

# “THROUGH THE BIBLE”

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## 2 CORINTHIANS 3-4

Like most professions when a pastor looks for a change of scenery he sends out a resume'. Churches read them and invite candidates in for an interview. But a prospective pastor needs to be very careful about what he includes on his prospectus... Recently, I ran across a list of statements pastors should NOT include on their resume'. Here we go...

- 8) In the five churches I've faithfully served over the last two years...
- 7) My extensive counseling of church members is a rich source of illustrations for my sermons.
- 6) I've been told every sermon I preach is better than the next.
- 5) My personality type has provided me ample opportunity to develop a wide range of conflict-resolution skills.
- 4) With a suspended driver's license a car allowance won't be necessary.
- 3) Hobbies include pit bulls and automatic weapons.
- 2) I require Sundays off.
- 1) I've learned to cope with financial crisis at every church I've served.

I mention pastoral resumes', because there were critics of Paul in the church at Corinth who were questioning the apostle's resume' - or *lack of one*. His detractors had cast doubt on his credentials. Paul opens Chapter 3 reluctantly defending himself.

"Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you?" A common practice in the early days of Christianity was for traveling preachers to carry with them *letters of commendation*, or *referrals* from their home church. Even today when requests come from folks who want to speak or sing at CC, their information packet will include letters of reference from other churches where they've ministered. Its standard protocol - it's a good way to validate the legitimacy of their ministry.

But Paul didn't bring such letters to the Corinthians. He didn't need to - when he came to Corinth there was no church. It was through the ministry of Paul that people were saved and the church had started. You would've thought the existence of the Corinthian church would've validated Paul's ministry. It'd be like Pastor Chuck coming to our church, and not being allowed to preach because he didn't bring with him the proper credentials. Chuck founded the first CC. Now this church, and the other 1500 Calvary Chapels worldwide, are a validation of his ministry! In essence, Paul is saying to the Corinthians, "*I started your church. Through my preaching God saved your soul - and now you want to see my ID?*" The Corinthians wanted to see Paul's resume', but Paul says they are his resume'... "*You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men...*" The false teachers who came to Corinth after Paul departed, came with impressive paperwork. But Paul insists that the Corinthians were his paperwork.

Verse 3, "Clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart." Paul was the pen God used to write on the hearts of the Corinthians. But the author of their transformation was Christ. Paul calls the Corinthians "*an epistle (or a letter) of Christ.*" Today we send text messages, and emails, but when Paul wanted to communicate he picked up a quill pen and parchment. He inked his letters. But ink can smear, or smudge, or fade with time... Even when the ink is legible the words can be lost, or ignored, or misinterpreted. This is what happened with the OC. God wrote His will on stone tablets. *This was before ink. The Ten Commandments God gave Moses, He chiseled in the stone with His finger.* But the same problems existed.

There was nothing wrong with God's Law. The problem was not *what was written*, but *how it was written*. Eventually, God's Law did get misunderstood. At other times, the Jews ignored the two tablets. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the commandments in His hands, in essence God said, "*Take these two tablets daily, and you'll feel better.*" But the Jews neglected their medicine.

Think of a very modern illustration... You need directions, so someone hands you a piece of paper. Yet just having directions doesn't mean you'll arrive. You can lose the paper - or misread it - or spill a drink and smear the ink - or roll down the window and it fly from the car... but what if I installed a GPS in the dash that always gave you updated directions. That GPS would proved much more efficient than a paper.

And this is why God wrote His will in our hearts. It's tough lugging around stone tablets, but God has etched His will into our basic desires and instincts. He installs a spiritual GPS inside us - *a new nature* - that keeps directing and recalibrating until we're in His will. This is the miracle of the New Covenant - and Paul holds it up in contrast to the Old. With the NC, God has gone high-tech! He's discarded stone tablets, and planted a spiritual chip deep into our spirit. Rather than fumble with a piece of paper, and try to follow God from the **outside in**. He puts His Spirit within us. Rather than conform to an external standard, God transforms us from the **inside out**.

Verse 4, "*And we have such trust through Christ toward God.*" It takes zero faith to follow directions. It's just there in black and white. You can follow a set of directions begrudgingly or mechanically. The right attitude has very little to do with obeying orders. And this was the problem with the Old Covenant. People kept the Law for all the wrong reasons. They were self-righteous, stuck-up, judgmental. They were holy on the outside, but their attitude stunk. This is why the NC was the better covenant. It's not just about *actions*, but *attitude*. God gives you a new heart. You love not judge - are humble not proud - trust instead of becoming self-sufficient.

