

2 Corinthians 4:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Analysis

But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty (ta krypta tēs aischynēs, τὰ κρυπτὰ τῆς αἰσχύνης, 'the secret shameful things')—Paul contrasts his transparent ministry with opponents who used panourgia (πανουργία, 'craftiness, cunning') and doloō (δολόω, 'to adulterate, corrupt') the word of God. He doesn't manipulate Scripture for personal gain or twist it to please audiences.

By manifestation of the truth (phanerōsei tēs alētheias, φανερώσει τῆς ἀληθείας)—Paul's defense rests on open declaration, not rhetorical tricks. He appeals to every man's conscience (pasēs syneidēseōs anthrōpōn, πάσης συνειδήσεως ἀνθρώπων) before God as witness. Truth doesn't need deceptive packaging; it commends itself when plainly stated. This is the antithesis of Sophistic rhetoric that valued style over substance.

Historical Context

Corinth was notorious for Sophists—traveling teachers who taught rhetoric and philosophy for pay, often manipulating arguments to win debates regardless of truth. False apostles in Corinth apparently used such tactics with Scripture. Paul's insistence on plainness was countercultural in a city that prized eloquence.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Where are you tempted to 'package' truth in ways that make it more palatable but less honest?
2. How does Paul's confidence that truth commends itself to conscience challenge modern marketing approaches to the gospel?
3. What 'hidden things of dishonesty' might you need to renounce in how you communicate spiritual things?

Interlinear Text

ἀλλὰ	ἀπειπάμεθα	τὰ	κρυπτὰ	τῆς	αἰσχύνης	μὴ
But	have renounced	G3588	the hidden things	G3588	of dishonesty	not
G235	G550		G2927		G152	G3361
περιπατοῦντες	ἐν	πανουργία	μηδὲ	δολοῦντες	τὸν	λόγον
walking	in	craftiness	nor	deceitfully	G3588	the word
G4043	G1722	G3834	G3366	G1389		G3056
τοῦ	θεοῦ	ἀλλὰ	τῇ	φανερῶσει	τῆς	ἀληθείας
G3588	of God	But	G3588	by manifestation	G3588	of the truth
	G2316	G235		G5321		G225
συνιστώντες	ἑαυτοὺς	πρὸς	πᾶσαν	συνείδησιν	ἀνθρώπων	
commending	ourselves	to	every	conscience	man's	
G4921	G1438	G4314	G3956	G4893	G444	
ἐνὼπιον	τοῦ	θεοῦ				
in the sight	G3588	of God				
G1799		G2316				

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 2:17 (Word): For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:11 (References God): Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

1 Corinthians 4:5 (References God): Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

2 Corinthians 11:3 (Parallel theme): But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Romans 1:16 (References God): For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

2 Corinthians 7:14 (Truth): For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which I made before Titus, is found a truth.

Ephesians 5:12 (Parallel theme): For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.

Ephesians 4:14 (Parallel theme): That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Romans 6:21 (Parallel theme): What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

2 Corinthians 11:6 (Parallel theme): But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things.