when people just won't believe?!

Because this is God's work... God's mercy extends to us... the truth is true...

But how will people ever believe?!

v.4 It's Satan (the god of this age) who's blinded the minds of unbelievers... he's put a veil on the gospel... he's covered God's light with darkness

Reminded of **Ephesians 6:12**

Our struggle is not against flesh and blood... but rulers/powers/spiritual authorities

We can be assured that Christ defeated the power of the spiritual powers and authorities at the cross - **Colossians 2**

But we're given a more personal reason for hope...

v.6 God who said let light shine... (Genesis 1) this is the true God, the creator of the universe, the God of all time... infinitely more powerful than the god of this age!

v.6 He made his light shine in us!!
He opened our eyes, gave us sight and light, we were given knowledge of God

If God could do this for Saul... persecutor, chief of sinners, he can do it for you
If he did it for you, he can do it for your family, housemates, coursemates...

God shines his light into dark places!!

God shows Power

God shows his power through... weakness!!

Imagine putting a Picasso in a cardboard frame...

...or imagine Jaime Oliver working at a Little Chef

...or imagine Steve Gerrard playing in your 5 aside team!

Of all the places to put your treasure... that's the gospel... in a clay jar!

A clay jar is the equivalent of a plastic box from the pound shop, or the Asda own brand stuff...

...they're every day, they store stuff, they're dirty, not well made, break easily

The point is, it's not about you... and that's done deliberately... to show off God's power!

So when we come to think about evangelism, being ministers of a New Covenant, we often make excuses...

Too young? Hudson Taylor, Timothy

Too bad? Paul the persecutor

Too many bad experiences? Helen Rosevere, Elisabeth Elliott

Too many other things? Eric Liddell, CT Studd

Too thick? Gladys Aylward