



Week 4: July 14-20

MONDAY, JULY 14

READ:

2 Corinthians 4 (NLT) (1) Therefore, since God in his mercy has given us this new way, we never give up. (2) We reject all shameful deeds and underhanded methods. We don't try to trick anyone or distort the word of God. We tell the truth before God, and all who are honest know this. (3) If the Good News we preach is hidden behind a veil, it is hidden only from people who are perishing. (4) Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't

believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God. (5) You see, we don't go around preaching about ourselves. We preach that Jesus Christ is Lord, and we ourselves are your servants for Jesus' sake. (6) For God, who said, "Let there be light in the darkness," has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. (7) We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves. (8) We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. (9) We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed. (10) Through suffering, our bodies continue to share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies. (11) Yes, we live under constant danger of death because we serve Jesus, so that the life of Jesus will be evident in our dying bodies. (12) So we live in the face of death, but this has resulted in eternal life for you. (13) But we continue to preach because we have the same kind of faith the psalmist had when he said, "I believed in God, so I spoke." (14) We know that God, who raised the Lord Jesus, will also raise us with Jesus and present us to himself together with you. (15) All of this is for your benefit. And as God's grace reaches more and more people, there will be great thanksgiving, and God will receive more and more glory. (16) That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. (17) For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! (18) So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.

REFLECT:

1. What are the truths and/or principles that stood out to you from what you just read?
2. Is there anything you believe God would want you to do in response to today's scripture reading?
3. Is there any sin you need to confess to God and/or to others that God revealed to you through what you just read?

PRAY:

- Tell God at least one thing you love and appreciate about who He is.
- Thank God for something that happened in your life yesterday.
- Confess any sin(s) to Him and thank Him for His forgiveness.
- Pray for at least one other person.
- Pray for yourself and commit to God your cares and concerns.
- Ask God to help you become more like Jesus today and open the doors for you to encourage and help someone else in Jesus' name.

TUESDAY, JULY 15

READ:

2 Corinthians 5 (NLT) (1) For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down (that is, when we die and leave this earthly body), we will have a house in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands. (2) We grow weary in our present bodies, and we long to put on our heavenly bodies like new clothing. (3) For we will put on heavenly bodies; we will not be spirits without bodies. (4) While we live in these earthly bodies, we groan and sigh, but it's not that we want to die and get rid of these bodies that clothe us. Rather, we want to put on our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by life. (5) God himself has prepared us for this, and as a guarantee he has given us his Holy Spirit. (6) So we are always confident, even though we know that as long as we live in these bodies we are not at home with the Lord. (7) For we live by believing and not by seeing. (8) Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord. (9) So whether we are here in this body or away from this body, our goal is to please him. (10) For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body. (11) Because we understand our fearful responsibility to the Lord, we work hard to persuade others. God knows we are sincere, and I hope you know this, too. (12) Are we commending ourselves to you again? No, we are giving you a reason to be proud of us, so you can answer those who brag about having a spectacular ministry rather than having a sincere heart. (13) If it seems we are crazy, it is to bring glory to God. And if we are in our right minds, it is for your benefit. (14) Either way, Christ's love controls us. Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life. (15) He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them. (16) So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! (17) This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! (18) And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. (19) For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. (20) So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" (21) For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 16

READ:

