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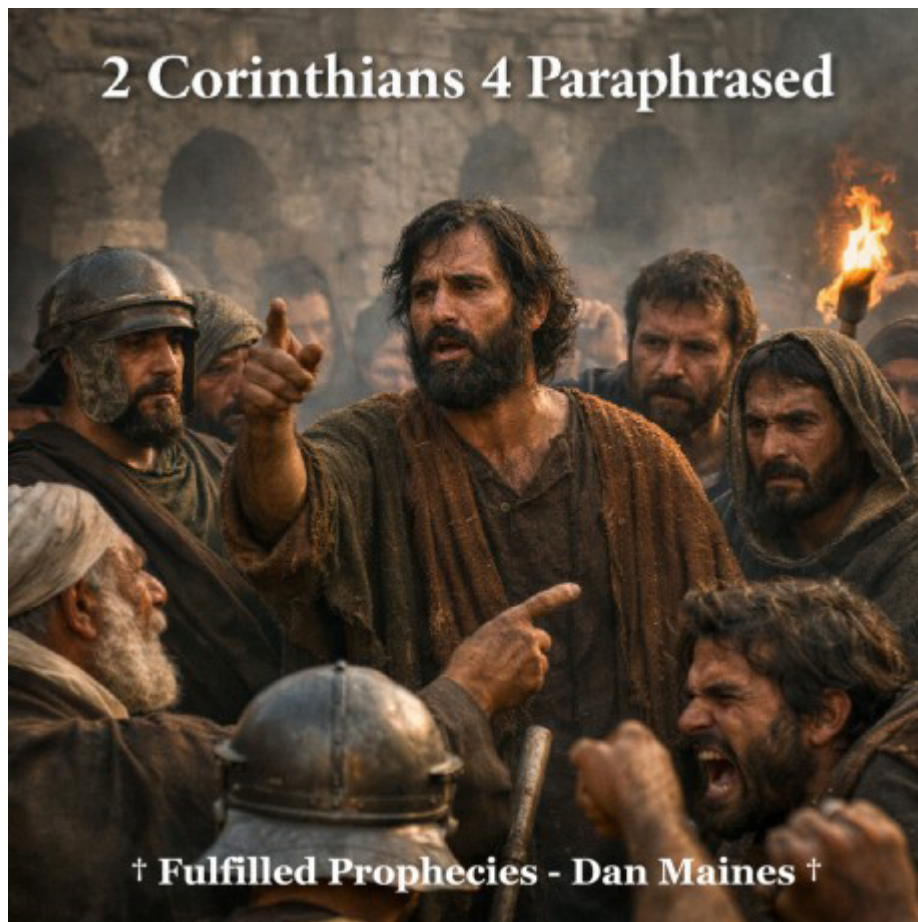
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2 Corinthians 4 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

2 Corinthians 4 Paraphrased

Introduction

† Paul explains the courage of those who serve Christ, even when the world rejects them. He shows that the gospel isn't hidden by God but is rejected by those whose minds are blinded by the god of this age (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

† This chapter reveals the contrast between temporary suffering and eternal glory. The apostles carried the message of life even while facing death daily (Romans 8:36).

† The message also exposes the fading glory of the old

covenant system that was passing away in their generation, replaced by the lasting glory of Christ's kingdom (2 Corinthians 3:7-11).

2 Corinthians 4:1

Because God showed mercy and entrusted us with this ministry, we don't give up or lose heart.

† Paul's ministry existed because of God's mercy, not human ability. The apostles understood they were chosen servants, not self-appointed teachers (1 Timothy 1:12-14).

† This courage came from knowing that Christ's kingdom had already begun and God's promises were being fulfilled (Luke 21:31).

† Early Christian writer Clement of Alexandria described the apostles as men strengthened by divine mercy rather than personal strength.

2 Corinthians 4:2

We have rejected shameful and secret practices. We don't manipulate the word of God or twist the truth. Instead we present the truth openly so every person's conscience can judge us before God.

