

Series: 2 Corinthians  
Title: If Our Gospel Be Hid  
Text: 2 Corinthians 4: 3-4  
Date: May 28, 2017  
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**2 Corinthians 4: 3: But if our gospel be hid, [veiled] it is [veiled] to them that are lost: 4: In whom the god of this world [age] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.**

Young's Literal Translation—"And if also our good news is veiled, in those perishing it is veiled, in whom the god of this age did blind the minds of the unbelieving, that there doth not shine forth to them the enlightening of the good news of the glory of the Christ, who is the image of God."

Lost and blind sinners like to blame their unbelief on the gospel, on God's word and on the preacher. They raise questions about whether or not the Bible is God's word, about Christ being God in human flesh and putting away sin, about the preacher and God's ability to save through the gospel. Their doubts are endless.

But Paul knew the truth so he declares dogmatically, "None of man's excuses are valid!" If our gospel be veiled, the real problem is that it is veiled to them that are lost, whose minds are blinded. The very gospel that sinners blame is in fact their only hope. Their only hope is that Christ might shine unto them through the very gospel we preach. So I declare the same to you today on the authority of God's holy word.

**Proposition:** If our gospel be veiled, it is veiled to them that are lost, whose minds are blinded, and their only hope is Christ shining unto them through the very gospel we preach.

## **THE PROBLEM IS THEY ARE LOST**

**2 Corinthians 4: 3: If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost...**

If our gospel be veiled, the problem is not the gospel, but the sinner. *"If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost."*

If anyone asks, "Am I lost?" the way to know is very simple. If you do not believe on Christ and are ashamed to publicly confess Christ then you are lost.

To be lost is to be in a dire condition. It is to be out of Christ the way—ruined—destroyed—useless—perishing. Scripture describes those who are lost as *"Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."* (Eph 4: 18) God the Holy Spirit says those who are lost are *"enemies in your mind by wicked works."* (Col 1: 21)

Being lost is a totally helpless state to be in. A man who is lost can do nothing to make himself otherwise. The sinner who is blind can do nothing to make himself see. The way to God is lost. All true understanding of God is lost. To be lost is to be worthy of God's just wrath.

John 3: 18: He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God....36: He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Have you ever been lost while travelling or out in the woods? Our sinful pride will not let us confess we are lost. Sinner, can you confess that you are lost? If God has made you truly confess you are lost, I have good news for you. *“The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”* (Lu 19: 10) But in order for this to be good news, we first have to be made to know and confess that we are truly lost.

## **THE PROBLEM IS BLINDNESS**

**2 Corinthians 4: 4: In whom the god of this [age] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not,...**

To make the lost state even worse, those to whom the gospel is veiled, are also blinded.

Imagine a man blind from birth telling you with sight that he does not believe there is a sun in the sky. You would know his problem is not the sun in the sky. The problem is that he cannot see. Men who are spiritually blind have no business speaking of spiritual things. They are blind.

The problem is not the gospel but the problem is within the sinner. *“In whom the god of this [age] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.”* It means all spiritual understanding was lost in the fall and the sinner is kept totally blinded.

Some think *“god”* should be translated with a capital *“G”*, meaning the true and living God. It is easy to see why. If our text is speaking of the devil, it is the only place he is called *“the god of this world.”* Christ called him *“the prince of this world.”* (Jn 12: 31; 14: 30; 16: 11) But nowhere else is the devil called *“the god of this world.”* The true and living God is indeed the God of this world. In fact, the true and living God is God of the whole universe. Also, when the devil blinds the minds of men it is only by the permission of the true and living God. *“The devil...walketh about, seeking whom he “may” devour.”* (1 Pet 5: 8) God said to the devil, *“Hast thou considered my servant Job?”* (Job 1: 8) In addition, we know that the true and living God does indeed blind the minds of men in reprobation as a consequence of their refusal to believe on Christ. In chapter 3, Paul spoke of the children of Israel being blinded. Concerning the children of Israel, John said,

John 12: 37: But though [Christ] had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: 38: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? 39: Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, 40: He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with *their* eyes, nor understand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. 41: These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him. (Is 6)

In our text, it is difficult to say if Paul is declaring *the consequences* of rejecting the gospel, as in the minds of the children of Israel were blinded in reprobation for not believing the gospel or if he is declaring *the cause* why all sinners do not believe on Christ, in that the devil has blinded their minds. It may be that he has both in mind.

Still, we do know from that as a result of our fall in Adam, scripture speaks of sinners walking according to the prince of the power of the air,

Ephesians 2: 2: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience 3: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

By nature, we all come into this world spiritually blind so that the devil is our shepherd. Unregenerate sinners are slaves to the prince of the power of the air and to our fleshly desires. The good news for God’s

elect is that Christ came to free his sheep from the bondage of the devil. Since Christ's sheep are flesh and blood, the Son of God

Hebrews 2: 14:...took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15: And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

By our Substitute removing our sins and making us the righteousness of God, the accuser of the brethren, the devil, has nothing with which to accuse God's people. Therefore, our resurrected Lord Jesus, as Head of his church, is now sending forth the good news of the gospel to each one he redeemed,

Acts 26:18: To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

What do blind sinners need? You recall in our Lord's parable concerning the woman who lost the coin, what did she do first? *She called for a light.* Blind sinner needs light.

