

2 CORINTHIANS 6 - Marks of the Ministry; Be Holy!

OBSERVATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: www.ptwente.com Click on “Latest Studies” on the right side. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

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Now Paul finishes the thought begun in 2 Corinthians in verses 1 & 2 of Chapter six, We then, as workers together with him, I'm an ambassador of Christ! Calling, pleading, imploring (with much emotion!) upon people to be reconciled with God. And Jesus took our sins that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him!

2Co 6:1 *We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain (not to neglect or slight; to begin in the Spirit and end in the flesh).*

2Co 6:2 *For He says: "IN AN ACCEPTABLE TIME (Kairos - an occasion, that is, set or proper time) I HAVE HEARD YOU, AND IN THE DAY OF SALVATION I HAVE HELPED YOU." Behold (look! See! Attention!), now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. (cf. Is. 49:8)*

2Co 6:3 *We give no offense (proskopē - a stumbling; occasion of sin) in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed.*

2Co 6:4 *But in all things we commend (sunistaō - to set together, approve, stand (with). ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience (hupomone, endurance), in tribulations (thlipsis - pressure, persecution, afflictions, trouble), in needs, in distresses,*

2Co 6:5 *in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings;*

v. 1 *Workers together with Him:* Paul sees himself as a co-worker with Jesus Christ. They are partners, and Jesus has given us the ministry of reconciliation (2Co_5:18).. *Also plead with you:* In 2 Cor. 5:20 we're that that God was pleading through the ministry of the apostles.. Now Paul will also plead with the Corinthians. To plead is to beg, because eternity is on the line! *Not to receive the grace of God in vain:* If, after receiving those truths concerning Christ which he had taught them, they were to give up his Gospel for another in which these truths had no place. This is what he dreads, both in Corinth and Galatia: the removal from the grace of Christ to another Gospel which is no Gospel at all, but a subversion of the truth.

v. 2 *Now is the acceptable time . . . now is the day of salvation:* By quoting/applying Isa_49:8, we are given a real sense of urgency. God has an acceptable time for us to work with His grace. God has a day of salvation that will not last forever. This is no time for Christian lives to be about ease and comfort and self-focus. It is time to get busy for the Lord, and to be workers together with Him!

v. 3 *One of the greatest obstacles to the progress of the Gospel is the bad example of people who profess to be Christians.* Unsaved people use the inconsistencies of the saints, especially preachers, as an excuse for rejecting Jesus Christ. Paul was careful not to do anything that would put a stumbling block in the way of either sinners or saints.

v. 4 *In all things we commend ourselves:* Paul gives the Corinthians his “resume”, to commend himself. *In much patience:* Paul's first qualification was patience.

Tribulations, needs, and distresses: As an apostle, an ambassador, as a co-worker with Jesus, he follows *patience* with describing why he needed this endurance. First, it was because of the general struggles and trials of life.

v. 5 *Stripes, imprisonments, and tumults:* As Paul continues his resume', he writes of sufferings directly inflicted by men. Stripes were the wounds on the back from a whipping, imprisonments refers to the frequent jail time Paul spent, and tumults speaks of violence from an angry mob. *Labors, sleeplessness, and fastings:* Describing his self-inflicted hardships. No one made him work so hard, or keep so many sleepless nights, or go without food so often. These were true trials, but ones Paul chose willingly as a co-worker with Jesus Christ. Paul isn't complaining about these, because they were self-inflicted. But they were relevant to his need for patience.

v. 1 *We are workers together with Him. We are never told that God works together with us. It isn't our work that God helps us with. It is His work that He asks us to do together with Him. Instead of trying to persuade God to help us with our work, we need to find out what God's work is, and do it with Him! As workers together, the Holy Spirit pleads with us not to receive God's grace in vain. Here is God's grace manifested in its greatest form. Don't pass it up. Don't let the grace of God be in vain. Accept this wonderful gift that God is offering to us, the righteousness of Jesus Christ, the forgiveness of our sins. Accept this glorious grace of God towards us.*

v. 2 *If you are not saved, "now is the accepted time." Examine your clock. Whatever time it is, right now is the time for you. "Can't I accept Him tomorrow?" Possibly, but you have no promise of a tomorrow. **The important thing is that God says the time is right now.***

v. 3 *We want **be sure the ministry is not to be discredited or blamed in any way because of our life.***

vs. 3-10 *Now notice about these paradoxes, it's in these things. Then it's by these things. Then it's as these things. He was in much patience. He was in tribulations. He was in need, the necessities, in the distresses, in the stripes, in the imprisonments, in the tumults, in the labors, in the sleeplessnesses, in fastings. But he was able to endure these things by the purity, and by the knowledge and by the longsuffering and by the kindness and by the power of the Holy Spirit and by the sincere love and by the word of truth and by the power of God, and by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, and by the honor and dishonor and by the evil report and good report. as deceivers, and yet true; [9] as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed; [10] as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.*

