2nd Corinthians

Series: Relentless

June 24, 2018

Message 4:

**True Grit**

2nd Corinthians 4

*Guests - Handout designed with you in mind - Info and notes especially for you - won’t call or visit -*

*Next Steps*

*Generosity*

*Notes on Handout and in YouVersion App*

**Intro:** Summarize the story of True Grit …

What I like about the movie … how he never gives up at the end … saves the life of the girl …

***Clip from the end?***

2nd Corinthians 4:1 - Therefore, since God in his mercy has given us this new way, …

“Therefore…” - find out what it’s there for -

Quick review …

**\*\* We’re calling this series “Relentless” - because in these passages we see Paul relentlessly pursuing God’s plan for His life, and relentlessly pursuing the purpose of the Corinthian people not wasting the grace of God that they have received -**

**And we share this goal - to relentlessly pursue God’s plan - and relentless pursue those who need God’s grace.**

**Big Idea: We never give up on our relationship with Christ.**

T.S.: We never give up because it’s real - because He is real - because He is bigger than us - and because His purpose is bigger than us!

Paul makes 8 statements -

**> Never give up.**

2nd Corinthians 4:1-2 - …we never give up. We reject all shameful deeds and underhanded methods. We don’t try to trick anyone or distort the word of God. We tell the truth before God, and all who are honest know this.

“I’m not a trickster - just genuine.”

No gimmicks …

* Manipulation vs .motivation -

I could manipulate if I wanted to … I don’t want to - whatever happens around here I want it to be real - to be genuine - and to result in changed lives.

**> Some will never understand.**

2nd Corinthians 4:3-4 - If the Good News we preach is hidden behind a veil, it is hidden only from people who are perishing. Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don’t believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don’t understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God.

Terry Inskeep worried about his family - didn’t understand why they couldn’t accept as he did …

Jesus had 60 leave in one day - at the end, Judas betrayed - Peter denied - only John watching from a distance - he appeared to be an utter failure -

This is hard to accept when we are relentlessly pursuing the goal of helping people to receive the grace of God - some will never understand …

**> It’s not about us.**

2nd Corinthians 4:5-6 - You see, we don’t go around preaching about ourselves. We preach that Jesus Christ is Lord, and we ourselves are your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, “Let there be light in the darkness,” has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ.

The Good News of Jesus Christ is not about the reputation of the preacher.

He needs to have character … but we don’t tell others about Jesus and want to see a church grow so that we can build a name for ourselves …

I’ve seen this with preachers …

“God told me to build a Bible School and name it after myself!”

I’ve seen this with denominations - for some, the denominational connection becomes more important than the Good News - it’s all about the denomination - serving the denomination - connecting with it’s programs - they are always the best!

Upward - vs. Sports Club -

Why not just go with what’s already working?

The Good News has to be about Jesus - building the reputation of Jesus -

“He must increase - I must decrease!”

John was willing to accept being overshadowed - we must do that as well - not lift ourselves up - It’s all about Jesus!

**> Our weakness shows His power.**

2nd Corinthians 4:7 - We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves.

If we make ourselves out to be strong - if we want to say we have the strongest and best ministry - then we are competing with others, rather than just giving them Jesus.

However, when others see that we are weak, we don’t have all the talent in the world, we don’t have all the money in the world, we don’t have all the best things in the world, yet lives are still being changed simply by trusting in Jesus - people will see that it is about Jesus and not about us!

Humility -

When I went to Indianapolis - thinking of the ads on the radio in Lakeland, Florida … “Come, find out for yourself!”

Anne Graham Lotz - “Just Give Me Jesus” -

“My life in 1999 and 2000 was pressure packed and trouble filled. My husband’s dental office, where he had practiced for thirty years, burned to the ground. All three of my children got married within eight months of each other. My son was diagnosed with cancer and went through successful surgery and follow-up radiation. I published two books … I produced a seven-volume video series … I kept up an intense speaking schedule that included international travel, fulfilled ministry obligations, and gave physical care to my parents, including going through my mother’s five emergency hospitalizations within a span of ten months. My ministry … was going through a transition that increased our yearly budget sixfold …

 “Even now, my duties and responsibilities at times seem overwhelming, and my schedule is overfilled. But I don’t want a vacation, I don’t want to quit, I don’t want sympathy, I don’t want money, I don’t want recognition, I don’t want to escape, Id on’t even want a miracle!

