



Ernest Jackson Boyett Jr.,
and his dear wife, Barbara,
left this earthly realm together on
November 29th, 2011
to be with our Lord.



Providence Theological Seminary Graduation Sermon

INSIDE THE MIND OF A MINISTER⁽¹⁾

May 15, 2010

As Christians, we can say of every day, “This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.” But this day in particular is truly a day for rejoicing for those of us in this room—certainly for our two graduates and their families and friends, but also for all of us who have longed to see this day and labored for it. We are those who have dreamed of a seminary with an emphasis on New Covenant Theology, and by God’s grace we have seen that dream become a reality. It has not been easy. “Through many dangers, toils, and snares we have already come.” But God’s grace has been with us, many sacrifices have been made, and many godly people have committed themselves to the success of this seminary—our faculty president, our excellent instructors, our wise and steady chairman of the board, our faithful board members, and all of you who have given generously to this work and who count yourselves to be friends of this seminary. We thank God for you all, because you have all played crucial roles in God’s plan for Providence Theological Seminary. It is a profound honor for me to rejoice together with you and to be speaking to you today.

I know that not every seminary graduate becomes a pastor. When I graduated from seminary, I didn’t know what I would do in the future, but I knew three things: I wouldn’t continue to live in Austin, I wouldn’t be a pastor, and I would never be a Calvinist! Take it from one who knows, God has his own plans for you two graduates! Perhaps you will be pastors, perhaps not, but you will be *ministers*, in whatever way the Lord your God will choose, whether in education or missions or writing or counseling. Today, we’re going to go inside the mind of a minister, in the hope that I may encourage you in whatever calling you receive from God

Please turn with me to 2nd Corinthians 4, verses 13-18.

Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, “I believed and so I spoke,” we also believe and so we also speak, knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into His presence. For it is all for your sake; so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving to the glory of God. So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient. But the things that are unseen are eternal.

Although I have pastored for nearly 32 years, I am still not mature enough to preach through 2nd Corinthians. It is a profound book, difficult to preach from because there is so much anguish in it. There is so much of Paul's emotion in it. He bares his soul as in none of his other letters. 2nd Corinthians has Paul at his most transparent, at times forced to defend his ministry, sometimes to the point of embarrassing himself. Toward the end of the letter he says "I have made a fool of myself, but you forced me to it. You drove me to it."

It all stemmed from the fact that false apostles had infiltrated the church at Corinth. This is one of four letters we know that Paul wrote to the church at Corinth. We have two of them, of course. And these false apostles were doing just what false apostle do. They were preaching another gospel. Chapter 11 verses 4-6 make it very clear. He says,

For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received or if you accept a different gospel than the one that you accepted, you put up with it readily enough. Indeed I consider that I am not in the least inferior to the super apostles even if I am unskilled in speaking, I am not so in knowledge. Indeed in every way we have made this plain to you in all things.

These "super apostles" were changing the message of Christianity, and they were, of course, doing negative campaigning. They were speaking against the apostle Paul. They were saying things like this: "Paul can't be trusted. He promises one thing, then changes his plans and does another thing. Didn't he promise to visit you and he didn't come? Well, doesn't that indicate someone pretty unstable and untrustworthy?" So, that was one charge.

Another was this: "Paul's letters may be weighty but he is not impressive in person. He is not impressive in authority or speech". And they also said, "There is something fishy about the fact that he doesn't charge for what he preaches. It must be worth exactly what you are paying for it. It must really mean that he doesn't love you Corinthians, and what he preaches is worthless. Perhaps he doesn't need money because there is something sinister going on. He is always talking about taking an offering for those poor saints at Jerusalem. Maybe he is using that money. Maybe he is embezzling from the churches and collecting money that he is supposedly going to take to the Jerusalem church. "

Paul is replying to all of these charges and rumors and innuendos in 2nd Corinthians. But the way he replies is this, and it is a little surprising: his authority as an apostle has been proven by the power of God working in him through *weakness*, working in him through *afflictions*, working in him through *sacrifices*. So, what Paul labors to argue in 2nd Corinthians is: whatever power he has comes from God's grace. In many ways the key verse of the book is perhaps in that section of the book that is most familiar where Paul talks about the "thorn" in his flesh. And, in one of the most famous verses in the book, chapter 12, verse 9, he quotes the Lord as saying to him, *My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness*. My power is made perfect in weakness!

