

1. Happy Thanksgiving! Happy Advent! Merry Christmas! Happy New Year!
2. Tell others about LifeLines!
3. See you Monday, 1/9/23!

## LifeLines November 21, 2022

### Today's Scripture: 1 Verse

#### 2 Corinthians 4:4

In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

### WHY WE'RE HERE

2 Timothy 3:16-17, All scripture is inspired by God & is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, & for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

### CONTEXT

In the first verses of Chapter 4, Paul stresses the revelation of God's glory as proclaimed in the gospels. Remember, "gospel" means "good news." Previously, Paul spoke of a veil that keeps those who are hardened by sin from being able to see God's glory. "Glory" is a word used to describe God's eternal splendor & majesty. It describes the manifestation of His Presence for humanity. This glory is revealed to humanity, to us, in Christ, but the veil is only removed from those who turn to the Lord. Only then will they see God's glory. Those who resist are unable to see the truth or the light at all.

[Have you ever pleadingly asked someone, "Can't you *see*? Don't you *get* it?" In the case of the revelation of Christ, some people *cannot* see. Our LifeLine verse is about these people, people who refuse to see the truth of the gospel or good news.]

Paul was adamant that he & his co-workers clearly teach the gospel even though some may not fully understand their teaching. He knew that some people had heard the truth & renounced it, choosing not to believe. After all, God gives all of us free-will. We make our own decisions about faith.

## **DIFFERENT VERSIONS**

### **NIV**

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

### **NLT**

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.

### **AMP**

Among them the god of this world (Satan) has blinded the minds of the unbelieving to prevent them from seeing the illuminating light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

### **ASV (American Standard Version)**

In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not *dawn* upon them.

### **NKJV**

Whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

### **TLB**

Satan, who is the god of this evil world, has made him blind, unable to see the glorious light of the Gospel that is shining upon him or to understand the amazing message we preach about the glory of Christ, who is God.

### **NCV (New Century Version)**

The devil who rules this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe. They cannot see the light of the Good News – the Good News about the glory of Christ, who is exactly like God.

## **GNT**

They do not believe, because their minds have been kept in the dark by the evil god of this world. He keeps them from seeing the light shining on them, the light that comes from the Good News about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God.

## **GW (God's Word Translation)**

The god of this world has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. As a result, they don't see the light of the Good News about Christ's glory. It is Christ who is God's image.

## **MSG**

All they have eyes for is the fashionable god of darkness. They think he can give them whatever they want, & that they won't have to bother believing a truth they can't see. They're stone-blind to the dayspring brightness of the Message that shines with Christ, who gives us the best picture of God we'll ever get.

## **SELAH**

## **BREAKING DOWN THE VERSE**

*In their case the god of this world...* This is the only New Testament reference to Satan as a "god." (Jesus referred to Satan as "the ruler of this world," in John 12:31, 14:30 & 16:11. Paul referred to Satan as "the ruler of this age" in 1 Corinthians 2:6 & 8 and as "the ruler of the power of the air" in Ephesians 2:2.) Satan dominates the age in which we live, but he's not in complete control. He is the god of fallen men who reject the Light & become victims of darkness. He has dominion over those who choose not to believe. He deceives & misguides. He encourages people to think they are self-sufficient & can use their minds alone to accomplish anything.

Paul knew there was a reason some people refused to listen to the gospel. As soon as someone rejects or doubts the gospel, Satan has an in-road because such people have unwittingly given him a foothold in their mind. Their unbelief becomes firmly established in their minds & hearts until both are blinded to the truth Paul tried to bring. The same is true today.

*has blinded the minds of the unbelievers...* Paul used the term 'unbelievers' to refer to non-Christians & adversaries linked with Satan. Paul considered

unbelievers to be perishing (see 2 Corinthians 4:3) & to be enemies of the cross of Christ (Philippians 3:18a). He told the Corinthians the minds of these people had been hardened just as it was with the Israelites in Moses day. They were unable to hear with their hearts.

The devil actively participates in blinding the minds of those who don't believe in Jesus – to keep them from coming to faith in Christ. The devil wants to prevent people from seeing the light of Christ, the truth of the gospel. He does this through easy access to people's souls. He penetrates their hearts & minds, diverting their attention to more pleasurable things. Unbelievers are willing subjects & have no idea what's happening to them.

