

**Sept 8, 2019**

**Speaker:** Eric Naus **Series:** Beyond the Boundaries – Living as a Church on Mission

**Passage:** 2 Corinthians 4:1-7

## Community Group Questions: "The Greatest Boundary Ever Crossed"

1. Read 2 Corinthians 4:1-7 aloud as a group. 2 Corinthians is Paul's second letter to the church at Corinth, a letter that details many of the struggles and trials that Paul faced as he lived "on mission" as an Apostle, bringing the gospel to people all around the ancient world. Even with all the rejection he faced in his apostolic mission, Paul refused to "lose heart" (see vs. 1). Have you ever been tempted to lose heart when sharing and demonstrating the gospel with people in your life? What are some of the greatest challenges that you face in living on mission as a Christian, and what things tend to discourage you the most?
2. The main reason Paul did not lose heart is that he saw the mission of reaching people with the gospel as *humanly* impossible, but *divinely* unstoppable. In other words, only God could actually bring a dead heart to life by his power! How does confidence in the sovereignty of God in salvation strengthen us to never lose heart in living on mission?
3. In verse 2, Paul insists that he never tries to manipulate people into the kingdom, but rather, he shares the gospel honestly and openly. Have you ever experienced manipulative evangelism? What does that look like, and how does it contrast with Paul's approach here?
4. Verses 3-4 deal with the "veil" that every person naturally has over their heart, which keeps them from embracing Christ. It's a natural hardness of heart (see 3:14-15), as well as a spiritual bondage to the powers of evil (note the "god of this world," i.e. Satan, in vs. 4). How should an awareness of this veil over people's hearts affect how we pray for them, how we share with them, and how we rely on God in seeking to reach them?
5. Verses 5-6 recount Paul's own conversion experience. Review the story in Acts 9:1-19. Comparing Paul's conversion story with 2 Cor. 4:6, what key elements did Paul believe were necessary for any person to truly convert to Christ? Which of these elements did you experience in your own personal conversion story? In other words, tell the story of how God sovereignly rescue you, beaming his light into your heart.
6. Verse 7 speaks of a wonderful "treasure" held in frail "jars of clay." It's a picture of how the glorious gospel is carried along by weak, frail, broken individuals like you and me. In your life, how has God especially used your weaknesses to make his gospel shine?

**Prayer suggestion:** Spend time thanking God for sovereignly drawing you to himself with the gospel, and piercing through the veil that once lay over your heart. Ask God to use your plain and honest witnessing and your humble weaknesses to make the treasure of his gospel known.