"*Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God,*" Not everyone is good at reading a map, and following the logistics. And the worst person on the planet at following directions is yours truly! Here's the adage in my house... "*If you want to get to heaven ask Sandy. If you want to go anywhere else you better ask Kathy.*" Kath has a knack for directions. I have a knack for getting twisted around and lost.

In fact, I've observed *most women* are better at directions than *most men*. It's been said, "*The reason Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years is that Moses was too proud to stop and ask for directions.*" But success under the NC for men and women alike, has nothing to do with our ability to follow directions. Paul says, "*our sufficiency is from God.*" Rather than hand us directions for us to follow, God plants a homing device in our hearts. He writes His will and way on our hearts. Our job is to trust Him! He does the work! "*Our sufficiency is from God.*"

And it's God "who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit..." A Believer's ability to *live out* the NC is from God, as well as his or her ability to *pass it on*. The Holy Spirit ministers *in us*, and *through us*.

Paul adds in verse 6, "for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." Give someone a task without the strength, or tools, or skills to do it, and you'll sentence them to despair, and discouragement, and death! This is what the letter did. The Law written on stone tablets was impossible for God's people to keep - *not because there was anything wrong with the Law*. The problem was with the people trying to keep the Law. They were unable.

This year the Chicago Bulls have the best record in the NBA, but not too long ago they had the worst. In the 1960s no one was bullish on the Bulls. In fact, their tallest player, Erwin Mueller, was just 6'8". Once, before a game with the Celtics - in the midst of a seven game losing streak, Coach Johnny Kerr, stood in the locker room and tried to fire up his team. He said to forward Bob Boozer, "Bob, go out there and pretend you're the best scorer in basketball." Then he turned to guard, Jerry Sloan, "Jerry, get out there and pretend you're the best defender the game has ever seen." Then the coach told Mueller, "Erwin, pretend you're the best rebounding, shot-blocking, dominating center in the game today!" The team was fired up and stormed onto the court. When the game was over the Bulls had lost again - by 17 points. Coach Kerr was so depressed. He didn't know what to say. Finally Mueller piped up and said, "Don't worry about it, coach. Just pretend we won." That's what happens when you live under the law. You're trying to win a game you simply can't win. You're not good enough. You don't have the skill. And if you're too proud to admit it you end up just pretending - *you play the hypocrite*. That's why Paul says, "the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

Verse 7 recalls the initial giving of the OC, "But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory." Exodus 34 describes the face of Moses after he came down the mountain with the Law in hand. His countenance actually flush with the glory of God. Call it the "divine shine," or the "Mo Glow." He looked like he'd gotten too much radiation - or spent too long in the tanning bed. His face beamed. And God required Moses to cover up with a veil. His glory was off-limits to the rank-in-file Hebrew. Of course, the glow faded over time. Like the glory of the OC - it waned. The Mosaic Law was transitory. The Law of Moses was unable to make anyone righteous. In fact, it's chief purpose was to expose our unrighteousness. Thus, it gave way to the NC. The grace of God, and the work of the Spirit make a more glorious covenant. The divine shine passed away, but the glory of God's grace will last forever!

Verse 10 "For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels." Compared to the glory of the Gospel, the glory of the Law now looks dull - lackluster - second-fiddle. "For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious." The prominence and splendor of the OC was fleeting. You could literally watch it fade from Moses' face. But the preeminence and significance of the New Covenant lasts forever.

"Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech - unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away." Under the OC the Hebrews were not worthy to behold the glory of God. This is why Moses was commanded by God to hide the glory behind a veil. And this veil became a symbol of the blindness that existed in the hearts of the Jews. They read the Law, understood its demands, but were unable to obey. The Law produced *guilt and fear* rather than

*righteousness and confidence.* It was a source of *frustration*, rather than *freedom and fulfillment*.

Verse 14 explains, "But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away." Read verse 16 and your heart should skip a beat. The relentless drone of the Law's demands... *do this, don't do that - do, don't, do, don't.* It creates a hopelessness. God seems a million miles away. You'll sooner travel to the nearest star than you'll get to God through the Law. You want to see God, draw close to God - but you butt noses with the veil. Yet, when anyone turns to Jesus - when we confess our sin, and stop pretending to be something we're not - suddenly, the veil is taken away. Instantly we're invaded by a sense of God's presence and pleasure. God comes into focus. His glory fills our emptiness. The distance we felt evaporates. *The veil is removed.*

Verse 17, "Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Notice, the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit are one! They're one God. In fact, the Holy Spirit is called "*the Spirit of the Lord.*" This means the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts is a continuation of the work of Christ on the cross. Both are experienced by grace through faith.