I have a superb remark about that verse for you graduates from the great commentator on 2nd Corinthians, Philip Edgecombe Hughes. He said, "To whatever degree a minister of Christ asserts his own adequacy, to that degree does he deny and withdraw from the sole sufficiency of the grace of God." That would make a good quote to display on your desk, facing toward you!

It is God's grace that has brought you to this day, his grace that has enabled you to study, to learn, to remember, and to persevere, and it is his grace that you will need to depend on all the days of your ministry, whatever it may be. You know that Jesus said, "Apart from me you can do nothing." I am sure you have felt the discipline of the Lord as He has revealed to you again and again, "You need Me." "I am glorified in your dependence on me," as Jonathan Edwards would put it. In this very chapter in verse 7, Paul says, "We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us." That's what you will be, God willing, as a minister, a jar of clay with a treasure in it.

In our text today, Paul magnifies the grace of God, not only in his own life and ministry but also in the lives of the Christians at Corinth. In so doing, he takes us inside the mind of a minister. We see the perspective that a true minister of the gospel will bring to his ministry. It's the same perspective in these verses today which all of us are called to bring to our lives as a whole. But people are going to be asking about you who are ministers of the gospel, "What makes him tick? What motivates him? What is the driving force in his life?" And the world *should* be asking that about you because, of course, you are going to be an enigma to the world. You are going to be somewhat of a mystery to the world. If Jesus is your Lord, you will have a Christian worldview. And, it will be just as applicable to your life as that same worldview was to Paul. While this is true for all of us, it is supremely true for ministers.

So, today I would like you to notice four perspectives from the mind of Paul that motivate his actions as an apostle. They are the same four things that should motivate you graduates and your actions all the days of your life. They are these: believing the Word of God, watching the work of God, hoping for the glory of God, and seeing the truth of God.

The first is: believing the Word of God. Look at verse 13 of 2nd Corinthians 4. *Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, I believed and so I spoke. We also believe and so we also speak.* Paul believed certain things were true, and, therefore, he spoke them. He even identified with the Psalmist because he quotes Psalm 116, verse 10: *I believed and therefore I spoke.*

Now, this is exactly the position that the Lord Jesus Christ showed us we should take by His own example. When Satan came to Him in the wilderness, He took verses out of a book of the Bible, Deuteronomy. It's interesting to me that I was taught in seminary that Deuteronomy was a forgery in which words were attributed to Moses. But Jesus believed Deuteronomy. He considered it to be the word of God. He took verses out of that book and hurled them at Satan. He believed and therefore He spoke, and said, "It is written. It is written. It is written." He believed those verses. And that's the primary reason you should, too: the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We don't consider the Bible to be the Word of God simply because of the latest archaeological findings or the latest linguistic studies. We start with the words of the Lord Jesus Himself who regarded the Old Testament as an authoritative book. And, so, the question is: do you consider the Bible to be so authoritative in your life that you speak and act based on Scripture? It is just that simple.

This is what Paul wanted Timothy to do. He wrote several important things to him, for example, *Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.* (I Timothy 4:16) He also wrote, *All Scripture is breathed out by*

God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness. (II Timothy 3:16) Ministers are to use the God breathed Scripture to teach, reprove, correct and train in righteousness. So, Christians and ministers must believe and then speak. You and I are forced in our decision-making and our marital relationships and in our relationships with other Christians, and our relationships with our friends and our family and our nation to *believe* and then to *speak*.

Now, Paul being an apostle, had not only the Old Testament, but he also had direct revelations from God that we have recorded in our Bible. And, a couple of them are in v. 14 where he says, *Knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into His presence.* The resurrection of Jesus, as I tell my church every resurrection Sunday, is the best-attested fact in history before the age of photography. Of course, now, with iPhoto and Photoshop available to us, you can't even believe photography! But once you could. And the resurrection has many evidences that make it as believable as an accurate photograph used to be! But, you can believe in the resurrection but not believe in the *meaning* of it. And, so, it is Paul who particularly tells us in Scripture the meaning of the resurrection of Jesus. It is not a resurrection like the raising of Lazarus from the dead. That didn't mean anything about Lazarus except that he had been touched by the grace and power of God. But the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, the apostle Paul says, means that He is Lord! *He has been declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead,* Paul says in Romans 1:4.

