

**LESSONS THIS QUARTER**

- 9) 29 April ..... 2Cor 1-2 ..... Enjoying God's Comfort
- 10) **06 May ..... 2Cor 3-4 ..... Displaying the Gospel**
- 11) 13 May ..... 2Cor 5-7 ..... Becoming New
- 12) 20 May ..... 2Cor 7-9 ..... Giving Faithfully
- 13) 27 May ..... 2Cor 10-13 ..... Finding Strength

**INTRODUCTION**

- Are we willing to live, suffer, and die to give the Gospel to others?
  - ♦ If not, what will it take to get us to that point?
- Jesus tells us to 'count the cost' before following Him (Lk 14:28); Paul tells us in this book what his cost was in sufferings, what his motivation was to undergo suffering, and what his reward would be
- Paul's reasons to share the Gospel with unbelievers and train believers even under hostile conditions included the following motivational elements in the table below:

Characteristics of the Gospel Message according to Paul	
It is a triumphant message .....	2 Cor 2:14, 6:18
It is a sincere and truthful message .....	2Cor 2:17
It is approved by the Spirit .....	2Cor 3:1-3
It makes us dependent on God .....	2Cor 3:4-5
Its Author is superior to anything and everything else .....	2Cor 3:6-18
The Gospel & its messengers are open to criticism .....	2Cor 4:2
It is Satanically-opposed.....	2Cor 4:3-4
It is Christ-honoring .....	2Cor 4:5-7
Though, suffering is promised...	2Cor 4:8-18
...It makes us confident in eternal glories.....	2Cor 5:1-9
It is also a compelling message.....	2Cor 5:10-17
It reconciles sinners to Christ .....	2Cor 5:11
It makes us ambassadors for Christ.....	2Cor 5:18-21
It is blameless.....	2Cor 6:1-7
It is paradoxical (we die, yet we live...)	2Cor 6:8-10
...and it separates us for service .....	2Cor 6:11-18

Passage	Comments
2Cor 3:1-3	<p><b>Ministers of a New Covenant</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In essence, Paul was asking if he needed to confirm his apostolic credentials again. Paul realized that with their immaturity and with false teachers taking advantage of them, anything &amp; everything he said would be twisted, doubted, or negated                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Why didn't Paul just write this church off?</li> <li>♦ When should one give up on a church?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Some reasons people leave church include:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. False or unfamiliar teachings, customs, or practices</li> <li>2. Not able to fit in or they were convicted of sin</li> <li>3. They got offended by someone or something</li> <li>4. Their spiritual, mental, emotional or other needs were not met</li> <li>5. They couldn't find a mate or someone in their social group</li> <li>6. Other reasons? _____</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <b>When is it biblically appropriate to leave a church?</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Abhorrent teachings..... Rm 16:17,18; 2Thes 3:6,14,15; .....2Cor 6:14; Rev 2:14-16</li> <li>2. Differing Philosophies ..... Acts 15:39</li> <li>3. Judgment..... Jer 51:45</li> <li>4. They defame you (hostile environment)..... Prov 14:7; ..... Mt 10:23; Acts 9:24,25; 18:6; 19:9</li> <li>5. Other biblical reasons? _____</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<p><b>CAUTION ON DROPPING OUT OF CHURCH FRIVOLOUSLY.</b></p> <p>Some churches in Revelations 2-3 were noted for having severe problems such as being dead (Sardis); lacking love (Ephesus), holding to false teachings (Pergamum); tolerating immorality (Thyatira), and having wealth but no zeal (Laodicea); – Yet, Christ acknowledged them as His Church, and He applauded the true believers in them for hanging tough and remaining faithful.</p>

Passage	Comments
2Cor 3:4-18	<p><b>We are Nothing – God is Everything</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• vv4-11. Our confidence and adequacy is in God. What does this mean, and what does it look like?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ <b>Consider this.</b> Even when we are intimidated to share our faith God uses our few words and feeble attempts to change lives for all eternity, and this by His design &amp; by His Spirit, not by our words or efforts. Our words and efforts are what God desires to use to grow His kingdom.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• v12. AND, because of our great HOPE (We Will Win and Be Rewarded for Every Effort) we use GREAT boldness of speech. This is great motivation to share the Gospel under adverse conditions</li> <li>• v17. 'Liberty is where the Spirit of the Lord is' – If only we could really grasp this concept. How free and bold we would be with sharing the Gospel</li> <li>• v18. We are being transformed from glory to glory or "from one degree of glory to another" (ESV). <b>IOW, our faith should continually spiral upwards, not down. If our faith is not growing, what is wrong?</b></li> </ul>
4:1-18	<p><b>Paul's Apostolic Ministry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• vv1-2. How do some "adulterate", "mishandle", or "tamper" with God's word to make it ineffective?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ ...and how do we "commend ourselves to every man's conscience"?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• vv3-4. How does Satan blind the minds of the unbelieving? Are they accountable? ..... Luke 8:5-15 REMEMBER: Unbelievers are not faultless!                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ They are willfully ignorant ..... Rm 10:3; 2Pt 3:5</li> <li>♦ They are unwilling to believe ..... John 5:40</li> </ul> </li> <li>• v7. "We have this (Gospel) treasure in earthen vessels so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God" – In other words, no flesh will glory in God's presence..... 1Cor 1:29</li> <li>• v15. God's grace should spread to more &amp; more people. <b>Does this mean churches should grow numerically? What if a church hasn't grown? What should be done?..... Mat 13:31-33</b></li> <li>• vv16-18. Our outer man is decaying, but our inner man is being renewed day by day. <b>Again, our faith should continually spiral upwards</b></li> </ul>

**CONCLUSION / APPLICATIONS**

- God commands us to share the Gospel, He prepares the hearts of those who hear, and He gives us the right motivation to hang tough

**NEXT WEEK: 2Cor 5-7.** We are given the ministry of reconciliation to bring sinners to Christ and to fix broken relationships – this is a priority for all Christians



Martyr Talk