Yet here's what happens in Christian circles. We believe we're saved by grace through faith - but then we try to live the Christian life in our own strength. Rather than trust more, we try more. It's grit - not grace! And we end up back behind the veil. Our faith gets buried under a mound of guilt. Rather than liberty, we're overwhelmed with condemnation. We have a NC, but we live as if we're under the Old. Author and speaker, Warren Wiersbe, has traveled extensively among churches across North America. And Wiersbe writes about what he's observed... "*There are Gospel-preaching churches that have legalistic tendencies and keep their members immature, guilty, and afraid. They spend a great deal of time dealing with the externals... they exalt standards and denounce sin, but they fail to magnify the Lord Jesus. Sad to say, in some New Testament churches we have an Old Testament ministry.*" Here's a real tragedy, "*NT churches with OT ministries.*" There are Churches that emphasize *rules and rituals*, whereas NC Christianity is all about *faith, and freedom, and fruitfulness*. As Paul puts it, "*and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*" Under the NC people no longer dwell on *their own deficiencies*. They're free from failure - covered by the blood of Jesus - and fixed on *the sufficiency of Christ*.

And verse 18 is crucial. "*But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*" Here's what happens to a believing heart under the NC... God strips away the veil. It's like walking into a dark room in the middle of the day, and ripping open the blinds. Suddenly, light streams into the room... Not because we *tried hard, or earned the right, or proved our worth* - but in response to our simple faith God pours into our hearts His peace and presence. And His glory transforms us - makes us like Jesus.

The Greek word translated "*transformed*" is "*metamorphosis.*" It speaks of a radical change. When a rock crystalizes, or a caterpillar leaves its cocoon and flies off a butterfly it's a metamorphosis. Under the OC you *conform*, and *produce* your own righteousness. But under the NC you're *transformed*. You *reflect* His righteousness. You become like Jesus.

Paul said the glory of the OC faded and diminished, but notice the glory of the NC intensifies. We go "*from glory to glory...*" The Christian life is a progression. And here's how *the glow grows...* we "*behold in the mirror...*" - we just keep spending time with Jesus. We keep the focus and attention of our hearts God-ward.

In NC Christianity a metaphysical miracle occurs in the heart of the believer. We change... *first our heart - then our thoughts and attitudes - ultimately our actions* - and it's amazing, we really weren't trying! We just kept our face toward Jesus. He effects the changes. It's the Spirit of God who does the work. All we do is supply the look. We maintain *an open face*. Oh, the power of a look! Look to Jesus - *with an unveiled-faith* - look, and you'll never be the same!

Chapter 4, "Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart." Note, the *majesty of the Gospel* effects the *ministry of the Gospel*. How can you get discouraged, how can you contemplate quitting - when you've got such glorious news to share! The NC provides new energy.

He writes of a NC ministry, "But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." One time in my married life I bought a newer model car. Kathy and I purchased a van - and buying cars is not an experience I enjoy. Usually, you're pressured, lied to, manipulated, strong-armed - and in the end suckered... And I don't like any of the above. So after several traditional dealerships, we went to car lot where you didn't have to dicker. In fact, the salesman told me, "No pressure, this is a good car, at a good price. If you don't buy it somebody else will." I liked his approach and it caused me to buy the car.

In essence, this was Paul's approach to the Gospel. He didn't use shameful methods, or rely on craftiness, and manipulation, or deceit. *Paul had confidence in the product*. God gives us the riches of Christ freely by faith. Paul just presented the truth. This is why you don't *preach* the Gospel like you *pitch* used cars. You don't have to stretch or twist the appeal. You don't have to bully anybody into buying. The Gospel is such a good deal it'll sale itself if you just present it as clearly and plainly as possible.

Verse 3, "But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them." In other words, the Gospel is such a good idea, the only reason people reject it is that they've been blinded by Satan. Mention Jesus to someone, and if they refuse to hear - *no matter how nice you approach them* - you know a spiritual deception has occurred. Chalk it up to "the god of this age." Satan blinds men to the truth. *This is why before we preach we need to pray*.

It's like the waitress in the foul mood. Her customer was just trying to be polite. When she brought him his coffee he said, "Looks like rain today, doesn't it?" She snapped back at him, "I can't help what it looks like, we sell it for coffee, so drink it and shut-up!" The point is, despite how nice you try to be there's still an edge - an opposition. It's caused by Satan. I've heard it said, "There's a lot you can do after you've prayed, but there's nothing you can do effectively until you've prayed!" Prayer is the heavy artillery. Through prayer we beat down strongholds. Recall the parable Jesus' told - we take the spoils - only after we've bound the strongman in prayer.

