

**I. Read II Corinthians 4:8-15**

- A. In verses 8 and 9, the Apostle Paul speaks honestly about the trials and tribulation he has suffered for the sake of the gospel. At each point he makes in this description, he offers a counterpoint, the hope that only true believers have in Christ. List the affliction and the hope—the point and the counterpoint.

- B. Read the following quotes of contemporary preachers/teachers who claim obedient Christians should never suffer, then contrast their quotes with Paul's description of his life in II Corinthians 4:8:

“... *poverty*’ is a curse that comes upon those who either have not served God properly, or who are not following certain laws of God...”—Pat Robertson

“You are suffering...because you have refused your place in Christ.”—E.W. Kenyon

“Jesus was not poor in His ministry, He had a treasurer!”—Kenneth Copeland

Read Matthew 5:10-12 and describe what Jesus promised to the faithful.

- C. A very important principle is explained in II Corinthians 4:10-12. Read and compare Galatians 2:20, then discuss the gist of that principle.

- D. In II Corinthians 4:13-14, Paul further explains the *second part* of the principle he described in verses 10-12. Read Philippians 2:8-11 and explain what must occur before exaltation and resurrection.
- E. In II Corinthians 4:15, Paul gives the other side of the *ministry coin* which he introduced earlier in verse 5. In verse 5, he explained that he preached and ministered first and foremost, “for Jesus’ sake.” In verse 15, he explains the infinite value each person under his care has as he writes:
- F. Paul describes what is happening in Corinth and elsewhere as “the grace which is spreading to more and more people.” Read Acts 2:42-47 and cite some of the particular aspects of “the grace” which Paul must have been alluding to in II Corinthians 4:15. Another way to express it would be to list the four *means of grace* described in Acts 2.

What are the implications for any church which wants to see “the grace of God spreading to more and more people”?