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INTERPRETATION

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2Co 6:6 by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love,

2Co 6:7 by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

*2Co 6:8 by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true;
2Co 6:9 as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed;
2Co 6:10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor (complete destitution of a beggar), yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.*

Be Holy;

2Co 6:11 O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open.

2Co 6:12 You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections.

v. 6 Paul begins to describe the resources he took advantage of in triumphing over adversity - by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love,

v. 7 by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left If he would honestly list his trials, he will also honestly list the fruit of the Spirit and the power of God in his life.

vs. 8-10 By honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. In concluding his resume', Paul lists his references, describing what both the world would think of him and what God thinks of him. The world, including the Corinthians, described Paul with words like: dishonor; evil report; deceivers; unknown; dying; chastened; sorrowful; poor; having nothing. In contrast, God described Paul with words like: honor; good report; true; well known; behold we live; not killed; always rejoicing; making many rich; possessing all things. Which reference was true? *2Co 4:18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

v. 11 Now Paul just opens his heart to them. I've talked plainly. I haven't used deceptive words. I haven't tried to manipulate you. I've been very frank and plain with you. As review the epistle, you find that Paul has been very honest with them. Our mouth is open unto you, no deceit, no double talk. And our heart is enlarged. In other words, we've opened up our heart unto you.

v. 12 You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections: The Corinthians were responding as a "victim" before Paul. Out of godly necessity he had been firm with them previously (*1Co 4:18-21, 2Co 1:23*). Now, they are probably claiming to be restricted by the "hurt" Paul has caused them. The real problem was that the Corinthian Christians were restricted by their own affections

The three marvelous series of paradoxes in *2Co 6:4-10* deserve careful pondering. The **first series enumerates Paul's sufferings** on behalf of the Gospel; the second, **his behavior under them**; the third, **the contrast between appearance and reality**, as judged respectively by time and eternity. The stoic bears life's sorrows with compressed lips; the Christian, with a smile. Let us be always rejoicing, many enriching, and all things possessing.

vs. 8-10 Paul listed a series of paradoxes, because he knew that not everybody really understood him and his ministry. **His enemies gave an evil report** of him as a man who was a dishonorable deceiver. **But God gave a good report** as a man who was honorable and true. Paul was well known and yet, at the same time, unknown. What a price he paid to be faithful in his ministry!

v. 11 With respect to your ministry to others, **how open is your heart toward them?** Do we **speak straight** with them **with much love in our hearts** toward them?

v. 12 Again with those we minister to, if there is any love not being displayed, we need to be sure it's coming from their side and not from ours.

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2Co 6:13 *Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open.*

2Co 6:14 *Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?*

2Co 6:15 *And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?*

2Co 6:16 *And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM. I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE."*



v. 13 Now in return or in a fair exchange, he said, I speak as to my children. Open wide your hearts also. Let your heart be opened to me even as my heart is open to you. For the return, for the exchange here is the same.

vs. 14-16 The concept of the “unequally yoked”, which is most important for all of us, comes from **Deu 22:10**, “You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together.” The ox was a clean animal to the Jews, but the donkey was not (**Deu 14:1-8**); and it would be wrong to yoke them together. Furthermore, they have two opposite natures and would not even work well together, resulting in pain and chafing under the yoke. It would be cruel to bind them to each other. In the same way, it is wrong for believers to be yoked together with unbelievers.

