

# **A Heart to Sacrifice**

*Loving and Living for What Matters Most*

## **Why has God Equipped You to Serve?**

*2 Corinthians 4:1-18*

*Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / January 22, 2017*

**2 Corinthians 4:1-18** shows us how God has called and equipped us to serve Him.

### **I. When He Gave You Mercy (Saved You) He Gave You Ministry!**

It's a package deal. God never separates those two things like we do.

**2 Corinthians 4:1** "Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart."

### **II. When God Saved You He Gave You His Word and the Power of the Gospel**

**2 Corinthians 4:2** "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."

As a Christian, God has given you His truth and the power of His Gospel so you have something that every human being desperately needs.

**John 8:32** "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free."

God's Word is truth so be careful that you don't compromise it, revise it, or try to water it down. People need it at full-strength!

### **III. When God Saved You He Gave You Your Own Personal Testimony**

**2 Corinthians 4:6** "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."

If you're a Christian, then the truth of God's Word has exploded with light in your own heart to show you the glory of your Savior – Jesus Christ.

Share your story with others, because there are people God will put in your path that are struggling in some of the same ways you were.

**2 Corinthians 4:7** "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us."

You carry around a treasure, which is the Gospel and the glory of Jesus Christ!

God chooses to use clay pots, like us, so that the excellence of the power may be of Him and not of us.

#### **IV. When God Saved You He Signed You Up for a Special Curriculum**

That special curriculum is His own special S.S.O. A. – The Sovereign School of Adversity.

**2 Corinthians 4:8-9** “We are hard-pressed on every side, but not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.”

Learn to describe your adversity and suffering in the Christian life accurately, because words matter.

The way you choose to describe the hard things that are going on in your life will ultimately shape your theology, which frames your thinking, which then feeds your feelings.

Words are the fabric of ideas that begin to shape your personal worldview and attitudes.

**2 Corinthians 4:10-12** “always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you.”

While Satan tries to keep people from seeing the glory of Jesus, God has millions of Christians whom He can reveal Jesus Christ to as people see less of us and more of Him through our suffering, brokenness, humility and dying.

The more we die the more Jesus can live and shine through us. That process happens best in the S.S.O.A. – the Sovereign School of Adversity.

#### **V. When God Saved You He Gave You a New Hope, a New Motivation, and a New Perspective on What Matters Most**

##### **A. You Have a New Hope – The Resurrection (v.14)**

The doctrine of the resurrection says God is going to redeem and remake all things, including our bodies. Heaven is going to come down to earth! Read **Revelation 21!** Everything sad and bad is going to come untrue!

##### **B. You Have a New Motivation for Why You Do What You Do (v.15)**

This verse contains Paul’s two great loves that motivated him to serve God the way he did: bringing grace to others and bringing glory to God. We see this again in **I Peter 4:10-11**.

##### **C. You Have a New Perspective on What Matters Most (vv.16-18)**

Fix your eyes on the eternal glory that is coming and you’ll be able to handle anything.

Our eternal perspective should give us critical thinking in how we perceive the world right now, so that we don’t get sucked into all the wrong things or bent out of shape over things that are temporal.

In **Romans 8:16-18**, Paul tells us our light and momentary affliction is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!

When you really get a hold of all that God's given to you, instead of just trying to do it in your own strength, you don't lose heart. You have the ability to keep going when others are falling.