***Big Questions: Looking to God’s Word for Answers
“…always being ready to make a defense…” I Peter 3:15***

**What Does It Mean To Be Lost? What Does It Mean To Be Saved? II Corinthians 4:3-6**

**Overview of Prior Questions**

**I. God is and He created all things for His glory**

**II. God reveals His glory by demonstrating His Attributes through His Creation**

**III. Humanity rejects the God who is and replaces Him with a God in our own image**

**IV. The pinnacle of God’s creation is humans made in His image, invested with infinite instrumental and intrinsic value**

**V. Our behavior matters because sin destroys the purpose for our existence. We cannot see, experience, and delight in the glory of God when we sin because we are placing our own desires about the intended design of the God who made us.**

**VI. The Gospel is the good news that God has restored the original intent of creation for humans to see, experience, reflect, and enjoy the glory of God forever. The means by which God accomplishes this work is through each individual’s faith in the perfect life, death, and resurrection of God’s own Son, Jesus Christ.**

**Exposition\* of II Corinthians 4:3-6**

**I. What is the Gospel?**

* **The Gospel means “good news,” God has “good news” for all people**
* **The highest good of the good news of the Gospel is seeing the glory of God in His Son, Jesus Christ**

**II. What does it mean to be lost?**

* **Lostness is blindness to the glory of God**
* **Lostness is living in a state of death**
* **Lostness is a work of the devil, who hates the glory of God, by blinding the minds of the perishing**
	+ **He does this by substituting the glory of God with many counterfeits: money, sex, video games, movies, TV, sports, cars, houses, alcohol, drugs, pornography, Facebook, IPhones, food, popularity, pride, work**

**III. What does it mean to be saved?**

* **God shines the light of the knowledge of His glory into the hearts of the lost**
* **The eyes of the lost go open and we see the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ**
* **In that moment, we move from a state of spiritual death into spiritual life**

 **Next week: The Lord’s Supper and Sudan Testimony**

**\* Based on a sermon by John Piper, “Opening Their Eyes, Doing What Only God Can Do”**

II Corinthians 4:3-4

**2 Corinthians 4**

**Paul's Apostolic Ministry**

 **1**Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, **2**but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. **3**And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, **4**in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. **5**For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. **6**For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

 **7**But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; **8**we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; **9**persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; **10**always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. **11**For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. **12**So death works in us, but life in you. **13**But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I BELIEVED, THEREFORE I SPOKE," we also believe, therefore we also speak, **14**knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you. **15**For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God. **16**Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

**17**For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, **18**while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

**I. Scripture Reading**

* **Read II Corinthians 4:1-18 (Slides)**

**Overview of Prior Questions**

**I. God is and He created all things for His glory**

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**III. Humanity rejects the God who is and replaces Him with a God in our own image**

**IV. The pinnacle of God’s creation is humans made in His image, invested with infinite instrumental and intrinsic value**

**V. Our behavior matters because sin destroys the purpose for our existence. We cannot see, experience, and delight in the glory of God when we sin because we are placing our own desires about the intended design of the God who made us.**

**VI. The Gospel is the good news that God has restored the original intent of creation for humans to see, experience, reflect, and enjoy the glory of God forever. The means by which God accomplishes this work is through each individual’s faith in the perfect life, death, and resurrection of God’s own Son, Jesus Christ.**

**Exposition\* of II Corinthians 4:3-6**

**I. What is the Gospel?**

* What is the highest good news that makes the Gospel good news?
	+ Is it the forgiveness of sins or justification by faith?
	+ Is it the removal of the wrath of God or from hell?
	+ Is it liberation from the bondage of sin?
	+ Is it entrance into heaven or eternal life or escape from pain?
* NO! Why? Because as great as all of these truths may be and as necessary as the Gospel is in order for these things to be true, none of them is the greatest or highest good in what God has done in the Gospel
* All of these truths grant us ability to experience the greatest, highest, best, final good – they remove obstacles to the highest good of the goodness of the Gospel
* All of these truths allow us to experience the Gospel
* What is the greatest final good according to this text?
* God in Christ is the Gospel
* Seeing Christ in all His glory is the ultimate, highest, greatest good
* **The Gospel means “good news,” God has “good news” for all people**
* **The highest good of the good news of the Gospel is seeing the glory of God in His Son, Jesus Christ**

**II. What does it mean to be lost?**

* Lost and its various meanings and usages: lose your keys, lose your mind, lose your patience, lose your cool, lose the game
* **Lostness is living in a state of death**
* **Read II Corinthians 4:3 (Slide 2)**
* Those who are perishing…
* Remember the most familiar chapter in the Bible on lostness, Luke 15 and the three parables – the lost coin, the lost sheep and the lost son
* **Read Luke 15:24 (Slide 3)**
* In the parable of the lost son, the father says, “for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.”
* Notice how Jesus connects spiritual lostness to spiritual death
* **Lostness is blindness to the glory of God**
* **Read II Corinthians 4:4 (Slide 4)**
* The god of this world…
* **II Corinthians 2:11, 11:14 (Slide 5)**
* “The god of this world” and schemes that war against the will of God means Satan
* **Read II Corinthians 4:4 (Slide 6)**
* **Lostness is a work of the devil, who hates the glory of God, by blinding the minds of the perishing**
	+ **He does this by substituting the glory of God with many counterfeits: money, sex, video games, movies, TV, sports, cars, houses, alcohol, drugs, pornography, Facebook, IPhones, food, popularity, pride, work**

