

## 2 Corinthians

**“Winning Through Weakness”**

**III. Main Teaching: 1:15-13:10**

**B. 2:12-6:18 Dying To Live**

**2 Corinth. 4:3-6**

**“Was blind but now I see”**

**I. Intro.**

**II. Vs. 3-4 Behind the curtain**

**III. Vs. 5-6 The great secret**

**I. Intro.**

Ever wonder why not everyone becomes a follower of Jesus? I mean think about it:

Receiving Jesus is a far better deal than winning the lottery, going on a dream vacation or even finding the love of your life. He is the friend that sticks closer than a brother, a Warrior King that guarantees the victory, the Groom that will always love you and will never leave you or forsake you. Why even at death He will usher you into the house that He has been preparing just for you. Not to mention the fact that He alone has wiped out our debt of sin past, present and future and has even made it possible for us not to live under the power of sin. With those truths it is just illogical not to receive Jesus, yet there are far more people who don't accept Him than those that do. As Jesus Himself predicted in Matthew 7:13 when He said, *“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.”* The Bible speaks of two reasons why a person who has heard the gospel doesn't receive Jesus as their Lord:

1. In John 3:19 Jesus said that He *“the light”* had come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. Simply put the number one

reason a person rejects Jesus is not a lack of evidence but they don't want to stop living in sin.

2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> reason is what Paul touches on in this passage as well as 2 Tim. 2:24-26. In that passage Paul writes to Timothy of the qualifications of leadership in the local Church saying that, *“the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient.”* Then in verse 25 Paul writes that the reason for these qualifications are so that, *“In meekness”* they will be able to *“instruct **those that oppose themselves**”*. Clearly Paul viewed the rejection of Jesus as an *“**opposition against one's own self**”*. Paul goes on to say that being *“apt to teach”* might grant those who are in *“**opposition against one's own self**”* the opportunity that *“God might give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth”* and in so doing that they *“may **recover themselves out of the snare of the devil**, who are taken captive by him at his will.”* Here in 2 Cor. 4:4 Paul writes of that *“**snare**”* saying in the NLT that *“**Satan, the god of this evil world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe, so they are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News that is shining upon them.**”*

The fact remains that in spite of the power of the gospel some remain deaf to its appeal and blind to its glory. The question is what can we the Church do about that problem?

## **II. Vs. 3-4 Behind the curtain**

Vs. 3-4 Paul concedes this accusation against him as they said that he taught things that were hard to understand and didn't produce the numbers as others did. His argument is that the lack of reception had nothing to do the message or the messenger but rather the hearers. There was nothing wrong with the gospel and Paul had not tried to *“water it*

down” to make it palatable. The problem was those who didn’t receive did so because there was a veil in their minds and hearts that caused blindness to it. Calvin put it this way, *“The blindness of unbelievers doesn’t detract from the truth of the gospel any more than the sun is less real to a person who is blind and cannot detect its light.”*

Some of the commentators on this passage say interpret this saying that Paul is answering the question, *“Why are people perishing?”* and that his answer was, *“Because they are blinded by the devil.”* They then say that Paul asks and answers, *“Why are they blinded by the devil?”* and his answer is, *“Because they won't believe.”* **If it is interpreted that way then this means:** *“That the basic reason for people being lost is because they refuse to believe, and that is what gives the devil an **opportunity** to blind them.”* But that is **not what Paul says**. It is the other way around: *People are perishing because they do not believe; and they do not believe because they **are blinded by the devil***. The god of this age is behind the scenes of world events and has brainwashed them. Paul says that the devil's tool is the veil. He has described that **“veil as the delusion that we are adequate to handle life by ourselves, that independent sense of pride that says, ‘I don't need any help; I can handle it by myself; I need no religious crutch; I don't need a savior.’”** In the words of William Henley's famous poem, *Invictus*: *“It matters not how strait the gate, how charged with punishment the scroll, **I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul.**”* The devil's purpose is to keep people from seeing that Jesus Christ is the answer. One of the great proofs of the Bible is that it confirms that people everywhere, in any generation, in any culture or background, long to be like God. They want to be in charge; they want to run things; they want to make final decisions about what happens to them; they want to control others and the events of their lives and

they are frustrated if they cannot. They long to be like God. It may surprise you that this was the intent of God from the very beginning that we on this earth we would manifest His qualities and His character. He has implanted that in the hearts of people everywhere. **The problem lies in assuming that such God like behavior is self serving, arrogant and that in this prideful arrogance that we can do this by ourselves, by our own efforts, by our own power, by our own abilities.** *The great secret the devil seeks to hide is that Jesus Christ is the secret.* Jesus said it in John 14:6, *“I am the way, the truth and the life. No one can come to the Father but by me.”*

