

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 242 – August 30th – 2 Corinthians 4:1-15

Works frequently referenced in these notes on 2 Corinthians

Carson, Donald A	<i>From Triumphalism to Maturity: A new exposition of 2 Corinthians 10-13</i> , Leicester, IVP, 1986
Kruse, Colin	<i>2 Corinthians</i> (Tyndale Commentary), London, IVP, 1987
Martin, Ralph P	<i>2 Corinthians</i> (Word Biblical Commentary), Waco Texas, Word Books, 1986
Tasker, RVG	<i>2 Corinthians</i> (Tyndale Commentary), London, Tyndale Press, 1958

Verses 1-6

4:1-6 echoes themes of 2:14-17 as well as Ch 3. "Paul is building up his earlier debate with his adversaries in chap. 3, and responding to another line of criticism brought against his Gospel and his ministry. We may infer that the line of this critique ran: Paul has every reason to be discouraged since his person is marked by weakness and his message is ineffectual (see on 10:10). It is as though his hearers were groping in darkness, and his preaching cannot help them because it lacks the demonstrable signs of power to convince them of its authenticity. Paul tackles these issues head-on in 4:1-6; and so he closes his elaborate discussion opened in 2:14." Martin

Verse 1

Διὰ τοῦτο, ἔχοντες τὴν διακονίαν ταύτην καθὼς ἠλεήθημεν, οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν,

δια τουτο looks forward to what follows.

διακονια, ας f ministry, service
 ἐλεαω and ἐλεεω be merciful, show kindness; pass. receive mercy
 ἐγκακεω become discouraged, tire of

Barett suggests that ἐγκακεω here means 'to neglect one's duty.'

A few inferior texts, followed by TR, read ἐκκακουμεν 'we grow weary'.

Paul's preaching was fired by his own experience of receiving mercy from God. The ministry he had received was to declare that which had given him life.

Verse 2

ἀλλὰ ἀπειπάμεθα τὰ κρυπτά τῆς αἰσχύνης, μὴ περιπατοῦντες ἐν πανουργίᾳ μηδὲ δολοῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ τῇ φανερώσει τῆς ἀληθείας συνιστάνοντες ἑαυτοὺς πρὸς πᾶσαν συνείδησιν ἀνθρώπων ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ.

ἀπειπάμεθα Verb, aor midd indic, 1 pl
 ἀπειπαμην (aor only) renounce

Hering says this is a technical term denoting abandonment of a belief or practice.

κρυπτος, η, ον hidden, secret

Cf. Phil 3:9.

αἰσχυνη, ης f shame, shameful deed

'hidden things of shame' = shameful underhand practices.

περιπατεω walk, walk about, live

πανουργια, ας f trickery, deceit, craftiness

Literally 'ready to do anything,' i.e., will stop at nothing.

μηδε nor, and not, not even

δολωω distort, falsify

Compare 2:17. Either Paul had been accused of perverting the word of God (perhaps tampering with God's message by not requiring Gentile converts to be circumcised, or generally perverting the OT), or he is implying that the false teachers are perverting the word of God. An element of both may be present.

φανερωσις, εως f bringing to light, disclosure

συνιστημι and συνιστανω trans recommend, commend

Paul will not commend himself. The only commendation is the message he preached; it was this that validated his ministry.

συνειδησις, εως f conscience, awareness
 ἐνώπιον before, in the presence of

Verse 3

εἰ δὲ καὶ ἔστιν κεκαλυμμένον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον
ἡμῶν, ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις ἔστιν
κεκαλυμμένον,

The underlying charge would seem to be that Paul's message is obscure, or, as Martin suggests, "Paul had offered an interpretation of the Mosaic veil that his enemies found fault with. The latter view explains the εἰ δε και, 'yet even if,' and the emphasis placed on ἔστιν, 'is,' in the sentence. It is freely conceded that the Gospel *is* veiled – but only to those who insist on having it so by clinging to an understanding of the veil that keeps it in place, and failing to appreciate that the covering is done away with in Christ. They are, alas, 'those on the way to perdition' (for the same term used of Paul's enemies, see 2:15; 1 Cor 1:18; Phil 1:28; 3:19; cf. 2 Thess 2:10)." This would mean that the second half of the verse would refer to Paul's adversaries rather than those who have failed to believe the message.

κεκαλυμμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n
nom/acc s καλυπτω cover, hide
εὐαγγέλιον, ου n good news, gospel
ἀπολλυμι midd be lost, perish, die

If this refers to those who have failed to believe Paul's preaching it implies that the reason for unbelief lies not in the obscurity of the message but in a Satan induced blindness that afflicts mankind. The wonder is not that many do not believe but that any should see the truth. Faith requires a divine miracle.

Verse 4

ἐν οἷς ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου ἐτύφλωσεν τὰ
νοήματα τῶν ἀπίστων εἰς τὸ μὴ ἀγᾶσαι τὸν
φωτισμὸν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τῆς δόξης τοῦ
Χριστοῦ, ὃς ἔστιν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ.

ἐν οἷς Hering translates 'In such folk it can be
seen that...'

αἰων, αἰωνος m age, world order

'god of this world' is most likely a reference to Satan (cf. 11:13-15; 1 Cor 2:8), although one or two commentators interpret it as a reference to God.

τυφλω blind, make blind
νοημα, τος n mind, thought
ἀπιστος, ον unfaithful, unbelieving

The fault lies also with the unbeliever for it is *their* lack of faith.

ἀγαζω see, perceive clearly
φωτισμος, ου m light, illumination,
revelation

The gospel concerns the glory of God revealed in Christ.

εικων, ονος f likeness, image

As image of God Jesus both reveals God and is also the perfect man – the second or last Adam cf. Phil 2:6-11; Col 1:15-20 also Jn 1:1,18; Heb 1:3.

Verse 5

οὐ γὰρ ἑαυτοὺς κηρύσσομεν ἀλλὰ Χριστὸν
Ἰησοῦν κύριον, ἑαυτοὺς δὲ δούλους ὑμῶν διὰ
Ἰησοῦν.

Cranfield comments, "Of all the various temptations which beset the Christian minister, one of the chief and deadliest is the temptation to preach himself."

κηρυσσω preach, proclaim

Cf. Gal 1:16; 1 Cor 1:23; Phil 1:15-18, also Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 12:3. Barrett says, "It would be hard to describe the Christian ministry more comprehensively in so few words."

Verse 6

ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ὁ εἰπὼν Ἐκ σκοτῶν φῶς λάμψει,
ὃς ἔλαμψεν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν πρὸς
φωτισμὸν τῆς γνώσεως τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν
προσώπῳ Χριστοῦ.

εἰπων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s λεγω
σκοτος, ους n darkness, evil
φως, φωτος n light
λαμπω shine, give light
γνωσις, εως f knowledge, understanding
προσωπον, ου n face, appearance, person

New creation is as much a work of God's sovereign power as the first creation. On this verse, compare the prophecy in Is 9:2. Martin suggests that this (rather than Gen 1) may be the primary reference of Paul's words, perhaps also with a reference to the role of the servant in Is 49:6; cf. 42:6,16; 60:1-2 who is said to be a 'light to the world.'

The shorter reading Χριστου is most likely to be original but because of the weight of evidence for the inclusion of Ἰησου it has been included in the UBS text but in square brackets.

Verses 7-15

Note the frequent use of the name 'Jesus' in these verses. Paul may be alluding to Jesus as an example of one who seemed humanly weak but was filled with (and raised by) the power of God.

Verse 7

Ἔχομεν δὲ τὸν θησαυρὸν τοῦτον ἐν
ὀστρακίνοις σκεύεσιν, ἵνα ἡ ὑπερβολὴ τῆς
δυνάμεως ἧ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ μὴ ἐξ ἡμῶν.