**III. What does it mean to be saved?**

* **Read II Corinthians 4:5 (Slide 7)**
* We don’t preach ourselves, for if we speak of our own glory, no one will get saved
* **Read II Corinthians 4:6 (Slide 8)**
* **God shines the light of the knowledge of His glory into the hearts of the lost**
* Darkness overcome and eyes open to see the glory of God in His Son Jesus Christ
* This prompts repentance from sin because sin keeps us from that glorious vision
* This brings forgiveness because our sin keeps us from seeing God as He really is
* This prompts faith because only by the work of God can we see Him
* God brings faith into dead, blind, and lost lives in order that we can finally see what we have never previously seen, Jesus Christ as the treasure of our lives
* Consider John 1 which opens with some very Genesis 1 language “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” John 1:1-3, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”
* **Read John 1:9-14 (Slides 9-11)**
* Consider the blind man in John 9, the man born blind
* **Read John 9:35-41 (Slides 12-15)**
* Consider Paul the Apostle, Acts 9
* **Read Acts 9:8-9 (Slide 16)**
* **Read Acts 9:17-18 (Slide 17)**
* **Read II Corinthians 4:6 (Slide 18)**
* **The eyes of the lost go open and we see the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ**
* **In that moment, we move from a state of spiritual death into spiritual life**
* Video clip from Piper “Opening their eyes, doing what only God can do” on the Jewish man from the Netherlands – 23:42 to 25:38 **(Video)**
* **Blank Slide**

**IV. Conclusion: This is THE issue of salvation. Salvation is the moment that we go from blindness to the glory of God and God opens our eyes so that we may see His glory. He does this by smacking the devil in the nose and overwhelming his schemes and opening our blind eyes so that the things that were once precious to us have become dust and ashes and the things that were once boring and irrelevant have become beautiful. That is how we get saved; God opens our eyes to His glory through His Son. (Blank slide)**

In this session we will work on answering five questions:

* What is the Gospel?
* What does it mean to be lost?
* What is conversion?
* What is our role in conversion?
* What is the role of teaching in conversion and growth in new believers?

What is the Gospel?

* Read II Corinthians 4:1-7
* What is the highest good news that makes the Gospel good news?
	+ Is it the forgiveness of sins or justification by faith?
	+ Is it the removal of the wrath of God or from hell?
	+ Is it liberation from the bondage of sin?
	+ Is it entrance into heaven or eternal life or escape from pain?
* NO! Why? Because as great as all of these truths may be and as necessary as the Gospel is in order for these things to be true, none of them is the greatest or highest good in what God has done in the Gospel
* All of these truths grant us ability to experience the greatest, highest, best, final good
* All of these truths allow us to experience the Gospel
* What is the greatest final good according to this text?
* Verse 6 says that the Gospel is the light of the glory of God as seen in Christ
* God in Christ is the Gospel
* Seeing Christ in all His glory is the ultimate, highest, greatest good in the universe.

What does it mean to be lost?

* Being lost means not seeing the glory of God in His Son
* There are all types of implications of this lost condition, but ultimately it is a blindness to God

What does it mean to get saved?

* Darkness overcome and eyes open to see the glory of God in His Son Jesus Christ
* This prompts repentance from sin because sin keeps us from that glorious vision
* This brings forgiveness because our sin keeps us from seeing God as He really is
* This prompts faith because only by the work of God can we see Him
* God brings faith into dead, blind, and lost lives in order that we can finally see what we have never previously seen, Jesus Christ as the treasure of our lives
* Consider John 1 which opens with some very Genesis 1 language “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” John 1:1-3, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”
* Read John 1:9-14
* Consider the blind man in John 9
* Consider Paul the Apostle, Acts 9
* Video clip from Piper “Opening their eyes, doing what only God can do” on the Jewish man from the Netherlands – 23:42 to 25:38 **(Video)**

What is our role in conversion?

* We are simply instruments through which the Holy Spirit uses us to bring conversion
* We are clay in the hands of God and He sends us to do what He alone can do
* Read Acts 26:17
* Only God can open the eyes of the blind and bring individuals out of darkness
* God will not do it without us, even though He is the only one who can do this
* Our role in the conversion of lost individuals in the Gospel is simply to be His instruments
* “My burden is light, My yoke is easy.” “Now go save the world.”
* How can His burden be light and then give us a task of doing the impossible?
* Because He does this. He does this work. He calls us to be His instrument so that we will be used by Him and so that we will be present to watch Him do this miraculous work and thus bring even greater glory to His name