### III. Vs. 5-6 The great secret

Vs. 5 So what hope is there that anybody who has been blinded by the devil will ever believe the good news? People cannot remove the veil themselves only Christ can take it away. So how then can people be saved? Paul says, *“That is where preaching comes in. That is why I have been sent.”* In Romans 10:17 Paul wrote that *“faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* **But the question is: What can we do about this condition that those who are blinded seem to be deaf as well?** In Matthew 12:29 Jesus said, *“How can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.”* A few chapters later Jesus said in 16:19 speaking to His Church saying **“I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”** So here is what the scriptures say we must do with regards to people’s blindness and spiritual captivity: **We need to go to God in prayer asking that God bind the “strong man satan” who has blinded the unbelieving’s eyes by veiling Jesus to them so that they will stay in captivity. We are to**

**be praying that satan's work will be bound and God's work will be released which will enable those blind to see.** *I'm afraid that the Church has abandoned the spirit led and empowered necessity of prayer as we continue to preserver for those who are under the snares of satan.* Paul says, *"It's for this reason we don't come preaching ourselves. If you want to know where we fit in, we are your servants for Jesus' sake."*

Paul didn't preach **personalities, programs, principals or procedures**; NO he preached a **Person** who is **Jesus Christ as Lord**! He is **NOT** going to be Lord some day when he returns, He is Lord NOW! When he rose from the dead He said in Matt 18:18 to His disciples, ***"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth"***. He is in control; He is in charge right now; all the events that occur in the world today occur because He has permitted them or has brought them into being. A lot of people misinterpret salvation as, ***"If you receive Jesus as your Savior, you will be saved."*** But you won't find that verse in the Bible; **He must be Lord of your life in order for you to be saved**. Friend, Jesus is Lord whether you believe it or not, whether you receive Him as such or not. Your unbelief won't change that but it will change whether or not you are saved. **Lord is who He is; saving is what He does.**

Could it be in today's world that in part people don't see Jesus because all they hear is Jesus as "***Savior***" not "***Jesus Christ as the Lord***" who saves? People will receive a "***savior***" who will deliver them from messes, self made or otherwise, but they aren't interested in a Lord who is over their lives! **There are a great many who remain blinded because they only want a savior so that they can go back to the mess they have made out of their lives. *They aren't wanting a way OUT they are looking for away to REMAIN without the natural consequences of their choices!***

Vs. 6 Paul knew what it was to be blinded and to see the light as that had been his experience as told by Luke in Acts 26:13. It is God's work to remove the veil as it was His work to bring light into darkness at creation. The God of creation called light out of darkness can alone bring light to blindness! *No one is beyond His love, no one has outran His grace and no one is so blind that He cannot bring them into light!* Paul goes on to say that the moment a person sees that Jesus is Lord, God's creative power begins to operate in his life and light comes into their darkness and the veil is removed. He takes us back to creation, when the whole world lay in darkness. Nobody could do anything about it except God, who said in Genesis 1:3b, "*Let there be light,*" and suddenly, out of the darkness, light sprang up in obedience to the creative word of the living God. Where do you find the light of the glory of God? In the face of Jesus Christ. And where do you find the face of Jesus? The bible is all about Jesus:

- Old Testament is full of anticipations of his character and his being
- The Gospels give you the record of his amazing life on earth
- The Epistles explain the implications of that life, his death and resurrection, and his working for us

As you read through the Bible the Spirit of God interprets them, and the "*face of Christ*" comes clearer and clearer and light comes into a darkened heart.