I love verse 5, it's important! "For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake." Christian ministry should be void of self-advertisement. Terms like "promotional tours," "image consultants," "fan clubs" have no place in the Christian vocabulary. We're "bondservants for Jesus' sake." Can you imagine a slave with a fan club? You can't *promote yourself* and *magnify Jesus* simultaneously. The spotlight only shines on one person at a time - and if it's on you, that means Jesus is in the dark!

"For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." You break the darkness not by talking about yourself, but by shining God's light! The knowledge of Jesus drives out the darkness.

Verse 7, "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us." At first glance this is a strange idiom - *who puts a treasure in clay pots?* It's like serving steak and lobster on a paper plate, or expensive wine in a styrofoam cup. You expect to find jewels and gold in a treasure chest, not a paper sack. *But this is not how God wraps His treasure...* He's taken the most valuable treasure on Earth, the Gospel, and placed it in clay pots. That's what we are... we're made of clay. We're coarse, uncouth, rough-edged pottery. We're a bunch of *cracked pots*. Imagine, *God places the Gospel in ball jars*.

*But why?* Paul explains, "*that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.*" God uses crack pots to hammer home that the power, and beauty, and wisdom of the message is not in the messenger. DL Moody was the Billy Graham of his day. A man used by God in mighty and marvelous ways. Yet Moody was uneducated. His voice was high-pitched and nasally. He had an unattractive appearance. Once, a reporter was sent to analyze Moody's success. He wrote, "*I can see nothing whatsoever in Moody to account for his marvelous work.*" And that is exactly the reason God puts His spiritual treasure in brown paper sacks - so everyone will know "*that the power is of God and not of us.*"

This is why Christian ministry should always be conducted in humility and simplicity. No glitzy fanfare, or ostentatious displays, or verbose introductions. I'm not saying we shouldn't communicate in an appealing manner - but the difference is in our motive. There's a difference between trying to *express yourself*, and wanting to *impress others*. The question to ask is, "*Are we trying to get the message heard, or are you wanting to get the messenger seen?*"

Whenever a liquid flows from a glass I want to make sure the taste that's left in the mouths of those who drink it is that of the *contents*, not the *container*. I have a cup in my office devoted to coffee. On occasion though, I'll pour Coke into that cup. I end up with coffee-flavored Coke. *The contents gets contaminated by the container. The drink is tainted.* When we share the Gospel what kind of taste do people leave with - have they received the pure, clear, untainted truth? Or are they thinking about me or us, and how spiritual we are... or how cool we are? Have we preached Jesus, or promoted ourselves? We need to give them Jesus; then get out of the way.

Notice verse 8, "*We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed...*" Here's a taste of Paul's ministry. Everywhere he went he got *beat-up*, but he never *gave-up*. The message motivated Paul!

Mark Twain once boarded a train for Sioux City. He didn't want to carry his briefcase on board, so he asked a clerk if the case was strong enough to handle the rigorous treatment of the baggage handlers. He took Twain's case, and threw it to the pavement, "*That, sir, is what she'll get in Philadelphia.*" Then he slammed it a half-dozen times against the side of the car. "*That's what she'll get in Chicago.*" Finally, he hurled the case against the wall, and stomped it vigorously until the papers spilled out, "*That's what she'll get if she ever makes Sioux City.*" Twain couldn't believe what he was witnessing. Finally, the clerk handed Twain his mangled briefcase; then said calmly, "*If you're going any farther*

than Sioux City, I'd suggest you carry it on yourself." Well, Paul was like that briefcase. He traveled a lot further than Sioux City and he received rougher treatment than Twain's briefcase. And yet the majesty of the message motivated the messenger! And God was at work in his difficulties.

He says in verse 10, that he's "always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you." Paul's body was probably more mangled than Mark Twain's briefcase. He was literally one of the walking wounded. But the cracks in his vessel became opportunities for the life of Jesus on the inside to shine through.

Dr. Rachel Remen tells a story of a patient she treated for severe depression. He'd lost a leg to cancer. She had him to draw a picture of how he saw himself. He drew an ugly, cracked, worthless vase. But a transformation occurred in this young man as he began to deal with his disappointments. He soon discovered he could be an encouragement to other cancer patients. His whole life took on new meaning. One day the doctor she showed him his previous drawing. The young man took out a yellow crayon and drew several vivid, colorful streamers flowing out of the cracks in the vase. He explained, "Where its broken, this is now where the light comes through." Paul makes the same statement. It's where he's dying - that's where the light shines through. Paul is no longer discouraged by difficulties, he now sees them as opportunities to reveal the light of Christ.