Thank goodness for the Holy Spirit working in & through believers.

*to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ...* The devil's desire has always been to keep us from seeing the Light of God, the Good News Jesus brought. He seeks to lead people away from the Light & back into darkness. The more people reject God, the more hardened their hearts become & the more the devil is able to keep them blinded to the light of the gospel.

*who is the image of God...* Christ is literally God's revelation of Himself to humanity. God intends that we know Him by knowing His Son. He wants us to come face to face with Him through Jesus Christ. Only those who come to Him through faith in Christ can see His glory. And, those who see it begin to be transformed to become more & more like Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:18).

**SELAH**

## **RELATED VERSES**

Isaiah 42:6-7a & 9, (Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would be a light to the Gentiles & free God's children from the captivity of sin.) I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand & kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind...See, the former things have come to pass, & new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

John 1:14, And the Word became flesh & lived among us, & we have seen His glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace & truth.

John 1:18, No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made Him known.

John 3:19-20, "And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, & people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light & do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed."

John 8:12, Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."

John 12:31 (This is Jesus speaking of His death), "Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out."

Acts 26:17-18 (Paul is relating to King Agrippa what Jesus said to him on the road to Damascus), "I will rescue you from your people & from the Gentiles – to whom I am sending you to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light & from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins & a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Me."

2 Corinthians 2:11, And we do this (speaking of forgiveness) so that we may not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

2 Corinthians 3:14-16 (Speaking of Moses who wore a veil over his face to keep the people from being blinded by the glory shining from his face after being in the presence of God), But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside. Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.

2 Corinthians 3:18, And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same *image* from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 4:6, For it is the God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:1-2, You were dead through the trespasses & sins in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient.

Ephesians 6:12, For our struggle is not against enemies of blood & flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly places.

Colossians 1:15-17, He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in Him all things in heaven & on earth were created, things visible & invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers – all things have been created by Him & for Him. He Himself is before all things, & in Him all things hold together.

Colossians 1:27, To them (the saints) God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Hebrews 1:3a, He is the reflection of God’s glory & the exact imprint of God’s very being, & He sustains all things by His powerful word.

1 John 1:5-7, This is the message we have heard from Him & proclaim to you, that God is light & in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him while we are walking in darkness, we lie & do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, & the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

## **SUMMARY**

Satan wants to keep as many people as possible spiritually blind. He doesn’t want people to know the truth about God. He’s on a vendetta to stop this from happening. We are to proclaim Jesus as the Light, the Truth & the Good News of the gospel.

Thank goodness the Holy Spirit has worked in us & allowed us to see & know the glory of God. Let us help spread this good news. Let us be a light to others & turn their spiritual blindness into sight. Is this even possible? Yes! How can this be done?

It is done through prayer! Reasoning is not a good tool. We pray for the Holy Spirit to intervene, to use us (or someone else, an incident, an unlikely encounter with someone, a song on the radio, etc.) to stir the person's curiosity, to cause them to wonder or ponder, to allow a glimmer of a new, (anointed) way of thinking/reasoning to *dawn* upon the person. Human reasoning calculates by seeing. This was true even for the disciples! As they were exposed to & spent time with the living Lord, their eyes *were opened*! It takes time before many folks learn to "walk by faith, not by sight." This is a tough concept for unbelievers to grasp. This is why we continue planting seeds & pray to the Lord of the harvest - knowing all things are possible.

Over the holidays, you may very well encounter family or friends who are unbelievers. I hope this LifeLine will help you understand them a little better. May you find bold, but soft, ways to share with them your faith & your thankfulness for instances when you've seen God at work in your life. Rather than trying to reason with others in an attempt to *convince* them of the value of faith or of their own spiritual blindness, pray for them in a new way. Let Proverbs 3:5-6 speak to you, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, & do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge Him, & He will make straight your paths," for, "This is the message we have heard from Him & proclaim to you, that God is light & in Him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5-7).

May it be so for you & yours throughout 2022.

*Let this verse be a LifeLine for you!*

*Let's Continue Learning!*

**SCRIPTURE IS OUR –**

***LifeLine!***