# LIFE IS HARD. God is goods



Finding the power of Jesus when you need it most!

Today we start the 4<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Paul's second letter to the church in Corinth







### The church at Corinth:

- Founded by Paul in AD 51 (Acts18)
- He spent about 18 months investing, training, discipling them.
- He has already sent one corrective letter (AD 55-56) addressing division & disunity; immaturity & immorality in the church
- This letter was written about a year later in regard to their response



<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.

What jumps out to you in this verse?





<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since through God's mercy

we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.

For me it is this





<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since through God's mercy

we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.

**ekkakeo** "to turn out a coward; to lose one's courage; to faint in view of trial, difficulty, etc.





### **2 Timothy 4:7**

<sup>7</sup> I have **fought** the **good fight**,

I have finished the race,

I have **kept the faith**.

One of my "life verses"





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**ekkakeo** "to turn out a coward; to lose one's courage; to faint in view of trial, difficulty, etc.





Election 2024

Conviction in ex-NFL player's killing

Trump defamation fine

Holocaust Remembrance Day

RELIGION

# US pastors struggle with postpandemic burnout. Survey shows half considered quitting since 2020

+50% seemed to have lost heart

More than 4 in 10 of clergy surveyed in fall 2023 had seriously considered leaving their congregations at least once since 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic began, and more than half had thought seriously of leaving the ministry, according to the survey released Thursday by the Hartford Institute for Religion Research.

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since through God's mercy

we have this **ministry**, we **do not lose heart**.

It would seem that quite a few are losing heart!

When ministry...

LIFE IS HARD. God is good.

2 CORINTHIANS



<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since through God's mercy

we have this **ministry**, we **do not lose heart**.

Think about how **hard** ministry was for Paul when he wrote this letter





<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since through God's mercy

we have this **ministry**, we **do not lose heart**.

Paul is having to defend his ministry to the people he invested 18 months of his life into!









### Paul was facing:

- attacks against his **character**
- attacks against the legitimacy of his credentials
- attacks against the effectiveness of his ministry.







### Paul was facing:

WHY?

- attacks against his **character**
- attacks against the legitimacy of his credentials
- attacks against the effectiveness of his ministry.



#### About a year earlier

#### 1 Corinthians 3

<sup>1</sup> Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but

as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ.

<sup>2</sup> I gave you milk, not solid food,

for you were not yet ready for it.

Indeed, you are still not ready.

<sup>3</sup> You are still worldly.

You need to grow up!





### **──→** 1 Corinthians

- You've got a bunch of divisions and quarrels going on. (ch. 3)
- You've got sexual immorality in the church, and you think it is ok? (ch. 5)
- You guys are taking each other to court and suing each other (ch. 6)
- You guys are getting drunk at communion (ch. 11)
- You guys don't have the slightest idea how spiritual gifts are supposed to function (ch. 12)

You should be beyond all of this; it is time to grow up!





### **→ 1** Corinthians

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   If you don't like the message,
   you attack the messenger, right?
- You guys don't have the slightest idea how spiritual gifts are supposed to function (ch. 12)

You should be beyond all of this; it is time to grow up!





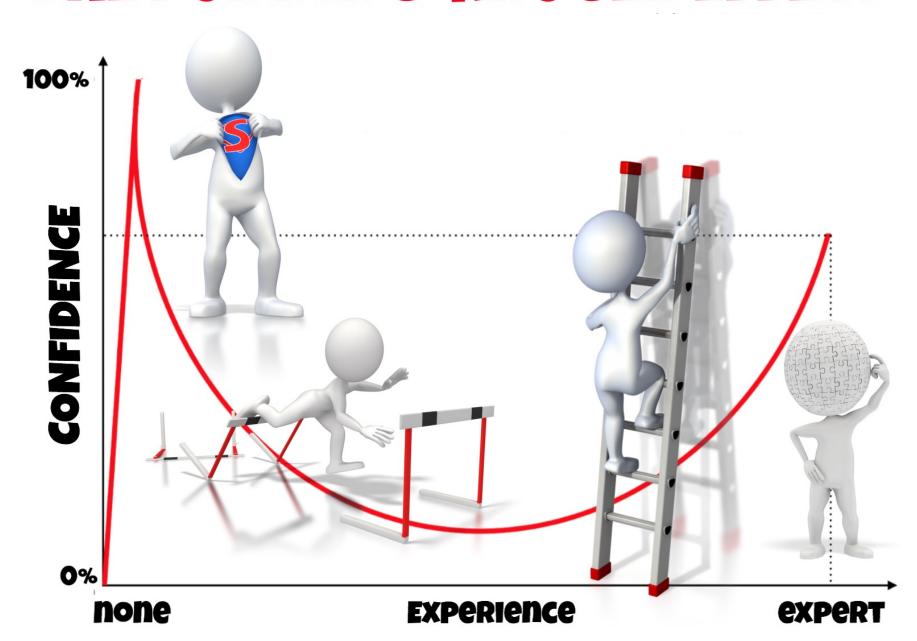
<sup>1</sup> Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—**mere infants in Christ**.