† Paul's message was transparent and straightforward. He didn't alter God's message to gain followers or approval (Galatians 1:10).

† The apostles appealed to conscience because the truth of the gospel was self-evident to those willing to hear (John 18:37).

† Irenaeus wrote that the apostles preached openly and publicly, not in secret philosophies like the pagan teachers.

2 Corinthians 4:3

If the good news we preach seems hidden, it's hidden to those who are heading toward destruction.

† The gospel wasn't mysterious or concealed by God. The

blindness existed in those who rejected the truth (John 12:37-40).

† This blindness was spiritual stubbornness that prevented many in Israel from recognizing their Messiah (Romans 11:7-8).

† Eusebius recorded that many Jewish leaders rejected the gospel despite clear evidence of Christ's resurrection.

2 Corinthians 4:4

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so they can't see the light of the gospel that reveals the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

† The phrase god of this age refers to the influence of Satan working through the present world system opposing Christ (John 12:31).

† Their blindness wasn't because the gospel lacked clarity but because they refused the light (John 3:19-20).

† Tertullian wrote that Satan worked through deception and persecution to keep people from seeing Christ's glory.

2 Corinthians 4:5

We don't preach ourselves. We preach that Jesus Christ is Lord, and we are your servants for Jesus' sake.

† The apostles never promoted themselves as religious authorities but as servants pointing people to Christ (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).

† This humility separated the apostles from false teachers who sought power and recognition (2 Peter 2:1-3).

† Clement of Alexandria noted that apostolic teaching always centered on Christ rather than the reputation of the teacher.

2 Corinthians 4:6

God, who said light should shine out of darkness, has made His light shine in our hearts so we can know the glory of God seen in the face of Jesus Christ.

† Paul connects the new creation in Christ with the original creation when God brought light into darkness (Genesis 1:3).

† The knowledge of God is fully revealed through Jesus, the visible expression of God's nature (Colossians 1:15).

† Irenaeus taught that Christ reveals the Father clearly because He is the visible image of the invisible God.

2 Corinthians 4:7

We carry this treasure in fragile clay jars so that the great power will clearly belong to God and not to us.

† The treasure refers to the gospel message entrusted to weak human messengers (1 Corinthians 1:27-29).

† The weakness of the apostles highlighted God's power working through them (2 Corinthians 12:9).

† Early Christian writings often described believers as vessels carrying the life of Christ into the world.

2 Corinthians 4:8

We are pressed on every side by trouble but we are not crushed. We are confused but we are not driven to despair.

† The apostles constantly faced persecution and hardship during their mission (Acts 14:19-22).

† Their endurance demonstrated the sustaining power of God working through them (Philippians 4:13).

† Eusebius recorded numerous accounts of apostolic suffering during the early expansion of Christianity.

2 Corinthians 4:9

We are persecuted but never abandoned by God. We are knocked down but not destroyed.

† Christ promised His followers they would face persecution but would never be forsaken (John 16:33).

† God's presence preserved the apostles even during violent opposition (Acts 23:11).

† Tertullian wrote that persecution only strengthened the faith of early Christians.

2 Corinthians 4:10

We constantly carry the death of Jesus in our bodies so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in us.

† The apostles shared in Christ's sufferings as they carried the gospel to the world (Philippians 3:10).

† Their suffering demonstrated the same self-sacrificial life Jesus displayed (John 15:20).

† Irenaeus taught that the suffering of believers reflected the suffering of Christ in the world.

2 Corinthians 4:11

While we live we are continually exposed to death for Jesus' sake so that the life of Jesus may be clearly shown in our mortal bodies.

† Apostolic ministry involved constant risk and danger because of the message they preached (2 Corinthians 11:23-27).

† Yet through their suffering the life and power of Christ became visible to others (Galatians 2:20).

† Early Christian historians noted that many believers accepted suffering rather than deny Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:12

So death is working in us, but life is working in you.

† The apostles endured suffering so that others could receive spiritual life through the gospel (1 Thessalonians 2:8).

† Their sacrifices helped establish the early churches throughout the Roman world (Acts 17:6).