The Holy Spirit, writing through Paul, **seeing believers and unbelievers in stark contrast to each other**, now give **five contrasts** to make the point of difference between them. **1 - Righteousness with lawlessness; 2 - light with darkness; 3 - Christ with Belial (Satan), 4 – a believer with an unbeliever; 5 - God’s temple with idols.** How could you possibly bring these opposites together? The very nature of the Christian demands that he be separated from that which is unholy. When a saved person marries an unsaved partner, it sets up an impossible situation; and the same thing applies to business partnerships and religious “fellowship.” *You are the temple of the living God:* In **1Co 6:19-20**, Paul writes of individual Christians as being temples of God. Here, he refers to the church as whole being the temple. Because temples are holy places, and should be protected against things that would defile the holy place, we should protect our hearts and minds as holy places before the Lord.

v. 13 May we be able to say to others, ‘may your love for me be the same as my love for you, that as you have my heart, I may have yours, and the same room in your heart, as you have in mine, just as a father has for his child and his children have for him.

vs. 14 - 16 **This concept of being unequally yoked is most important to us!** How could you possibly bring these opposites together? The very nature of the Christian demands that he be separated from that which is unholy. When a saved person marries an unsaved partner, it sets up an impossible situation; and the same thing applies to business partnerships and religious “fellowship.”

v. 16 How aware are we that our body is the temple of God? What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? for you are the temple of the living God; as God has said, **"I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM. I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE."** What a glorious, glorious thing! God has said that He will dwell in you. You are the temple of the living God. And God dwells in us! He is our God. We are His people. That is beautiful!

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2Co 6:17 Therefore "COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM AND BE SEPARATE, SAYS THE LORD. DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN, AND I WILL RECEIVE YOU." (cf. Is. 52:11)

2Co 6:18 "I WILL BE A FATHER TO YOU, AND YOU SHALL BE MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS," (cf. 2 Sam. 7:14)

LIVING FOR JESUS – T. Chisholm; Steve Anderson

*1 Living for Jesus a life that is true,
Striving to please Him in all that I do;
Yielding allegiance, glad-hearted and free,
This is the pathway of blessing for me.*

*2 Living for Jesus who died in my place,
Bearing on Calv'ry my sin and disgrace;
Such love constrains me to answer His call,
Follow His leading and give Him my all.*

*3 Living for Jesus through earth's little while,
My dearest treasure, the light of His smile;
Seeking the lost ones He died to redeem,
Bringing the weary to find rest in Him.*

v. 17 This call to *come out from among them and be separate* probably is related to the problem of “too much affection”, mentioned in 2Co_6:12. We really can love too much, thinking we may just add the love of God without renouncing the ideas of Satan and this world. We must remember that one of the seeds that failed in the parable of the soils had ground that was too fertile. It would grow everything. *Says the LORD* – This is the sovereign God of heaven who offers us adoption as His children as we separate unto Him. The call to purity and separation unto God flows from the offer of reconciliation mentioned at the end of 2 Cor.5. “A man cannot accept reconciliation with God and live in sin; because the renunciation of sin is involved in the acceptance of reconciliation.

v.18 . Jer_31:9 is quoted here to show the benefit of separating from worldly influence, that of a more intimate relationship with God . **"I WILL BE A FATHER TO YOU, AND YOU SHALL BE MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS.** There is always a glorious promise for those who are willing to separate themselves from the world's influences for the sake of godliness. This call to come out from among them and be separate deals with the problem of “too much affection” Paul mentioned in 2Co_6:12. We really can love too much, thinking we may just add the love of God without renouncing the ideas of Satan and this world. Remember that one of the seeds that failed in the parable of the soils had ground that was too fertile. It would grow everything. **SAYS THE LORD ALMIGHTY."** The title Almighty uses the Greek word *pantokrater*, which means, “the One who has His hand on everything.” In the whole New Testament, the word is used only here and in the book of Revelation. Paul wants us to understand that it is the sovereign God of heaven who offers us adoption as His children as we separate unto Him.

v. 17 Therefore because of this, **"COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM AND BE SEPARATE, SAYS THE LORD. DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN, AND I WILL RECEIVE YOU."** You're are not to have communion, light with darkness. You are not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. So come out from among them. Be separate, says the Lord. Don't touch the unclean thing.

v.18 A separated life, not joined together in an unequal yoke, but living a separated life. God said, I will be a Father unto you. You will be My sons and My daughters, but that's by separation. May we live by His precepts, that we might indeed be children of God, His sons, His daughters and You, God, a Father to us. We thank You, Lord, for the beautiful relationship, made possible through Jesus Christ.

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