Funny, most of them were Gentiles, who had been Christians for less than 5 years, and they are attacking his credentials?





# THE DUNNING-KRUGER EFFECT



<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since through God's mercy

we have this **ministry**, we do not lose heart.

By contrast Paul studied the OT for most of his life and spent the last 20 years following Christ





<sup>7</sup>Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. <sup>8</sup>Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.

By the time he started the church in Corinth, he had started maybe 9 other churches, he is no "rookie"!





<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since through God's mercy

we have this **ministry**, we do not lose heart.

A little later in this letter Paul will tell us what he has had to endure doing ministry





I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. <sup>24</sup> Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. <sup>25</sup> Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, <sup>26</sup> I have been constantly on the move.





I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. <sup>27</sup> I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.





<sup>28</sup> Besides everything else,

I face daily the pressure of

my concern for all the churches.

I have to put up with you!





<sup>28</sup> Besides everything else,

I face daily the pressure of

my concern for all the churches.

He was probably giving counsel, guidance, oversight to as many as 20 churches at this point.





<sup>8</sup> For we cannot do anything **against the truth**, but only for the truth.

<sup>10</sup> This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority—the authority the Lord gave me for *building you up*, <u>not</u> for tearing you down.

When I wrote to you, my motive was pure!





I have worked much harder, been in prison...flogged...

exposed to death again and again...beaten with rods...

pelted with stones...shipwrecked...in the open sea...on the move...

been in danger in everywhere and from everyone...

gone without sleep...gone without food...been cold and naked...

constantly worried about you

I've been through all of this, and you want to attack me?





<sup>23</sup> I call God as my witness—and I stake my life on it—

that it was in order to spare you

that I did not return to Corinth.

It's a good thing I didn't come!
You really wouldn't have liked what I had to say!





<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since through God's mercy

we have this **ministry**, we **do not lose heart**.

How hard would ministry have to be...

For you to lose heart?





<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since through God's mercy

we have this **ministry**, we **do not lose heart**.

I think I'd quit









## How do we not to lose heart in ministry



<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since through God's mercy

<u>we</u> have this ministry, we do not lose heart.

First off, you have to know you have one!





<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since through God's mercy

we have this **ministry**, we do not lose heart.

What is ministry?





<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this **ministry**, we do not lose heart.

diakonos, in the simplest terms it means "servant" ("one who serves").





<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since through God's mercy

we have this **ministry**, we do not lose heart.

Expanded a little more, it means the rendering or assistance or help by performing certain duties, often of a humble or menial nature, including such mundane activities as waiting on tables or caring for household needs—*activities without apparent dignity* 





# — Ephesians 4

<sup>11</sup> So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip his people for works of <u>service</u>,

It's the same word here - diakonos

"for works of ministry"





# **Ephesians 4**

<sup>11</sup> So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists,

the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service,



Notice our role





# **Ephesians 4**

<sup>11</sup> So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists,

the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service,

so that the body of Christ may be built up

Notice the purpose of your ministry





<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since through God's mercy

we have this **ministry**, we do not lose heart.

We have a *ministry* to the church and a *mission* to the world that doesn't know Him





<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since through God's mercy

we have this **ministry**, we do not lose heart.

Ministry to the church

Builds the body for the Mission in a world that is HARD





<sup>4</sup> For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function,

<sup>5</sup> so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member <u>belongs</u> to all the others.

<sup>6</sup> We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.



### Romans 12

<sup>10</sup> Be devoted to one another in love.

Honor one another above yourselves.

100 times we are told "how to" in the NT.

What are those?



