

Mission Possible 2 Corinthians 4

Introduction:

1. There is quite a mission that was imparted from Christ to the apostle Paul, and now to us. Acts 26:17-18
2. But the mission is not impossible - not when you break it down to each local church doing their part, and then break it down even further to each local church member doing his or her part.
3. The mission (if it is to be accomplished) must be a team effort. Did you know that Paul (writing to the churches) uses the word “*together*” 37 times?
 - He uses phrases like “*strive together in prayers,*” “*perfectly joined together in the same mind,*” “*laborers together with God,*” “*workers together,*” “*knit together in love,*” “*caught up together,*” “*live together with him [Christ],*” and “*comfort yourselves together.*”
4. In Philippians 1:27, Paul commands the church to strive together for the faith of the gospel. In Philippians 4:3, he uses the same Greek word, and it is translated “*labored with me in the gospel,*” referring to some ladies who had helped with the mission.
 - The Greek word used in these verses literally means “to wrestle in company with; to seek jointly.” The word is “soon-ath-leh-o.” It comes from two Greek words – “soon” (union with; together), “athleho” (to contend in competitive games). We get our word “athlete.”
 - So when you put these two words together, you basically get “together compete.” We have a common word in our English language that expresses this thought – teamwork!
5. Paul teaches the church that if the gospel is to get out to a lost world, it will take teamwork. If the mission is to be accomplished, it will take teamwork.
6. This is why every believer must be actively engaged in missions outreach. Why is this?

First, because we have a fierce opponent

1. We must wrestle together and exercise teamwork because there is an opposing team! The opposing team is led by an individual the Bible identifies as “*the god of this world.*”
 - It is a little “g” in “*god,*” but what a description of Satan! He is indeed god of all that believe not. They are held captive by him; he is their father, and the lusts of their father they will do.
2. In verse 3, “*lost*” means “to destroy fully; to perish; to lose.”
 - Jesus told Peter that Satan desired to have him, “*that he may sift you as wheat.*” Luke 22:31
 - Peter later would write to believers that Satan was their adversary, and that, as a roaring lion, he is walking about, seeking to destroy and devour people.

3. Satan knows that in order to accomplish his goals and desires he must blind people from the soul-saving message of Jesus Christ. People are drowning in sin and bondage, and Satan does not want people to know that there is a lifeline. vs. 4
4. As believers, we **have** the lifeline. We have Jesus Christ. Verse 7 declares, “*We have this treasure [Jesus Christ]...*”
5. He can change anybody’s life, but the lost must know about Him and hear about Him.
6. Think about this. If Satan knows that he must blind people from the light and truth of Christ, and if Satan knows that we have the light and knowledge of Christ, what do you think his strategy would be for us?
7. Satan’s strategy would be to get us preoccupied with other things so as to forget our primary mission, which is to shine the light of the gospel of Christ to others.
 - **Example:** In 2 Corinthians 2:10-11, the Corinthians were caught up in an in-house issue of a wayward church member, and were struggling with bitterness and unforgiveness toward him.
 - Notice that all of this would cause Satan to get an advantage on them. Then Paul says, “*...for we are not ignorant of his devices.*”
8. Satan wants to sidetrack Christians and local churches from their primary mission. What is our primary mission? What is the heartbeat of our leader?
1 Timothy 1:15, 2:4
 - God’s passion is to see the light of Christ shine forth that the lost might be saved.

Second, because Christ has changed our lives

1. Jesus Christ is the image of God (vs. 4). If you want to see the Father, look at Jesus Christ! He perfectly reveals the Father in human, bodily form. As 1 Timothy 3:16 declares, “*God was manifest in the flesh...*”
2. There was a day and time in history in which God commanded the light to shine out of darkness (vs. 6). It happened in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago. John 1:1-5
3. But notice what Paul tells these believers in verse 6. He says that the light of Christ “*...hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God...*”
4. The light, the glory, and the knowledge of God have all been imparted to us as believers. How did God communicate these blessings to us? In the face (or person) of Jesus Christ.
5. If you are saved, you can emphatically say that you have this treasure within you (vs. 7). Because you have Christ, you have light, spiritual knowledge, and the very glory of God dwelling within you in your earthen vessel (your body).
 - Our hearts are no longer blinded by the god of this world. We have been set free and now enjoy all spiritual blessings in Christ. Christ has changed our family, our position, our eternal destiny, and the very core of our soul and spirit.
6. If we know the Fountain to receive all these wonderful blessings, don’t you think we have a spiritual and moral obligation to share that knowledge with others? vs. 13

- If we know the cure for blinded eyes, if we know the fountain for thirsty souls, if we know the way of escape from Satan's snare, we have a moral obligation to let others know. Romans 1:14-16
7. Has Christ changed your life? What are you doing to help get the message of Christ out to the lost? Are you engaged in missions outreach?

In Conclusion:

1. Our life on earth is brief. I'm fearful that so many times our enemy gets us distracted with things that really don't matter in light of eternity.
2. The Bible describes our life here on earth as a moment (vs. 17). Our life on earth is momentary, but our life in heaven will be eternal. vs. 18
3. If this is true, then doesn't it make sense that our time, our energy, our monies, etc., should be primarily spent in things that will be eternally worthwhile?