

Brynmawr Family Church Sermon

3 Reasons to be Thankful- 2Corinthians 4 & 5
Stuart Wheatman, Sunday 29th March 2009

Read 2Cor 4:1 – 5:8

Introduction

Three reasons to be thankful. Paul is defending his preaching of the gospel to the Corinthians. He answers some offensively put questions such as:

- Why he didn't come to them with a letter of recommendation.
- His real motive for preaching the gospel (some thought it was for money).
- Why the new covenant was better than the old as the old seemed to have a lot of glory when it was given.
- Why so many respectable Jews had not responded if it was such good news
- If the message was such good news why were so many suffering and even dying as a result of it?

Paul answers each of these in turn and in so doing brings out just how blessed we really are despite how things may sometimes seem on the surface. We will look at 3 areas he highlights, and use them as a basis for thankfulness.

We can be thankful for:

1. Revelation. For God's mercy to us- giving us His revelation -2Cor 4:1-6

- God's mercy to us- revelation is God's doing not ours- v5,6- 'not preach ourselves...for it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness'- just as we do not have the ability in ourselves to make the sun rise (although Joshua spoke with faith & made it stand still) so we cannot bring ourselves revelation. Often a scholar cannot get what a child receives easily- the simplicity of the gospel. Jesus rejoiced revelation given to the simple. Paul-foolish to shame wise-1Cor 1:27. Application=humility.
- Creation -light shone before the sun created- it was the light of Jesus' face shining out- later delegated to the sun. The shekinah, the glory, kabod 'weight' (worth, splendour) of God- see Mt transfiguration, shepherds in field during nativity, the star leading to the birthplace of Jesus, tongues of fire at Pentecost, fire & cloud of God in OT.
- This same light shone into Paul's life on the Damascus road & blinded him
- The one who had the Damascus road experience (Acts 9:3) writes that if we are Christians this same light has shone into our lives (God's 'super trooper' spotlight) to enable us to understand the gospel, whether we are aware of it or not. To reveal is to bring to light. It is as much a miracle as creation.
- Application=thankfulness. Pray for others to have revelation of God's love (if the 'chief of sinners' can be saved, anyone can).

2. Sanctification. For His treasure in us, being renewed each day- 2Cor 4:7-16

- IVP background commentary- 'Earthen or clay jars as opposed to bronze ones were readily discarded because clay was always available, such containers were cheap and disposable if they were broken or incurred ceremonial impurity- an odd container for a rich treasure'
- Paul isn't downgrading our bodies- they are temples of the Holy Spirit and as such should be cared for- 1Cor 3:16-17, 1Cor 6:13-20. However, our present bodies are getting older and will one day die. We get tired and sick, we suffer hardships in this body and persecution.

- But we are more than our physical bodies (e.g. when you lay out a corpse- becomes obvious there is no one inside). The real us is inside and has been made spiritually alive by God and reflects His glory increasingly -we are becoming more like Him (see 2Cor 3:18) and being renewed day by day (2Cor 4:16).
- Moses had a glory which faded with time (see Ex 34:29-35, 2Cor 3:13), but the glory inside the Christian increases with time- we are mirrors reflecting His glory.
- Age becomes irrelevant in the kingdom. There is a spiritual giant inside you- you look a lot like Jesus on the inside, a spiritual black-belt.
- Applic- judge no one according to the outward appearance- 2Cor 5:16-17. Do not put emphasis on feelings. Don't give up- God hasn't finished with you yet. Often we are the last to realise we have changed (just as a child growing up looks so much bigger to relatives not seen in a while). Believe & give thanks that you have changed (justification) and you are changing (sanctification). Often toughest times physically are the greatest times of spiritual growth.

3. Glorification. For a coming glory & a permanent house- 2Cor 4:16-5:8

- v17- The scales are heavily balanced in our favour- 'Light' affliction leads to 'heavy' and far outweighing glory, momentary troubles are replaced by eternal blessings- cp. Rom 8:18 'not worthy to be compared to the glory' & Rom 8:37 'more than conquerors'- our reward far outweighs our suffering.
- V18- Fix eyes on the unseen (permanent), not the seen (temporary)- the reward, not the trial. Our rewards are permanent dye but our trials are 'wash in, wash out'. Rev 21:4
- Death for the Christian and non -read examples. What is our view of death? World sees it as weakest time, a time to avoid, but for the Christian the strongest time of our lives (my dream). Sense of about to be clothed. Adam & Eve naked, mortal, but we shall again be clothed with immortality. Tent=temporary residence, we are just camping- death is moving into the promised land where we have a permanent dwelling. The three pigs- the brick house had a permanence- we will receive an immovable house when our flesh fails. Mark 14:58- Jesus' resurrection =temple 'not made by hands'- never to die again
- v5 God has prepared us for this very thing- i.e. it will be the highest point of this life. The Spirit given as a guarantee- deposit on our coming house. Application- be filled.

Summary

We can be thankful for:

- God's mercy to us in enabling us to understand and respond to the good news.
- The glorious work He is doing inside us despite outward trials
- The glorious future He has prepared for us in glory

Application

- Thankfulness & worship. Prayer for those yet to experience God's love for themselves.

Songs:

He changed me
There's a place
There is a day
Sing a song of celebration
There's a sound on the wind