

STRENGTH THROUGH WEAKNESS

2 CORINTHIANS 4:1-6

SHINE JESUS SHINE



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

DAVID MURRAY
NOVEMBER 14, 2021 (PM)

INTRODUCTION

Why do so few see the beauty and glory of Jesus Christ? We love reading about him in our Bibles. We delight in hearing him preached. We rejoice to worship him. We talk about him enthusiastically when we fellowship together. We have sweet communion with him as we pray and live our lives. But then we try to tell others about him, and we're met with "Meh!" or "Who cares?" or "I don't get it."

"What am I doing wrong?" we ask ourselves. We're excited, but they are bored. We're thrilled, but they're chilled. We want to see Jesus first and most, they want to see him last and least. What's going wrong here? What's happening? **Why do so few see the beauty and glory of Jesus Christ?** Or maybe you're one of the "Who cares?" crowd. You don't get Jesus, do you? Your question is more about yourself, "**Why do I not see the beauty and glory of Christ?**" 2 Corinthians 4:1-6 answers both questions.

BACKGROUND

In the last verses of chapter three, Paul encouraged the Corinthians with the power of the Gospel to change their lives. By seeing the beauty and glory of Christ, they would be changed into the same image (2 Corinthians 3:18). But that raises a question, **Why do so few see the beauty and glory of Christ?**



1. THE 'GOD' OF THIS WORLD BLINDS MINDS TO JESUS (1-5)

Paul's ministry was extremely simple in method (1-2) and message (5). He shunned manipulative methodology that deceived people. Rejecting all underhand schemes and sneaky tricks that undermined God's Word, he openly stated the truth so that none of the lost could accuse him of hiding it from them (1-2). His message was "Jesus Christ is Lord" which he took every opportunity to proclaim as a servant of God's people (5). But despite Paul's truthful and transparent method and message, the most common result was closed minds and hearts. What was the problem?

The devil is the blinder

...**the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers** (4).

This is the only place in the Bible where the Greek word for 'god' (theos) is applied to the devil. He's not a 'capital-G-God' as his influence is limited to this 'world' or this 'age.' But he's given the 'small-g-god' title because of the power he exercises over people. That power stems primarily from his ability to blind the minds of unbelievers every time Jesus is preached, spoken of, or thought of. Sometimes he blinds by distracting and diverting our thoughts from Jesus. Other times he does it by lying, "Jesus is irrelevant...Jesus will spoil your life...Jesus isn't interested in you...You'll lose all your friends and fun... No one believes this any more...Science disproves the Bible..." Other times he lets us believe everything the Bible teaches us about Jesus but simply blinds us so we cannot see the glory and beauty of Jesus.

The people are blinded

...**to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God** (4).

The problem is not the message or the messenger but the hearers. The Gospel is clear but the unbeliever is blind to 'the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.' John Piper says, "Lostness is blindness to glory."

When we say something is 'glorious' we're saying it's beautiful, awesome, wonderful, magnificent, and radiant. The unbeliever cannot see anything of that in Jesus. They can see glory in sport, in creation, in animals, in people, in technology, in people, in Instagram, in computer games, in 4K HDTV, but they cannot see glory in Jesus. No matter how well or long we speak about Jesus, they see no beauty that they should desire him, no glory that they should worship him. They are bored and blank-faced. Just as bored and blank as a blind person looking at sunset. Bethlehem is boring. Calvary is commonplace. The resurrection is routine.

CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

Who is your God/god? Is it the god of this world or the God of heaven? Here's how you know: Do you see compelling and irresistible glory in Jesus Christ. If no, then you are blinded by the god of this world. As you sit here and Christ is worshipped and preached, the devil is actively blinding your mind.

Pray for the blinded. We were once blind ourselves. We saw no glory in Christ. The devil successfully blinded us. But as people prayed for us, so let's pray for the blinded.

MANY SEE BEAUTY IN THE COSMOS OF CHRIST
FEW SEE BEAUTY IN THE CHRIST OF THE COSMOS



How can I see the glory of Jesus?



2. THE GOD OF HEAVEN SHINES JESUS INTO HEARTS (6)

God Shines Jesus

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts (6).

Nothing less than Genesis 1:3 is duplicated in every conversion. **And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.** Where there was lightless darkness, pitch blackness, there now is bright, brilliant, and beautiful light. The same God, the same command, the same effect happens in every believer's life.