He had already written, you know, in his first letter to the Corinthians – or actually his second letter which we call I Corinthians – that the resurrection demonstrates that our sins were forgiven. He says, *If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then also, those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.* Where did he get that *meaning* of the resurrection? Well, he got that meaning of the resurrection because the Holy Spirit had revealed to Paul that the resurrection was validating the atonement. When Jesus died on the cross and went into the presence of God, the fact that God raised Him from the dead, never to die again, meant that the atonement worked! It meant that the atonement was a success. It was, to quote a title of a book by our Faculty President, a “definite atonement.” And furthermore he says in the book of Romans in 4:25 that *He was raised for our justification.* He was raised because in the mind of God our justification was accomplished. His wrath was satisfied by our substitute, the sinless lamb of God, and therefore we could be declared to be as righteous as Jesus! And, therefore, God raised Him from the dead and revealed the righteous of God, which comes through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ for all who believe. Those who believe on Jesus are justified through their faith, with his righteousness imputed to them. Your sins have been forgiven on an objective basis in the eyes of the God who will by no means clear the guilty!

But all this is because Jesus was sinless; and if He had not been sinless, He would have stayed dead. It is just that simple. But because He was, in fact, the God-man, the Son of God, and it was impossible that death should hold him, God raised Him from the dead and our salvation is secure. The empty tomb *means* that your sins are forgiven! Paul knew that by revelation; you know it by Scripture!

And he tells the Corinthians in this same verse 14 that *those who believe in Jesus will be raised also.* Think again of Lazarus. Just because Jesus raised Lazarus it did not guarantee anything other than the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. It showed us His power, and that Jesus could

raise others if He wanted to. But the resurrection of Jesus indicates, for Paul, that those who believe in Him will be raised also.

Now all of these things are truths from the Word of God. And, you and I have that Word. We base our lives on it. You and I make decisions every day based upon what the word of God commands or allows or prohibits. If it is true that *out of the abundance the heart the mouth speaks*, what should be in our hearts? If it is true that we are to be *transformed by the renewing of our minds*, what should be in our minds? What should be in our hearts and our minds is the Word of God. The authority of your ministry must be the Bible, the infallible Word of God; and the focus of your ministry must be the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now when I say the focus of your ministry must be the Lord Jesus Christ, I mean not only who he is in terms of Christology—and that must be Scriptural, because all cults get that wrong—I mean he must be presented as the proper content of the gospel, and as the proper subject of Scripture.

As concerning the proper content of the gospel, it is crucial that you really know what the gospel is and how it is centered in Jesus. You need to live in Romans, chapters 3-5, and in Ephesians, chapter 2, and in the entire epistle to the Galatians, which begins by asserting that there is a different gospel. Paul says, *Even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.* (Gal. 1:9) This different gospel is a gospel that combines faith and works. It is *not* justification by grace alone, through faith alone, by Christ alone, according to Scripture alone, and to God alone be the glory. This different gospel can take many forms, but it always involves trusting partly in your works, not as evidences of your faith as the Bible teaches, but as contributing to your salvation. It insults the cross where Jesus finished his work of atonement; it insults his resurrection where he was raised for our justification. Beware particularly the New Perspective on Paul, and beware the leaven of N.T. Wright who has enchanted so many evangelicals with his brilliance. Wright denies what I have just preached to you about the imputation of Christ's righteousness, calling it "a pious fiction." Many evangelicals are now believing him and his different gospel, especially in Reformed circles. The Roman Catholic Council of Trent has never been rescinded and says to this day that I should be *curse*d for what I just preached to you. Brothers, guard the gospel, guard the deposit entrusted to you, as Paul admonished Timothy.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus! Never preach a gospel that denies those words! Your salvation is in Christ alone; tell others that is where it is to be found. Spurgeon said after preaching at the Metropolitan Tabernacle for thirty years, "I do believe that we slander Christ when we think that we are to draw the people by something else but the preaching of Christ crucified. We know that the greatest crowd in London has been held together these thirty years by nothing but the preaching of Christ crucified. Where is our music? Where is our oratory? Where is anything of attractive architecture, of beauty or ritual? 'A bare service,' they call it. Yes, but Christ makes up for all the deficiencies." He sure does. *Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ* said Paul in Romans 10:17, and he meant more than you can imagine. "The word of Christ" means "the preaching that Christ *does* about *himself*! Here is what you may trust: preach the gospel—Jesus Christ, crucified, resurrected, ascended, and reigning—and you may trust Jesus to preach through you, calling, convicting, comforting his sheep who hear His voice! Just stay on message—present Jesus Christ as the proper content of the gospel.