θησαυρος, ου m treasure store

ὄστρακινος, η, ον made of baked clay
σκευος, ους n object, thing, vessel

The plural 'vessels' indicates that Paul is speaking not of himself alone but of his companions – and of all messengers of the gospel. The contrast is being drawn between the treasure of the content and the 'cheapness' of those who carry it. Manson suggests the picture is of a clay lamp that could be bought in the market at Corinth. It is cheap and fragile but bears a light. Collange suggests the picture is one of dignity: Paul speaks of himself as a chosen vessel (cf. Acts 9:15) moulded in the hands of the potter.

ὑπερβολη, ης f surpassing, beyond
measure

ἦ Verb, pres subj, 3s ειμι

Verse 8

ἐν παντὶ θλιβόμενοι ἀλλ' οὐ στενοχωρούμενοι,
ἀπορούμενοι ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐξαπορούμενοι,

The four contrasts of this and the following verse "reflect the vulnerability of Paul and his co-workers on the one hand and the power of God which sustains them on the other." Cf. 13:4

θλιβω press hard; pass experience
difficulty/trouble

"The verb recalls the bitter experience of the Psalmists (3:2, LXX; 12:5; 22:5; 34:19) who endured hardship out of loyalty to Yahweh and his cause... The root θλιβω/θλιψις also looks back to 1:3-11 and ahead to 7:5 where the 'affliction' is clearly precipitated by the crisis at Corinth." Martin

στενοχωρεομαι be held in check, be
limited, be crushed (with difficulties)

Cf. 6:12. Hering translates, "we are hemmed in on every side yet not crushed."

ἀπορευω act & midd be at a loss, be
disturbed

ἐξαπορευομαι despair

Verse 9

διωκόμενοι ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐγκαταλείπόμενοι,
καταβαλλόμενοι ἀλλ' οὐκ ἀπολλύμενοι,

διωκω persecute, pursue, harrass

ἐγκαταλειπω forsake, abandon

καταβαλλω knock down

ἀπολλυμι destroy, kill, lose; midd be lost,
perish

Cf. 4:3. "Paul seems to be claiming here that while his opponents re powerful – they can knock him down – they are not able to subvert his apostleship or destroy his work." Martin

Verse 10

πάντοτε τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ σώματι
περιφέροντες, ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῷ
σώματι ἡμῶν φανερωθῇ.

Paul speaks here of close union with the
suffering of Jesus.

παντοτε always

νεκρωσις, εως f death

Cf. 4:19. νεκρωσις, in contrast with θανατος, emphasises process, 'dying.' "The sufferings which come upon him daily in his work for Jesus are gradually killing him." Denny "Paul's intimate association of his apostleship with Jesus' death is a major theme in his ministerial life, as A. Schlatter ... puts it: 'As Jesus' herald, he told the story of the passion; he not only told it, but he experienced it too; cf. Phil 3:10.'" Martin

σωμα, τος n body

περιφερω carry about, bring

ζωη, ης f life

φανερωθῇ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s φανερωω
make known, reveal, make evident

"We know that a major debating point at Corinth was precisely the issue: Where is the real φανερωσις, the true manifestation, of divine strength (see on 4:2; 5:10,11)? Paul's opponents appealed to their charismatic presence and signs (12:12). Paul himself saw the power of God in his weakness (12:1-10 ...) because there he identified with him who was 'crucified in weakness' (13:3). And in particular Paul saw his own office as 'minister of the new covenant' (3:6), which is modelled on the righteous sufferer in Israel, yet christianised by Paul's awareness of living in the new age with its christological centre." Martin

"The apostle shares in the death of Christ through his own sufferings which kill the old Adam so that the new Adam may emerge."

Hering

Verse 11

ἀεὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες εἰς θάνατον
παραδιδόμεθα διὰ Ἰησοῦν, ἵνα καὶ ἡ ζωὴ τοῦ
Ἰησοῦ φανερωθῇ ἐν τῇ θνητῇ σαρκὶ ἡμῶν.

ἀει always, constantly

Some few MSS, including p⁴⁶, read εἰ 'for if we as living persons are being handed over ...'

ζωω live, be alive

θανατος, ου m death

παραδιδωμι hand or give over, deliver up

Used regularly of Jesus' death.