We were in the dark, devil-dark, bored and blank to the beauty of Jesus. But God sovereignly and graciously said, "Let there be light" and there was light. We may not know the moment, but God knows the moment. He didn't ask for our permission. He didn't ask for our help. He simply turned the light on in our devil-dark hearts. Sometimes it's a flood light, like the Apostle Paul. Other times it's a pin-prick light that we barely notice initially, but gets bigger and brighter over time. How do I know if God's done this for me?

We see Jesus

...has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (6).

Jesus is no longer boring but beautiful. The light gives us knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. We no longer ask ourselves in church, "How can I distract myself?" but "How can I focus?" We no longer dread church but delight in it. We hunger for glory and hunt it down in the Bible until we are in awe of Jesus. Like Moses, we plead, "Lord show us your glory." I pray that before every worship service. "Lord show them your glory." Every verse, doctrine, sermon, worship service, Bible reading, meditation, fellowship, sacrament, etc., is a glory opportunity.

CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

No one is too dark. No heart was darker than Paul's, but when God said, "Let there be light!" there was light." Instead of hating Christ he loved him. Instead of smashing the light, he turned it on everywhere. No one is too dark. Pray, "Shine Jesus Shine, Fill this heart with the Savior's glory." And let's pray that for everyone.

Praise God for turning on the light. If you see glory in Jesus. If you are in awe of his beauty. If he excites you and entrances you, it's because God said, "Let there be light" and there was light.

I well remember growing up in church utterly bored and switched off. My plan was to put my faith in Jesus after I had made lots of money and lived life to the full. The devil had totally blinded me to glory. But one day, God sovereignly said, "Enough. Enough blinding. Enough blindness. Let there be light. Show David my glory in Jesus. Let him see the magnificence of Jesus." It took me a few weeks to understand what was happening, but when I did, I realized that I was entranced with Jesus. I was excited by him. I saw so much beauty in him that I had to have him. My hunger for glory was satisfied and still is. And it was all his sovereign mercy, his unilateral grace. Praise God for turning on the light.

Stay hungry for glory. See soul-satisfying beauty in the many varied faces of Jesus Christ. His baby-face in the manger. His teen face in the Temple. His tempted face in the desert. His spittled face at Gabbatha. His bleeding face on the cross. His dead face in the tomb. His happy face in the Garden

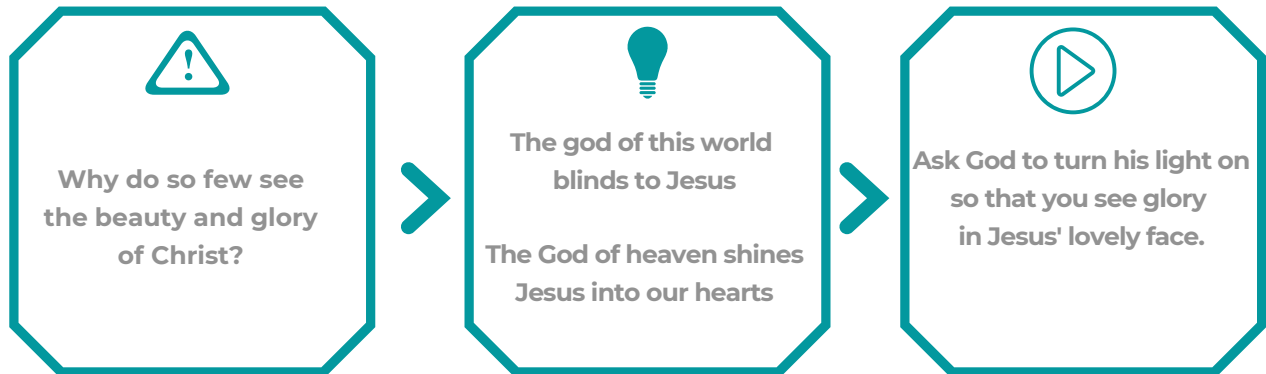
BLIND TO JESUS, BLIND, OR
SHINE JESUS SHINE



Hear God's Story > Change our story > Tell the Story > Change others' stories



SUMMARY



PRAYER: Light-shiner, shine in my heart and many hearts so that we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did Satan blind you?
2. Where did you look for glory before you believed in Jesus?
3. Who are you praying for that they may see glory in Jesus?
4. How did God turn the light on? What was that experience like?
5. Which of Jesus's 'faces' do you find most beauty in?
6. How will you stay hungry for Jesus's glory?

First Byron Christian Reformed Church
8541 Byron Center Ave SW, Byron Center, MI 49315
Phone: (616) 878-9768
www.firstbyroncrc.org

Pastor David Murray
www.HeadHeartHand.org
www.livingthebible.net