2 Corinthians 6 (NLT) (1) As God's partners, we beg you not to accept this marvelous gift of God's kindness and then ignore it. (2) For God says, "At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you." Indeed, the "right time" is now. Today is the day of salvation. (3) We live in such a way that no one will stumble because of us, and no one will find fault with our ministry. (4) In everything we do, we show that we are true ministers of God. We patiently endure troubles and hardships and calamities of every kind. (5) We have been beaten, been put in prison, faced angry mobs, worked to exhaustion, endured sleepless nights, and gone without food. (6) We prove ourselves by our purity, our understanding, our patience, our kindness, by the Holy Spirit within us, and by our sincere love. (7) We faithfully preach the truth. God's power is working in us. We use the weapons of righteousness in the right hand for attack and the left hand for defense. (8) We serve God whether people honor us or despise us, whether they slander us or praise us. We are honest, but they call us impostors. (9) We are ignored, even though we are well known. We live close to death, but we are still alive. We have been beaten, but we have not been killed. (10) Our hearts ache, but we always have joy. We are poor, but we give spiritual riches to others. We own nothing, and yet we have everything. (11) Oh, dear Corinthian friends! We have spoken honestly with you, and our hearts are open to you. (12) There is no lack of love on our part, but you have withheld your love from us. (13) I am asking you to respond as if you were my own children. Open your hearts to us! (14) Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? (15) What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? (16) And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said: "I will live in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people. (17) Therefore, come out from among unbelievers, and separate yourselves from them, says the LORD. Don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you. (18) And I will be your Father, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty."

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THURSDAY, JULY 17

READ:

2 Corinthians 7 (NLT) (1) Because we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that can defile our body or spirit. And let us work toward complete holiness because we fear God. (2) Please open your hearts to us. We have not done wrong to anyone, nor led anyone astray, nor taken advantage of anyone. (3) I'm not saying this to condemn you. I said before that you are in our hearts, and we live or die together with you. (4) I have the highest confidence in you, and I take great pride in you. You have greatly encouraged me and made me happy despite all our troubles. (5) When we arrived in Macedonia, there was no rest for us. We faced conflict from every direction, with battles on the outside and fear on the inside. (6) But God, who encourages those who are discouraged, encouraged us by the arrival of Titus. (7) His presence was a joy, but so was the news he brought of the encouragement he received from you. When he told us how much you long to see me, and how sorry you are for what happened, and how loyal you are to me, I was filled with joy! (8) I am not sorry that I sent that severe letter to you, though I was sorry at first, for I know it was painful to you for a little while. (9) Now I am glad I sent it, not because it hurt you, but because the pain caused you to repent and change your ways. It was the kind of sorrow God wants his people to have, so you were not harmed by us in any way. (10) For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death. (11) Just see what this godly sorrow produced in you! Such earnestness, such concern to clear yourselves, such indignation, such alarm, such longing to see me, such zeal, and such a readiness to punish wrong. You showed that you have done everything necessary to make things right. (12) My purpose, then, was not to write about who did the wrong or who was wronged. I wrote to you so that in the sight of God you could see for yourselves how loyal you are to us. (13) We have been greatly encouraged by this. In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was about the way all of you welcomed him and set his mind at ease. (14) I had told him how proud I was of you—and you didn't disappoint me. I have always told you the truth, and now my boasting to Titus has also proved true! (15) Now he cares for you more than ever when he remembers the way all of you obeyed him and welcomed him with such fear and deep respect. (16) I am very happy now because I have complete confidence in you.

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FRIDAY, JULY 18

READ:

2 Corinthians 8 (NLT) (1) Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. (2) They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity. (3) For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. (4) They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem. (5) They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do. (6) So we have urged Titus, who encouraged your giving in the first place, to return to you and encourage you to finish this ministry of giving. (7) Since you excel in so many ways—in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us—I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving. (8) I am not commanding you to do this. But I am testing how genuine your love is by comparing it with the eagerness of the other churches. (9) You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich. (10) Here is my advice: It would be good for you to finish what you started a year ago. Last year you were the first who wanted to give, and you were the first to begin doing it. (11) Now you should finish what you started. Let the eagerness you showed in the beginning be matched now by your giving. Give in proportion to what you have. (12) Whatever you give is acceptable if you give it eagerly. And give according to what you have, not what you don't have. (13) Of course, I don't mean your giving should make life easy for others and hard for yourselves. I only mean that there should be some equality. (14) Right now you have plenty and can help those who are in need. Later, they will have plenty and can share with you when you need it. In this way, things will be equal. (15) As the Scriptures say, "Those who gathered a lot had nothing left over, and those who gathered only a little had enough." (16) But thank God! He has given Titus the same enthusiasm for you that I have. (17) Titus welcomed our request that he visit you again. In fact, he himself was very eager to go and see you. (18) We are also sending another brother with Titus. All the churches praise him as a preacher of the Good News. (19) He was appointed by the churches to accompany us as we take the offering to Jerusalem—a service that glorifies the Lord and shows our eagerness to help. (20) We are traveling together to guard against any criticism for the way we are handling this generous gift. (21) We are careful to be honorable before the Lord, but we also want everyone else to see that we are honorable. (22) We are also sending with them another of our brothers who has proven himself many times and has shown on many occasions how eager he is. He is now even more enthusiastic because of his great confidence in you. (23) If anyone asks about Titus, say that he is my partner who works with me to help you. And the brothers with him have been sent by the churches, and they bring honor to Christ. (24) So show them your love, and prove to all the churches that our boasting about you is justified.

