

Student Work

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Embracing the Hard Truth of the Gospel

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Embracing the Hard Truth of the Gospel

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Daily Scripture Texts

[Psalm 119:105-112](#)

[2 Kings 23:1-8, 21-25](#)

[2 Corinthians 4:1-12](#)

The first twelve verses found in 2 Corinthians 4 discuss the high calling and responsibility given to ministers of the word. They are expected to fulfill their office with the highest code of conduct, speaking the full truth of the gospel through the power given them by God. However, while these verses clearly shed light on the expectations of a minister, I also think they point out something important regarding those hearing the word preached. Ministers are required not “to tamper with God’s word”, which means that they need to preach the entire truth of the gospel regardless of how difficult or convicting that truth may be. In turn, those listening need to embrace that truth, even when it is difficult to hear.

If we are going to call our ministers to preach the whole truth, then we need to be willing to hear that truth without defensiveness. Neither task comes naturally to sinful humanity, which is why the only way for a minister to speak the truth and for a hearer of the word to understand and embrace that truth is through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit working in us is the only thing that keeps our minds from being blinded and the gospel from being veiled. When that truth is unveiled, it will not always be easy to hear. In fact, the word of God promises quite the opposite. Yes, the message of the Scriptures is one of hope, grace, mercy and love; however, those things can only be appreciated and understood to their fullest extent when they are seen through the reality of despair, judgment, sin, and depravity. We can never understand grace unless we first come to know the depth of our sin. That is one of the primary truths of the Bible, and it also happens to be one of the convicting truths that we do not like to hear, one which many modern churches tend to shy away from preaching.

One of the other difficult truths of the gospel is that we will face hardship and suffering in this life. We will suffer from the sinful effects of the fall for the entirety of our earthly lives, and each morning we will wake up having to work against the constant pull of our sinful nature. Thankfully, God’s mercies are new every morning (Lamentations 3:22-23). As verses 8 and 9 of 2 Corinthians show, we will encounter great tribulation in this life, but it will not destroy us. Just as we need to see our sin in order to see the wonder of God’s grace, we need to see the pain of this world in order to see the extent of the comfort found in salvation. We can find that comfort in the very words of Jesus when he says in John 16:33, “In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.” Nothing on this earth—no tribulation or trial or pain, or even death—can take away the believer’s place in the hand of the almighty God.

For that reason, every truth found in the Bible should bring joy and comfort to a believer. Yes, the Scriptures will be convicting because God’s people still live in a constant battle with sin, but even in that battle, we find hope in the fact that Christ has “overcome the world.” Since God is on our side, the minister can strive to live up to his calling of speaking the word in truth to all people, and the believing hearers of the word can strive to hear that word with humility. Therefore, when reading the first twelve verses of 2 Corinthians, we must ask ourselves: are we ready to hear the hard truth of the gospel? Have we embraced the trials of this life in light of the comfort found in our salvation? Has God so changed our hearts that we are willing to die to ourselves every day for the sake of Christ? Those are the questions of a believer, and those are the questions that only come to light when we embrace the hard truths of the gospel while finding comfort in the promises of God.