Concerning the second aspect of the focus of your ministry being the Lord Jesus, it is crucial that you present Him as the proper subject of Scripture. Jesus preached one of the greatest sermons of all time and we have a one-verse summary of it in Luke 24:27: *And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.* All Scripture leads to Christ. The principle of fulfillment in him is one of the foundations of New Covenant theology because it is one of the key principles of Biblical interpretation. Let me read to you my favorite sentence outside the Bible. It was uttered by Professor F. F. Bruce in 1968 during some lectures he gave at Fuller Theological Seminary in 1968. Here it is: *In Jesus the promise is confirmed, the covenant is renewed, the prophecies are fulfilled, the law is vindicated, salvation is brought near, sacred history has reached its climax, the perfect sacrifice has been offered and accepted, the great priest over the household of God raised up, the Son of David reigns, the kingdom of God has been inaugurated, the Son of Man has received dominion from the Ancient of Days, the Servant of the Lord, having been smitten to death for his people's transgression and borne the sin of many, has accomplished the divine purpose, has seen light after the travail of his soul and is now exalted and extolled and made very high.*^[2]

Brothers, Jesus is the proper subject of Scripture. In our same epistle, II Corinthians, Paul wrote in 1:20, *For all the promises of God find their Yes in Him. That is why it is through Him that we utter our Amen to God for His glory.* We get all this from the Word of God.

And you will be misunderstood for standing on the Word. You will be ridiculed. You will be hated as our Lord was and said that you would be. But, may you have the same spirit of Paul, who had the same spirit of the Psalmist, and may you also say, *I believe, therefore I speak.*

A second motivation for you from the mind of the apostle Paul is watching the work of God. Look at verse 15. It says, *For it is all for your sake; so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving to the glory of God.* What does that mean? Well, all that Paul has done and endured for the Corinthians result in so many blessings for others. And that has resulted in yet other people being influenced by the Corinthians and giving thanks to God.

You see, grace has not only converted the Corinthians but through the Corinthians grace influences others. And, this is one of the most exciting things about the Christian life, as you know, to see God taking ordinary people and doing great things with them and then affecting many other people through them. This can only be thrilling to one who loves the Lord, who loves the gospel, and who loves people.

This is what a minister is always on the lookout for—God changing people's hearts, God working in their circumstances, God ordering the events in their lives for their good and His glory. There are what I call "chains of grace" and people and events become links in those chains. A man like Paul could write a letter from prison to his beloved church at Philippi, to saints who were worried about him, and say, "You're not going to believe this! I want you to know that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ." (Phil. 1:12-13) Paul could see that he has been brought to Rome for a purpose and God is working that purpose out. Paul didn't even care that some preached Christ from envy and rivalry! He said, "What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice." (Phil. 1:18)

Most of us can perceive some of the work of God after it's happened, but a minister expects God to be working and loves to see the signs of it. He loves to see conversions, he loves to see progress, he loves to see in people growth in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. He loves to see, if he can, both the immediate and the far-reaching results of grace.

For example, here we are today giving thanks for the grace of God to the glory of God, but do you ever ponder the links in the chain of grace that made today possible? Many of you may be here today because God brought Dr. Gary Long into your life. Certainly, that's true of me. I heard of Dr. Long in the spring of 1980 shortly after I had become a Calvinist. I knew he pastored in San Antonio and had written a book called *Definite Atonement*. I met him at the famous Salado conference in October of that year. Theological changes were going on among many Calvinistic Baptists who had left Dispensationalism and gone almost or part-way into Covenant Theology. Many were seeing that Scripture taught something different than those two choices. Dr. Long had made his own contribution to the discussion in that year of 1980 by publishing a pamphlet called, "The Christian Sabbath—Lord's Day Controversy" and by presenting a paper at the Dallas Council on Baptist Theology called "Biblical Law and Ethics: Absolute and Covenantal." That paper, now in book form, remains controversial, to say the least. But what Dr. Long was doing was not for shock value or to stir up controversy. It was an attempt at respecting Scripture, wrestling with Scripture, and refusing to simply regurgitate the traditions of men even when they were respected men in respected traditions. That's the approach that is now being worked out in an educational environment at Providence Theological Seminary.