† Eusebius described the apostles as men who endured hardship so that others might gain eternal life.

2 Corinthians 4:13

Because we have the same spirit of faith spoken of in Scripture,

we believe and therefore we speak.

† Paul refers to the faith expressed in Psalm 116:10, showing continuity between Old Testament faith and the gospel message (Psalm 116:10).

† Faith naturally leads to proclamation because truth cannot remain silent (Romans 10:14-15).

† Clement of Alexandria wrote that genuine faith compels believers to declare God's truth boldly.

2 Corinthians 4:14

We know that the One who raised the Lord Jesus will also raise us with Jesus and bring us into His presence together with you.

† The resurrection of Christ guaranteed the resurrection life promised to believers (1 Corinthians 15:20-23).

† From the fulfilled perspective this resurrection life was revealed fully when the old covenant age ended and the new covenant kingdom stood complete (Matthew 16:27-28).

† Early Christian writers consistently pointed to Christ's resurrection as the foundation of Christian hope.

2 Corinthians 4:15

All these things happen for your sake so that grace will spread to more people and cause many to give thanks to God and increase His glory.

† The suffering of the apostles helped spread the gospel to more nations (Acts 13:47-49).

† As the gospel expanded, thanksgiving and worship multiplied among believers (Colossians 1:6).

† Eusebius recorded the rapid growth of the church despite persecution.

2 Corinthians 4:16

So we don't lose heart. Even though our outer body is wearing out, our inner life is being renewed day by day.

† Physical suffering didn't destroy the believer's hope because spiritual renewal continued daily (Romans 12:2).

† The new covenant life transformed believers inwardly even while the physical body aged (Ephesians 3:16).

† Irenaeus described the Christian life as an inward renewal through Christ's Spirit.

2 Corinthians 4:17

Our present troubles are small and temporary, but they are producing for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

† The apostles viewed suffering through the lens of eternity rather than temporary hardship (Romans 8:18).

† The coming fulfillment of God's kingdom placed their trials in proper perspective (Hebrews 12:28).

† Tertullian wrote that Christian suffering prepared believers for eternal glory.

2 Corinthians 4:18

So we focus not on what is seen but on what is unseen. What is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

† The visible world of the old covenant system was temporary and fading away (Hebrews 8:13).

† The unseen kingdom of Christ is eternal and cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:28).

† Early Christian writers frequently reminded believers to focus on the eternal kingdom rather than earthly circumstances.

Historical References

† Clement of Alexandria taught that apostolic courage came from confidence in God's eternal kingdom.

† Irenaeus wrote that the apostles endured suffering because they believed firmly in the resurrection life of Christ.

† Eusebius recorded the persecution and perseverance of early believers during the spread of Christianity.

† Tertullian explained that Christian suffering strengthened the church and spread the gospel further.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We remember that the gospel isn't weakened by hardship or opposition. God's power still works through ordinary people.

† Our struggles today are temporary, but God's kingdom and promises are eternal.

† We focus on Christ and His unseen kingdom rather than temporary circumstances around us.

† Like the apostles, we carry the light of the gospel so others can see the glory of God through Christ.

† This reminds us that faith isn't about comfort but about faithfully living in the life Christ has already given us.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why did Paul say the gospel was hidden to some people?

A: Because their minds were blinded by the influence of the present world system opposing Christ (John 12:40).

Q: What does the treasure in clay jars represent?

A: The gospel message carried by weak human messengers so God's power is clearly seen (1 Corinthians 1:27-29).

Q: Why did the apostles endure so much suffering?

A: Their suffering helped spread the gospel so others could receive life through Christ (1 Thessalonians 2:8).

Q: What does focusing on the unseen mean?

A: It means prioritizing God's eternal kingdom rather than temporary earthly conditions (Hebrews 12:28).

Q: Why did Paul call their troubles temporary?

A: Because eternal glory far outweighs the suffering experienced in this life (Romans 8:18).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† 2 Corinthians 4

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

† Tertullian, Apology

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