Verse 13, "And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke..." Here he quotes Psalm 116:10... "We also believe and therefore speak..." I like this train of thought. Faith doesn't stay silent. It declares itself. It's born in the heart, but eventually bubbles to the surface and finds an expression. And here's what Paul's faith declares, "knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you." Paul had given his body to God as a living sacrifice. He wasn't worried about its present welfare - he knew that one day his body would be resurrected immortal, incorruptible, invincible. Death could not take from Paul anything that really mattered. "For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God." Paul considered his sufferings worth it, knowing that God was glorified.

Verse 16, "Therefore we do not lose heart." Paul ends the chapter as it began. The Gospel's *majesty* motivated Paul's *ministry*. When you carry glorious news you carry on despite painful circumstances. Paul doesn't give up, or give out, or give in. No matter how bang up he gets, he refuses to lose heart.

One day the devil had a garage sale. All his tools were laid out in the front yard for public inspection. Each tool was marked with a price. On display that day, Satan had a treacherous lot of diabolical implements: *hatred, envy, deceit, greed, lust, pride*. But over in the corner was a harmless-looking tool. It was well worn, but it was extremely high priced. Someone asked, "What's the name of that tool?" Satan replied, "That's the tool of discouragement. It's priced so high because I can use it to pry open men's hearts and invade them even when I can't get close to them with other tools. Its badly worn because I use it on almost everyone, especially since so few people know it belongs to me. It's my favorite tool!" Hey, Satan will discourage us if we let him. He sets us up for disappointment when he gets us focused on three areas of life... the **physical and fleshy**, the **here and now**, the **visible and tangible**.

Notice first, Paul tells us, "Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day." Here's a potential

source of great discouragement - *you and I are growing older. Growing older is inevitable...* All supermodels end up wrinkled - every muscle a body-builder develops withers in the grave... The *"outward man is perishing!"* But while the outward man *deteriorates*, the Spirit of God *invigorates* the inner man. I'm wearing down physically, but I get stronger and stronger spiritually. Thus, the key to overcoming discouragement is to stay focus on the *inward man - not the outward man*. God keeps us alive and renewed spiritually.

And there's another way to beat the blahs - focus on *your eternal rewards, not your temporal troubles*. Paul tells us in verse 17, *"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory..."* It's amazing, Paul endured *shipwrecks, stonings, imprisonments, beatings* - incredible hardships - but he calls them *"our light affliction."* How can that be? His list doesn't seem *"light"* to me... that is, until, it's compared with heaven's glory. *Heaven's highs* make *today's burdens* seem light as a feather. Heaven is so heavy your first nano-second with Jesus will more than make up for a lifetime of tears and pain on earth. Paul says *"our light affliction... is just for a moment."* Compared to eternity, life on earth is a split second. A million zillion years from now all the tears we've shed in this world will have long been forgotten.

I love verse 17. In it God has promised us not just *"glory,"* but a *"weight of glory..."* And not just a *"weight of glory,"* but an *"eternal weight of glory..."* And not just an *"eternal weight of glory,"* but an *"exceeding and eternal weight of glory..."* But there's more... And not just an *"exceeding and eternal weight of glory,"* but a *"more exceeding and eternal weight of glory..."* And not just a *"more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,"* but a *"far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!"* How's that for a bright hope! We need to keep our eyes on heaven. It will be for us a *"far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!"* I don't know about you, but *I can't wait!*

Finally, we need to look beyond *the visible and tangible* to *the spiritual realities."* Paul says in verse 18, *"while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen."* In fact, the spiritual stuff are the realities that matter most... *love, grace, mercy, peace, integrity, fellowship*. *"For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."* Focus on what you can see and you'll lose heart, but focus on the iceberg just below the surface and faith will grow.

Recall when Elisha's servant heard that the king had dispatched men to take the prophet captive, he was frightened - *but not Elisha*. The prophet had eyes of faith. He saw more than what his servant saw. In 1 Kings 6:17 Elisha prayed that God would open the eyes of his servant. And in the same verse we're told, *"Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha."* God had dispatched troops of his own. The angelic secret service was on duty to protect His man, Elisha.

Here're the lessons we learn in 2 Corinthians 4... *We won't get discouraged if...* If we keep our minds from focusing on the deterioration of the *outward man* and let God renew the *inward person* day by day. If we seek *eternal rewards* not *temporal success*. If we gravitate toward the *spiritual* not the *visible*. A Christian's priority should be *inward not outward, eternal not temporal, and spiritual not tangible*.