I heard another man preach at that Salado conference, the great evangelist John Reisinger, from whom I have learned much and stolen much over the years! He preached the doctrines of grace in a warm-hearted way, and like Dr. Long, he was willing to dare to go where the Scriptures took him, even to the point of conflict in his own family. His masterpiece is a little book worth its weight in gold, *Abraham's Four Seeds*. One reads it and says, "All this was right in front of my eyes all the years I read the Bible, yet I never connected it properly and realized what it meant." He, too, was a link in the chain of grace for me.

But there were links in the chain of grace in the lives of both these men. When he was a student at Dallas Theological Seminary, Dr. Long had been mentored by Dr. S. Lewis Johnson, professor of theology who later became the beloved Bible teacher at Believers Chapel in Dallas.

Their mentoring was mutual; the future Dr. Long led Dr. Johnson to an acceptance of definite atonement.

Concerning John Reisinger, he was introduced to the doctrines of grace which he learned to preach so well, by an elderly gentleman who was a link for him in the chain of grace. When John was a young pastor in Lewisburg, PA, the old gentleman would come to church and hear him preach on Sunday, and then send him a letter, which he would receive by Tuesday. The letter would point out the Arminian errors in John's sermon and correct his theology. He was very respectful and John was respectful of him and searched the Scriptures to see if these things were so. Eventually, the old man led him to believe and preach the doctrines of grace. Who was the old man? His name was I.C. Herendeen, and he may very well be a link in your chain of grace also. In 1917, he had been a tract and Bible distributor in Swengel, PA. His little company was called Bible Truth Depot, and in that year of 1917, he met the British Bible teacher Arthur W. Pink, who introduced *him* to the doctrines of grace! Herendeen wanted to publish books by Pink,

and in 1918, he published one that almost cost him his company, *The Sovereignty of God*. It was hard to sell, and Herendeen had to take a secular job selling shoes because of his losses. Moreover, the book enraged Christians at the time, and it still does. It is the most-thrown-against-the-wall theology book of all time! But its influence in the last 90 years has been phenomenal and probably has reached to your library—or maybe your wall! Here is the point: these are examples of the work of God as it is wrought through Christians. Grace reigns! Pink influences Herendeen, who influences John Reisinger, who meets Gary Long, who has been influenced by S. Lewis Johnson, and who puts on a conference, and influences Joe and Pam Kelley of Killeen Bible Church in Texas, who desire that a seminary be established and who persuade their church to donate land for it. Dr. Long brings to the seminary board members and instructors, all of whom have been influenced by him in the providence of God for which the seminary is named. The end result is now this joyous graduation day for all of us, and behind it all is God! Did you know that your legacy goes all the way back to Arthur W. Pink? It's even greater; it goes all the way back to the Lord Jesus Christ, who said, "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!" A minister of God always knows that these kinds of interrelated events and influences will happen, that it is normal in the kingdom of God; he looks for them, and delights in them, with no thought of rivalry, envy, or jealousy. He is watching the work of God.

You will be an influence on others in your own ministries, and, God willing, through you, grace will extend to more and more people. And you yourselves may well be surprised one day to learn of the influence you've had, and how God has used you for His glory. In the early nineteenth century, an elderly pastor of a church in Scotland received a criticism from one of his deacons. (You will always find that that people will complain right before the morning worship begins, so that Satan may destroy your frame of mind for the service!) The deacon said, "Pastor, something must be wrong with your preaching and your work. There's only been one person added to the church this year, and he's just a boy." The minister replied, "I feel it, but God knows I've tried to do my duty." He was depressed during the service and thought, when it ended, "I must resign." Everyone left the building—except the young boy the deacon had mentioned. He approached the pastor and asked, "Do you think if I worked hard for an education, I could become a preacher—perhaps a missionary?" The pastor said, "Ah, this heals the ache I feel. Robert, I see the divine hand now. May God bless you, my boy! Yes, I think you will become a preacher." And Robert did. He was Robert Moffatt, the famous missionary to Africa, who served there for over fifty years as a preacher, translator, and explorer. He is perhaps most well-known for the fact that his daughter married David Livingstone. You truly never know where your influence will reach!

