

SERMON THOUGHTS ABRIDGED II CORINTHIANS 4:1-10
GLORY! AND NO GLORY

(GLORY):

Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. 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.

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.

For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. 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.

(NO GLORY):

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. 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—always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

A little boy uniquely identifies every vehicle he sees “truck” or “not a truck.”
Regarding the labors of St. Luke's pastor, or of any pastor, or of any Christian, this text speaks of “Glory” and “No Glory.”

The Apostle Paul was given by God the ministry of the New Covenant. The Old Covenant from Mt. Sinai with its heavy load of demands brought only death. The New Covenant with its message of Christ the crucified and risen Savior brings life!

The Apostle Paul was a “minister”---that is, a “servant”---of the great message of the New Covenant.

So is your pastor today. He doesn't “run” the congregation; he “serves” it.
Paul himself had been shown great mercy by the Lord; he had been a persecutor of Christians!
Therefore Paul did not “lose heart” in his labors; he was thankful for the mercy shown him.
The same is true for each of us in our Christian lives, pastor and church member alike.

Paul did not use trickery to make disciples for Christ.

He presented God's Truth to each man's conscience—sin and forgiveness of sins in Christ.

Each must answer to God for himself.

This is our pattern also. We do not use gimmicks, entertainment, smooth talk, lofty arguments, etc., to “make” the church grow.

Where there is NO success, when someone does not believe the Gospel, the fault does not lie with the Gospel. Satan has blinded the mind. It is Satan's goal to keep every soul in darkness, hidden from the Glorious Light of Forgiveness and Life in Christ.

Christ is the image of God. When we “see” Christ, then we truly “see” God and His glory.

The messenger of this Good News—whether St. Luke's pastor or you--does not preach or proclaim self.

The messenger proclaims: “Christ,” “Jesus,” “the Lord.”

“Christ”—or Messiah—the one specially designated by God

- 1) to speak God's message to us (the prophet)
- 2) to offer the sacrifice to appease for our sins (the priest)
- 3) to lead us as God's children (the king).

“Jesus”—the Savior, the Rescuer, in whom we are safe and sound forever

“Lord”—the master under whom we all live.

The messenger is a bondservant to the hearer—committed to proclaiming Christ.
The messenger proclaims the brightness and Glory of God--the God who said “Let there be Light!”
He shines into the darkness of the human heart to give Light and Life through forgiveness in Christ the
crucified and risen Savior.
Numbers 6:24. “The LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you!”
SUCH GLORY!

For the messenger, however, it is not about self-glory.
The messenger is just an “earthen vessel,” a jar of clay, a clay pot—weak, common, a dime a dozen.
Perhaps we could say, “Not a stainless steel container, but a thin plastic ice cream pail—flimsy, a dime a
dozen.
NO GLORY for the messenger, but GLORY for God.

In fact, the messenger is often thwarted by Satan, by the unbelieving world, by the old sinful nature of church
members and of self alike! in order to quit, to give up, to stop proclaiming the light and glory of Christ.
The messenger, whether it is the pastor or you the member, is often “hard pressed, perplexed, persecuted,
struck down” in this life.
Yet by the love and power of God, the message goes on and goes out!
By God’s hand the messenger is “not crushed, not in despair, not forsaken, not destroyed!”
The glorious Lord keeps inglorious sinners and frail messengers, going forward.
He leads us to see the death and the failure that are ours for our sins, yet at the same time the death and
failure that Christ bore for us at Calvary which is our victory and life!
Through such losers as us, victory and life in Jesus are loudly proclaimed to others!
Thus, by God’s grace, sinners, who have no glory, are glorious in Christ!
We and others who have no Glory, are given greatest Glory in the Savior from sin and death!

This is the labor of the Christian pastor and Christian member.
Just like Truck and Not a Truck, for us it is Glory and No Glory--Glory to God in Christ and No Glory for
Us—which in the end becomes the gift of forgiveness and eternal life in Christ! Such GLORY!

So be it!

Pastor R. Kanzenbach --