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SATURDAY, JULY 19

READ:

2 Corinthians 9 (NLT) (1) I really don't need to write to you about this ministry of giving for the believers in Jerusalem. (2) For I know how eager you are to help, and I have been boasting to the churches in Macedonia that you in Greece were ready to send an offering a year ago. In fact, it was your enthusiasm that stirred up many of the Macedonian believers to begin giving. (3) But I am sending these brothers to be sure you really are ready, as I have been telling them, and that your money is all collected. I don't want to be wrong in my boasting about you. (4) We would be embarrassed—not to mention your own embarrassment—if some Macedonian believers came with me and found that you weren't ready after all I had told them! (5) So I thought I should send these brothers ahead of me to make sure the gift you promised is ready. But I want it to be a willing gift, not one given grudgingly. (6) Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. (7) You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully." (8) And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. (9) As the Scriptures say, "They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever." (10) For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you. (11) Yes, you will be enriched in every way so that you can always be generous. And when we take your gifts to those who need them, they will thank God. (12) So two good things will result from this ministry of giving—the needs of the believers in Jerusalem will be met, and they will joyfully express their thanks to God. (13) As a result of your ministry, they will give glory to God. For your generosity to them and to all believers will prove that you are obedient to the Good News of Christ. (14) And they will pray for you with deep affection because of the overflowing grace God has given to you. (15) Thank God for this gift too wonderful for words!

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SUNDAY, JULY 20

READ:

2 Corinthians 10 (NLT) (1) Now I, Paul, appeal to you with the gentleness and kindness of Christ—though I realize you think I am timid in person and bold only when I write from far away. (2) Well, I am begging you now so that when I come I won't have to be bold with those who think we act from human motives. (3) We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. (4) We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. (5) We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ. (6) And after you have become fully obedient, we will punish everyone who remains disobedient. (7) Look at the obvious facts. Those who say they belong to Christ must recognize that we belong to Christ as much as they do. (8) I may seem to be boasting too much about the authority given to us by the Lord. But our authority builds you up; it doesn't tear you down. So I will not be ashamed of using my authority. (9) I'm not trying to frighten you by my letters. (10) For some say, "Paul's letters are demanding and forceful, but in person he is weak, and his speeches are worthless!" (11) Those people should realize that our actions when we arrive in person will be as forceful as what we say in our letters from far away. (12) Oh, don't worry; we wouldn't dare say that we are as wonderful as these other men who tell you how important they are! But they are only comparing themselves with each other, using themselves as the standard of measurement. How ignorant! (13) We will not boast about things done outside our area of authority. We will boast only about what has happened within the boundaries of the work God has given us, which includes our working with you. (14) We are not reaching beyond these boundaries when we claim authority over you, as if we had never visited you. For we were the first to travel all the way to Corinth with the Good News of Christ. (15) Nor do we boast and claim credit for the work someone else has done. Instead, we hope that your faith will grow so that the boundaries of our work among you will be extended. (16) Then we will be able to go and preach the Good News in other places far beyond you, where no one else is working. Then there will be no question of our boasting about work done in someone else's territory. (17) As the Scriptures say, "If you want to boast, boast only about the LORD." (18) When people commend themselves, it doesn't count for much. The important thing is for the Lord to commend them.

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