

Illuminate Devotional Study— 2 Corinthians 4:1-6

Start by reading 2 Corinthians 4:1-6.

You're lying in your bed one morning, trying to enjoy the last few moments of sleep before you have to start your day. You've been hitting the snooze button on your alarm clock or iPhone or whatever, prolonging the inevitable event of having to get out of bed when suddenly someone opens your bedroom door and turns on the light. You probably react like almost everyone else: scream in agony at the sudden brightness while you bury your head in your pillow, trying to protect your poor retinas.

In this passage, Paul makes a very clear connection between our idea of light and the message he was teaching to the churches. He made every effort to teach his message as clearly as possible. When God made the world, He saw that it was good, full of peace and harmony. That all went away when sin entered the picture. Now there was injustice, war, hatred, pain and suffering. So what did God do about it? Paul and the rest of the Apostles didn't go around saying that God hated people and that they were doomed to live like this forever. He was given a message of hope for a corrupted world. God didn't want us to be left stumbling around in darkness, but instead sent us His Son, Jesus – the light of the world. Jesus is the message of peace and hope from God, giving us a way to live with Him forever. God was using Paul (and others) to proclaim that message to people who were still living in darkness.

Paul didn't want people to be left in confusion or doubt when it came to what God had done through Jesus' death on the cross. Jump ahead to 2 Corinthians 5:17-19. Paul talks about the ministry God called him to, calling it a ministry of reconciliation. Reconciliation is a big word that means that a friendly relationship has been restored between two people (or groups of people). You've mended the fence, so to speak. This doesn't mean that everyone accepts the light, though. Paul even says in the main passage that the god of this age (Satan) will do everything in his power to keep people from seeing the light. Those who refuse to believe the message fail to see Christ for who He truly is and will continue to live in dark chaos that hangs over this world like a storm cloud.

This isn't a message Paul made up on his own. Remember – God is the one who gave them the message. As we read the Bible, we are constantly reminded about what that message is: God desires people to not live in darkness, forever separated from Him. Instead, He came and brought His light to us so that we might live in the light of His truth. God has given this message to us so that we can tell other people about the Light of the World.

Discussion questions:

- 1. Do you think people prefer to live in "light" or in "darkness"? Why did you answer the way you did?*
- 2. If God wants people to see the light (the Gospel), why doesn't He force people to see it?*
- 3. As Christians, Jesus has given us the job to tell people about what He has done for them on the cross. Why is it difficult to share our faith with our friends or our family?*
- 4. What are some ways we can share the light of the Gospel with other people?*

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we thank you for giving us the Light of the World. Thank you that we can have eternal life through His death and resurrection. Give us courage as your messengers as we share your light to the people around us through what we say and do. In Jesus name, Amen.