**Forgive** one another (Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13) **Accept** (or welcome) one another (Romans 15:7) **Greet** one another with a holy kiss (Romans 16:16; 2 Corinthians 13:12) Admonish one another (Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16) Honor (be devoted to, be kind to) one another above yourselves (Romans 12:10) Be at peace with one other (Mark 9:50) **In humility consider** one another better than yourselves (*Philippians 2:3*) Be devoted to one another in love (Romans 12:10) **Live in harmony with** one another (Romans 12:16) **Bear (or carry)** one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2) **Look to the interests of** one another (*Philippians 2:4*) Bear (or be tolerant) with one another (Colossians 3:13) **Love** one another (John 13:34 and at least 15 other times) **Be kind and compassionate to** one another (*Ephesians 4:32*) **Pray for** one another (James 5:16) Be patient with one another (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13) **Serve** one another (Galatians 5:13) **Be likeminded towards** one another (*Romans 15:5*) **Show (offer) hospitality to** one another (1 Peter 4:9) **Build up (or edify)** one another (Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11) **Speak the truth in love to** one another (*Ephesians 4:25*) Care (or have equal concern) for one another (1 Corinthians 12:25) **Speak to** one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (*Ephesians 5:19*) Clothe yourselves with humility towards one another (1 Peter 5:5) **Submit to** one another (*Ephesians 5:21*) **Comfort** one another (1 Thessalonians 4:18) **Teach (instruct)** one another (Colossians 3:16; Romans 15:14) Confess your faults (sins) to one another (James 5:16) **Stir up (spur)** one another to love and good works (*Hebrews 10:24*) **Consider** one another better than yourselves (*Philippians 2:3*) **Teach** one another (*Colossians 3:16*) **Employ the gifts that God has given us for the benefit of** one another (1 Peter 4:10) Wash one another's feet (John 13:14) **Encourage** one another (1 Thessalonians 4:18 and 5:11) When you come together to eat, wait for one another (I Corinthians 11:33) **Exhort** one another (*Hebrews 3:13*)

# Romans 12

<sup>4</sup> For just as each of us has one body with many members,

and these members do not all have the same function,

<sup>5</sup> so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

<sup>6</sup> We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us.



# **Ephesians 4**

<sup>11</sup> So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the *pastors and teachers*, <sup>12</sup> to <u>equip</u> his people <u>for</u> works of <u>service</u>, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup> until <u>we all</u> reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the **fullness of Christ**.

Our goal – we ALL are like Christ!





# Matthew 20

<sup>26</sup> It must not be like that among you. On the contrary,

whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,

<sup>27</sup> and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave;

<sup>28</sup> just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, **but to serve**,

and to give his life as a ransom for many."

We follow His example as "servants"





<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since through God's mercy

**WE** have this ministry, we do not lose heart.

Would you agree, we all have a ministry?





<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since through God's mercy

we have this **ministry**, we **do not lose heart**.

