

Bible Study Notes
2 Corinthians: Section 11

by Larry Roach

2 Corinthians 4:1-2

Through God's Mercy

Focal Passage: 4:1-2

Since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.

This passage, and the one preceding it, clearly proclaims that since the ministry of the Holy Spirit is working through us we are confident, full of hope, competent, bold (**cf. 3:12**), and in freedom (**cf. 3:17**) within the Spirit of God which is bringing forth righteousness – transforming us into the image of Jesus Christ. All of this is not of ourselves -- it is the Spirit moving or ministering through us.

This ministry is through God's mercy – not only working in us but is overflowing into the lives of others. This mercy is not something we have earned or deserve; it is the gift of God that has been poured out upon us because of his love, **cf. Ephesians 2:8-9**.

Because this ministry of mercy is working through us, "We do not lose heart or faint". No matter what trials or tribulations come our way, we do not succumb to fear and pass out. Nor are we discouraged or beaten down. How could any of those things that come against us from the world, the enemy or our flesh compare with the greatness of the mercy that works through us in the Spirit? **Cf. 4:8-9**.

In contrast, and in response to the Spirit working through us, "We have renounced secret and shameful ways." We have turned our face aside from those things that are in the dark and are shameful, and we keep our eyes fixed upon Jesus. Through the ministry of the Spirit we are not looking or stepping to the left or the right. **Galatians 5:25** instructs us: "Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit." Also see **Romans 8**.

We are in this world, but we are not of this world. Since we belong to another kingdom, we do not participate in the acts or attitudes of this world, for we have renounced those things – allowing the Spirit to push them aside as we walk with Jesus. **Romans 12:1-2a** reminds us, "In view of God's mercy, offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – which is your spiritual worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Let our mind be transformed into the mind of Christ, **cf. 1 Corinthians 2:16**.

Also in response to God's mercy, "We do not use deception," for the Spirit of Truth is moving through us. Therefore, we do not "distort the word of God." On the contrary, we proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ. In all of this, in the sight of man and in the sight of God, we are an open book. We speak plainly and live our lives openly to be examined.

In conclusion: We no longer live in shame that came from the condemnation of the law. Shame is a state of being, and through the redemption of Jesus Christ our being has and is being transformed into his image -- and we now live in his glory and righteousness. "Those who look to the LORD are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame," **Psalm 34:5**. Our faces are unveiled, **cf. 3:13**. We are not hiding in secret, nor are we participating in secret and shameful ways. We are living freely in the light, as the Spirit of God is moving and speaking through us. Our faces are not covered with shame for the glory of the Lord is shining through us as we stand firm in God's mercy.

In light of this truth, what would God have you do?