 “This book is the cry of my heart - just give me Jesus. Please! …

“He is enduringly strong.

 He is entirely sincere.

He is eternally steadfast.

 He is immortally gracious.

He is imperially powerful.

 He is impartially merciful.

He is the greatest phenomenon that has ever crossed

 the horizons of the globe.

He is God’s Son.

 He is the sinner’s Savior.

He is the captive’s Ransom.

 He is the Breath of Life.

He is the centerpiece of civilization.

 He stands in the solitude of Himself.

He is august and He is unique.

 He is unparalleled and He is unprecedented.

He is undisputed and He is undefiled.

 He is unsurpassed and He is unshakable.

He is the lofty idea in philosophy.

 He is the highest personality in psychology.

He is the supreme subject in literature.

 He is the unavoidable problem in higher criticism.

He is the fundamental doctrine of theology.

 He is the Cornerstone, the Capstone, and the stumbling Stone of all religion.

He is the miracle of the ages.

“Just give me Jesus! He makes God visible!”

**> We will not be beaten!**

2nd Corinthians 4:8-10 - We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed. Through suffering, our bodies continue to share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies.

Examples of martyrs -

We have ups and downs - we will keep going!

Paul’s experiences …

**> It’s all about Jesus - and we die so that others can live!**

2nd Corinthians 4:11-12 - Yes, we live under constant danger of death because we serve Jesus, so that the life of Jesus will be evident in our dying bodies. So we live in the face of death, but this has resulted in eternal life for you.

This is why Jesus died - people didn’t understand it - people still don’t understand it today -

We don’t live for Jesus so that we can experience luxury.

We don’t live for Jesus so that we can pray and have all our bills paid.

We live for Jesus - and we may face difficulty because of that - but in our weakness He is strong - in our suffering with grace - with a smile - others see that they can make it through their difficulties as well - and still be blessed in the face of hardship - if they have Jesus!

Paul - “If Jesus was willing to die so that we could live - I’m willing to die so that others can live!”

That must be our attitude - It’s not about us!

Paul did have to die … to Timothy - ready to be offered -

2nd Timothy 4:6-8 - As for me, my life has already been poured out as an offering to God. The time of my death is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. And now the prize awaits me—the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on the day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his appearing.

**> Our faith won’t let us stop.**

2nd Corinthians 4:13-15 - But we continue to preach because we have the same kind of faith the psalmist had when he said, “I believed in God, so I spoke.” We know that God, who raised the Lord Jesus, will also raise us with Jesus and present us to himself together with you. All of this is for your benefit. And as God’s grace reaches more and more people, there will be great thanksgiving, and God will receive more and more glory.

If you know this story of Jesus is true - how can you give up?

Are you tempted today to give up? Are you going through something so hard, you are thinking God no longer cares? … no longer loves you? … won’t come through for you?

What’s the point?

Heaven is the point! We’re not living for this earth!

Psalms express this …

If you are ready to give up on Jesus today, hear the Apostle Paul …

Through our difficulties - God’s grace will reach more and more people! If you stick with it, not only will you make heaven, many others will as well! It’s not about this life - it’s about the next life! That’s the one that will last forever!

**> So we never give up.**

2nd Corinthians 4:16-18 - That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. For our present troubles are small and won’t last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! So we don’t look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.

Paul is giving them a speech like Winston Churchill -

Set up ….

***Churchill … movie clip - 1:52-3:16***

Don’t focus on the trouble - the problems - focus on Jesus -

Jesus - looked beyond the cross -

Hebrews 12:1-3 - Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God’s throne. Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won’t become weary and give up.

**Be relentless!**