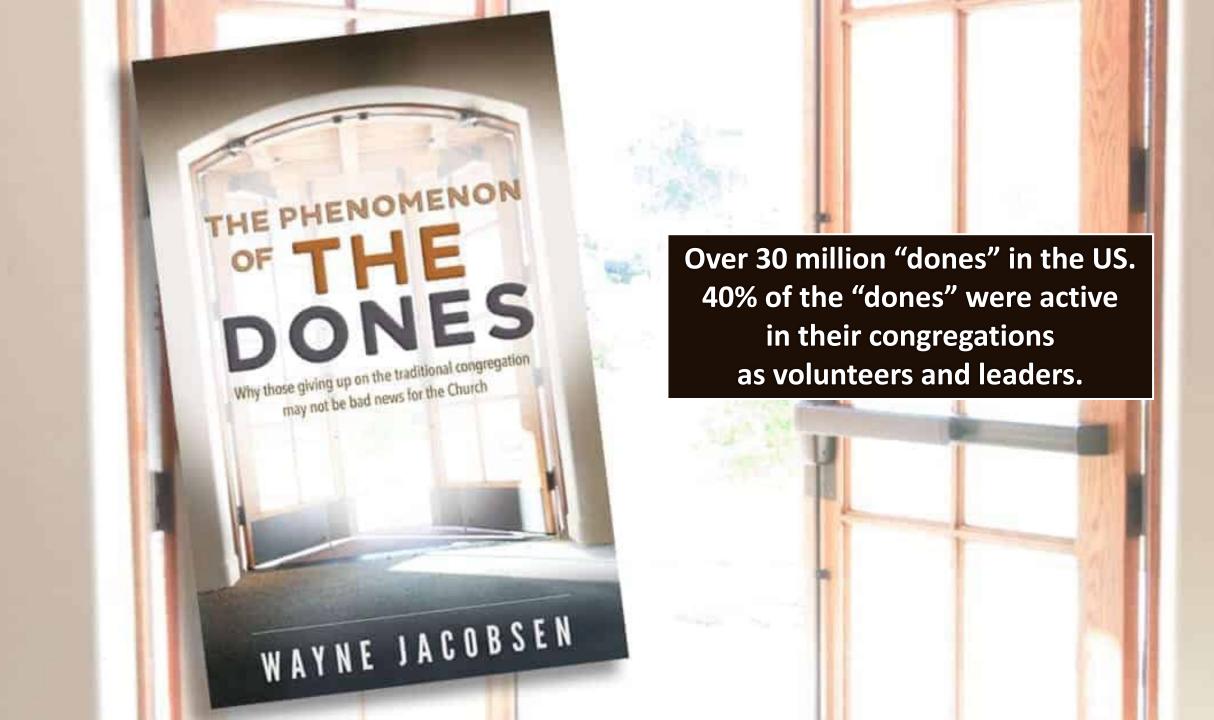


Anyone losing heart?

**ekkakeo** "to turn out a coward; to lose one's courage; to faint in view of trial, difficulty, etc.











# How do WE not to lose heart in ministry



<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since through God's mercy

we have this **ministry**, we **do not lose heart**.

We lose heart because we **forget WHY we do it**.







WHY helps us determine our intent, which is our desire to undertake an activity.

WHY is the most powerful psychological question

to boost motivation.

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since through God's mercy

we have this **ministry**, we **do not lose heart**.

Remember what we saw in the book of Romans about our response to God's mercy?





Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters,

in view of God's mercy,

to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice,

holy and pleasing to God—

this is your true and proper worship.







# The WHY of our ministry should be: because it's our worship



# → Colossians 3

<sup>23</sup> Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart,
 as working for the Lord, not for human masters,
 <sup>24</sup> since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.







# The WHY of our ministry should be: to make us more like Christ



<sup>18</sup> And **WE ALL**, who with **unveiled faces** contemplate the Lord's glory,

are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory,

which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Serving is one of the ways God changes us!





<sup>18</sup> And **WE ALL**, who with **unveiled faces** contemplate the Lord's glory,

are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory,

which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

The transforming power of Jesus Christ is on display when we trade selfishness for *selflessness*.





<sup>18</sup> And **WE ALL**, who with **unveiled faces** contemplate the Lord's glory,

are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory,

which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

"How did your serving today help you become more like Christ?"





We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure,

so that we despaired of life itself.

<sup>9</sup> Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death.

Now, there were times when Paul did feel like giving up.





We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure,

so that we despaired of life itself.

<sup>9</sup> Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death.

But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves

but on God, who raises the dead.

Jesus appeared to him in visions several times to encourage him (Acts 18:9-10; 23:11; 27:24; II Tim. 4:17)



We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure,

so that we despaired of life itself.

<sup>9</sup> Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death.

But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves

but on God, who raises the dead.

The hard times should strengthen your faith!







selfish ambition or vain conceit.
value others above yourselves,

4 not looking to your own interests

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since through God's mercy

we have this **ministry**, we **do not lose heart**.

BTW - your marriage is a ministry!







Friday, Feb. 23rd, 6-9:30pm

\$15/person or \$25/couple · Meal & Childcare Provided SIGN UP BY FEBRUARY 18TH



<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since through God's mercy

we have this **ministry**, we **do not lose heart**.

Once we understand the WHY, then comes the HOW.





# **Ephesians 4**

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy

of the calling you have received. <sup>2</sup> Be completely humble and gentle;

be patient, bearing with one another in love. <sup>3</sup> Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

HOW you do ministry is important!





<sup>2</sup> Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways;

We walk in the light, not worrying about any part of our life being exposed





<sup>2</sup> Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways;

We walk in the light, not worrying about any part of our life being exposed

WYSIWYG





<sup>2</sup> Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways;

we do not use deception,

If God's Word is true, why would we use deception?