θνητος, η, ον mortal

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body,
human nature

"Thus the one who proclaims the crucified and risen Lord finds that what is proclaimed in his message is also exemplified in his life. On the one hand he is daily subject to forces which lead to death, but on the other he is continually upheld, caused to triumph, and made to be more than a conqueror by the experience of the risen life of Jesus in his mortal body (cf Rom 8:35-39; 2 Cor 1:8-10; 2:14; Phil 3:10; 4:12-13)." Kruse

Verse 12

ὥστε ὁ θάνατος ἐν ἡμῖν ἐνεργεῖται, ἢ δὲ ζωὴ ἐν ὑμῖν.

ὥστε so that, with the result that
ἐνεργεω work, be at work (in)

Paul's ministry involves him and his companions in the threat of death in order that they might preach the gospel which brings life to others, cf. Col 1:24.

Verse 13

Ἔχοντες δὲ τὸ αὐτὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως, κατὰ τὸ γεγραμμένον· Ἐπίστευσα, διὸ ἐλάλησα, καὶ ἡμεῖς πιστεύομεν, διὸ καὶ λαλοῦμεν,

Paul is answering an implied question, "Why then be an apostle?"

γεγραμμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n
nom/acc s γραφω

πιστεω believe, have faith, have
confidence in

διο therefore, for this reason

λαλεω speak, talk

The quotation is from Ps 116:10. Ps 116 speaks of the psalmist's confidence in the face of trouble (crushing). The psalmist knows that he will walk with the Lord in the land of the living. Paul has the same Spirit-given confidence that God will uphold him in his trials. In particular, Paul is confident that God will raise him up with Christ (v.14) and therefore that he also will walk with the Lord in the land of the living.

Verse 14

εἰδότες ὅτι ὁ ἐγείρας τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ ἡμᾶς σὺν Ἰησοῦ ἐγερεῖ καὶ παραστήσει σὺν ὑμῖν.

εἰδότες Verb, perf act ptc, m nom pl οἶδα
know, understand

ἐγειρω raise

ἐγερεῖ Verb, fut act indic, 3 s ἐγειρω

Martin favours the shorter reading τὸν Ἰησοῦν which has significant support (p⁴⁶ B 33 etc.).

παραστήσει Verb, fut act indic, 3 s

παριστημι and παριστανω present,

bring into one's presence, stand before

Verse 15

τὰ γὰρ πάντα δι' ὑμᾶς, ἵνα ἡ χάρις
πλεονάσασα διὰ τῶν πλειόνων τὴν
εὐχαριστίαν περισσεύσῃ εἰς τὴν δόξαν τοῦ
θεοῦ.

πλεοναζω increase, grow

πλειων, πλειον more, most, many

"It is possible ... that Paul has this section of the Corinthian church in his sights, and is expressing thankfulness that 'a majority of the church at Corinth had grasped their dependence on the grace of God' (Barrett). The upshot is that they, since they are thought of as having come over to Paul's position regarding the recent disaffection, would have a more sober opinion of themselves as they reflect on the way these restored relations are due to divine grace, and should express their thankful hearts of praise to God. This line of interpretation is eminently reasonable. But we have opted for the former view – that Paul is calling the readers to celebrate the grace that extends to more and more unbelieving persons – on the ground that he is still in combative mood. He is disavowing an interest in increasing his own apostolic stature by seeing more people becoming believers; this is a counterblast to his opponents who made such a claim. He is anxious to see the grace of God in wider display – but only so that gratitude may *abound to God's glory*, not his own." Martin

εὐχαριστια, ας f thanksgiving

περισσεω intrans. increase, abound

"Is the verb περισσευση 'overflow,' 'abound,' transitive, requiring an object, or intransitive with no object? In the latter case, it may have a causative sense, as in Barrett's rendering, 'the grace ... may cause gratitude to abound to the glory of God,' which we have followed. This is preferable to seeing περισσευειν as finding its direct object in εὐχαριστιαν, so RSV, 'it may increase thanksgiving.'" Martin