

God's Abundant Grace: Second Corinthians

8 – THE NATURE OF THE MINISTRY (2 CORINTHIANS 4:1-6)

I. Paul's Attitude Toward Ministry (2 Corinthians 4:1-2)

A. Paul's Ministry (2 Corinthians 4:1a)

- Paul acknowledges that they have the ministry of the New Covenant.

B. God's Mercy (2 Corinthians 4:1b)

- The ministry was given to Paul in spite of his past sins.

C. Paul's Attitude (2 Corinthians 4:2)

1. The Renouncing of Shameful Ways (2 Corinthians 4:2a)

- Paul renounced the shameful practices used in handling the gospel.
- Some accused him of using the gospel deceitfully to serve his own ends.

2. The Proper Handling of the Gospel (2 Corinthians 4:2b)

- Paul states that they present the gospel in truth before God and man.

II. The Nature of Ministry in the World (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)

A. The World's Blindness to the Gospel (2 Corinthians 4:3)

- The gospel is hidden from those who are lost.

B. The Source of the Blindness (2 Corinthians 4:4a)

- Satan has blinded their eyes to the truth of the gospel.

C. The Reason for the Blindness (2 Corinthians 4:4b)

- Their eyes are blinded to keep them from understanding the gospel.

III. The Responsibility of Ministry (2 Corinthians 4:5-6)

A. The Object of Their Ministry (2 Corinthians 4:5)

1. Not Themselves

- The focus of their ministry was not themselves.

2. Jesus Christ

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- Paul states that the focus of their ministry was Jesus Christ alone.

3. Their True Condition

- Paul stated that they were slaves to the ministry of Jesus Christ.

B. Light in the Midst of Darkness (2 Corinthians 4:6)

1. The Picture of Creation

- Paul reminds the reader that God brought light into darkness at creation.

Scripture: Genesis 1:2-4 (ESV)

² The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. ³ And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. ⁴ And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.

2. Spiritual Light

- Paul tells us that God brought light into our lives with the gospel of Jesus Christ.