<sup>2</sup> Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we **distort** the word of God.

**Doloo** was used in secular Greek to describe the dishonest practice of adulterating wine with water.





<sup>2</sup> Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways;

we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God.

It is the Word of God, why water it down?





<sup>2</sup> Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God.

I think a lot of people lose heart because a leader did one or all of these things





On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly

Paul said, "I didn't"





## On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly

"When you've got that (truth) you don't need any gimmicks; you don't need any buildup; you don't need to bribe people and trick them to get them to come because they are expecting something else. Just tell the truth."

Ray Stedman





On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly

we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience

in the sight of God.

The test of any religion is not whether people like it or whether it is comfortable or whether it makes them feel good. The test, is always, "Is it true?"





On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly

we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience

in the sight of God.

Why are we scared to do that?





<sup>2</sup> Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways;

we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God.

We water it down because we think it will make the gospel more acceptable





<sup>2</sup> Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways;

we do not use **deception**, nor do we **distort the word of God**.

We do that because we want to be seen as effective

FOPO





<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since through God's mercy

we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.

It is easy to lose heart when we don't think we are being effective, right?





<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since through God's mercy

we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.

Corinth was a city around 500,000 people and the church there was roughly 6 years old

How big was the church?





<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since through God's mercy

we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.

Corinth was a city around 500,000 people and the church there was roughly 6 years old

How big was the church?

40-150





<sup>3</sup> And even if our gospel is veiled,

it is veiled to those who are perishing.

Paul knew some will get it, some won't





<sup>3</sup> And even if our gospel is veiled,

it is veiled to those who are perishing.

Why don't people get it or believe?





# <sup>4</sup> The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers,

so that they cannot see the light of the gospel

that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Who is this?





He (Devil) was a murderer from the beginning,

not holding to the truth,

for there is **no** truth in him.

When he lies, he speaks his native language,

for **he is a liar** and **the father of lies**.



<sup>4</sup> The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers,

so that they cannot see the light of the gospel

that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

We tend to think the reason for people being lost is because they just refuse to believe





<sup>4</sup> The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers,

so that they cannot see the light of the gospel

that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

We tend to think the reason for people being lost is because they just refuse to believe

"We've just got to be more convincing"





<sup>4</sup> The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers,

so that they cannot see the light of the gospel

that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Can you imagine the power that the evil one must have to be able to blind the eyes of humans to the light of the gospel?





### **Matthew 13**

<sup>19</sup> When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart.

Let Jesus words sink in...





### **Ephesians 6**

<sup>10</sup> Finally, **be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.** <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

You and I don't have enough strength in ourselves to fight this battle!





64 Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. 65 He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me *unless* the Father has enabled them."66 From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.

It is not our persuasive words that draw men out of darkness, it is God!



<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since *through* God's mercy

we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.

It is only by God's grace and power that any of this happens





<sup>5</sup> For what we preach is **not** ourselves,

but Jesus Christ as Lord,

and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

Ministry gets tiring when you think it's about you, your effort, your power





<sup>5</sup> For what we preach is **not** ourselves,

but Jesus Christ as Lord,

and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

"Don't look to us for any help. We don't come preaching ourselves. We can only point you to Jesus!"





<sup>5</sup> For what we preach is not ourselves,

but Jesus Christ as Lord,

and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

It is about Him, He is the Master, I'm just learning to be a better servant!





<sup>6</sup> For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," [a]

Paul reminds us that with His words God separated the light from the darkness





<sup>6</sup> For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," [a]

made his light shine in our hearts to give us

the light of the knowledge of God's glory

displayed in the face of Christ.

It is God, through His Word, that shines light into our dark hearts!





<sup>6</sup> For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," [a]

made his light shine in our hearts to give us

the light of the knowledge of God's glory

displayed in the face of **Christ**.

When He does, He reveals to us our Messiah, our Savior





"'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. 16 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. 17 I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them <sup>18</sup> to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'





<sup>6</sup> For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," [a]

made his light shine in our hearts to give us

the light of the knowledge of God's glory

displayed in the face of Christ.

We not only get to watch but be a part of the miracle of Him creating life out of death!





<sup>5</sup> For what **we preach** is not ourselves,

but Jesus Christ as Lord,

and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

Is there anything more important?