### **THE REMEDY IS THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL**

**2 Corinthians 4: 4: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.**

The gospel we preach is the very light we need. The gospel is glorious light. God the Holy Spirit moved Paul to say, "*How shall not the ministrations of the spirit be rather glorious!*" (2 Cor 3: 8) He calls it "*the glorious gospel of the blessed God.*" (1 Tim 1: 11)

Christ our Redeemer is the Light of the gospel we preach! The Gospel is Christ, whom we preach! The gospel we preach is glorious light because its author and subject is glorious light. The gospel we preach is glorious because the grace and promises it gives are by and in Christ to the praise of the glory of God's grace. The LORD said of Christ,

Isaiah 42:6: I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; 7: To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, *and* them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

Christ is *the image of God.*

John 1: 14: The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

John 14:9...[Christ said] he that hath seen me hath seen the Father;

Hebrews 1: 1: God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2: Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,...

Christ gives his redeemed the light by giving us the gospel in spirit and in truth or as our text says by "*shining unto us.*" In Christ's great High Priestly prayer, he said to the Father,

John 17: 22: And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.

“The glory” Christ gives which makes us one is “*the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, shining unto us.*” It is not enough to merely hear the gospel preached. Christ the LIGHT must shine into our hearts. Why? After Christ told Nicodemus that his people must be born again, our Lord declared why,

John 3: 19: And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20: For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. 21: But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Where the Light does not shine in the heart, men go on hating Christ the Light and hiding in darkness and playing the blame game. But when the Light of Christ shines in the heart then sinners come to Christ the Light. This is certain. It is how Paul could say that those who do not believe are lost and blind. When Christ the Light shines into our hearts then we come to Christ confessing our deeds openly, manifestly as sinful and we confess openly that we are saved by God’s deeds in Christ, not our own.

## **CHANGED INTO THE SAME IMAGE**

**2 Corinthians 4: 4: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.**

**2 Corinthians 3: 16...when [the heart] shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away....18...we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

When we are made to behold Christ, the image of God, with the eye of faith then we are changed into his image by the Spirit of the Lord. It is this new creation performed by the Spirit of the Lord by whom “*ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*” (Eph 4: 24)

This sight of Christ the image of God is transforming within us by the Spirit of the Lord in that we are “*changed into the same image.*”

For example: beholding Christ our Wisdom, we are changed into the same image in that the Spirit of the Lord makes us “*put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.*” (Col 3: 10) For the first time, “*we have the mind of Christ.*” (1 Cor 2: 16) We are given discernment to bow to his word in spirit and in truth.

Beholding Christ our Righteousness who made complete atonement for the sin of his people we are changed into his image in that “*the Spirit within us is life because of righteousness.*” (Rom 8: 10)

Beholding Christ, we are changed into the same image so that we are made to repent and believe on him—“*they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn*” (Zech 12: 10) It is through faith in Christ that God imputes the righteousness of Christ to us because Christ made us the righteousness of God in him.

Beholding Christ our Sanctification, we are changed into the same image in that our hearts are purified after Christ our Holiness through faith in him. (Acts 26: 18; 1 Pet 1: 22)

Beholding Christ who is Love, we are changed into the same image in that we are given a heart of love—“*love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*” (1 Jn 4: 7)

Beholding Christ our Propitiation, who mercifully propitiated God on our behalf, the believer is made merciful in the inward man. Beholding Christ the Meek, we are made meek in the new man. Beholding Christ the Peacemaker, we are changed into peacemakers in the new man. Beholding Christ who is Longsuffering, we are made patient in the inward man.

And Christ continues this work in the believer through the same gospel by the Light of Christ shining into our hearts—“*all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.*” (Eph 5: 13-14)

Right now, we “*see through a glass darkly*” and “*know in part*” but when at last we behold Christ face-to-face we will know him even as we are known and then “*when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*” (1 Jn 3: 2)

Believer, always remember, when we are rebuked by a gospel message, it is Christ speaking. True sanctification is by the power of the Holy Spirit shining into our hearts, so that through the gospel we are made to behold Christ!

Sinner, can you confess you are blind and need Christ? The proud Pharisee's would not,

Joh 9:39: And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind...41: Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

The point is, Christ came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. A real sinner is one made to confess he is lost and blind. Is that you, sinner? Christ is the Light! Believe on him!

John 8:12: Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Christ is All! We need Life, Christ is All! We need Righteousness, Christ is All! We need Holiness, Christ is All! We need Redemption, Christ is All! We need Forgiveness, Christ is All! We need acceptance with God, Christ is All!

Sinner, nothing else is important but knowing Christ and being found in him, apart from any works of righteousness of your own. Believers never ceasing needing Christ to shine into our hearts! Oh, may Christ shine into our hearts now and make us confess he is our All and in all!

**Amen!**