The third thing we get from Paul that is inside the mind of a minister is hoping for the glory of God. In verse sixteen we read, *So we do not lose heart, though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. You see it is appointed to man to die once. We are all on our way to the grave. In the meantime, we are going to suffer, but not only do we suffer, we are being transformed and we are going to find one day that this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.* That word "weight" looks back to the Hebrew word for glory—"kabod." The word means weight, but it came to mean "worth" or "dignity" and "majesty." You are getting more Christ-like because of your sufferings. You are getting more godly because of your sufferings. That is what sufferings do to us. There are all part of God's plan to conform us to the image of Jesus. Paul is looking not only at this life but *beyond* this life, not only to heaven where we will be present with the Lord, but also to the final state, when creation will be set free from its bondage to corruption. He wrote to the

Philippians that our coming Savior “will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.” (Phil. 3:20-21)

Until then, the sufferings of this present time are working in us something unimaginable, a weight of glory compared to which the sufferings of this life, bad as they seem, will be as light as a feather. We are all aware of our outward bodies wasting away, but at the same we inwardly appreciate more and more the grace and mercy of God. Suffering is producing endurance, endurance is producing character and character is producing hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. As a minister you will live with tragedy, sorrow, disaster, disease, and death. There will be times of relief, of remission, even healing in answer to prayer. But for yourself and everyone you know, the outer self is wasting away. Your theology must face that grim fact, but also rejoice in its counterpart that the inner self is being renewed day by day. How often have I read these verses to people in hospitals and on death beds. *This light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.* Ultimately, according to His promise, we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells and the guaranteed final state of glorification of our bodies. *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified, he also glorified.* (Rom 8:29,30). The mind of a minister will keep this perspective always, hoping for the glory of God. *We rejoice, Paul said in Romans 5, in hope of the glory of God.*

And finally, number four; the last thing that motivates Paul, that should motivate a minister, is seeing the truth of God. In verse eighteen we read, *as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.*

The apostle Paul was able to see a heavenly perspective on the events of everyday life.

Just look up the page slightly beyond our 4th chapter of II Corinthians to chapter 3:18. *And we all with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*

There is a glorious heavenly reality behind the transient events of our fleeting lives. That means that the most mundane events have eternal consequences and an eternal purpose behind them. And that, in turn means it is that heavenly perspective that must be the mind of the minister. You can see this perspective in 4:8-12, as Paul shows how God’s work is not thwarted by the persecution of His apostle. *We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.*

The affliction, the perplexity, the persecution, the striking down, the being given over to death—these are the things that are seen, and they are transient. They won’t last forever, nor can they overcome the work of God. What’s important to Paul is what is “unseen,” the life of Jesus in his body and the fruit of the spiritual life in the Corinthian church. These are the eternal realities which the mind of a minister must perceive. This is seeing the truth of God.

How wonderful it is to be able to see God at work when others cannot perceive it! Because the saints of God read the book of God, they see the Word of God, they see circumstances and they see the hand of God. The saints see events unfolding and they see the providence of God. They see changes in others and in themselves and they see the power of God. The saints see even the dead body of a Christian, and they see a soul that has entered the presence of God. Like Moses, we endure as seeing Him who is invisible. *The things which are seen are transient but the things, which are not seen, are eternal.*

May God bless all of you. May this seminary continue on in faithful witness and in equipping of the saints for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ. May we be diligent in that work till Jesus comes again. May you two graduates, and everyone here today, continue believing the Word of God, watching the work of God, hoping for the glory of God and seeing the truth of God.

And now may the last word to our graduates be from your Lord, who loved you, saved you, led you to go to seminary and who will be with you in the ministry to which He is calling you: “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

[1] Delivered by Jackson Boyett, Pastor of [Dayspring Fellowship](#) in Austin, Texas. Pastor Boyett is also a member of the Board of Directors for Providence Theological Seminary in Colorado Springs, CO.

[2]F.F. Bruce, *New Testament Development of Old Testament Themes* (Grand Rapids, 1968), p. 21