

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 26TH, 2024 // 2 CORINTHIANS

WORKING TOGETHER (2 CORINTHIANS 6:1-2)

"WORKING TOGETHER WITH HIM"

We are ambassadors of Christ and as His representatives, we are sent out to be a mouthpiece for the King, but **we are not sent out to do this important work alone.**

- **We have been invited into the ministry of reconciliation as co-laborers with Jesus, because God wants us, not because He needs us.**

ACCOMPLISHING HIS WORK FOR HIS GLORY

God never promised a life of ease but in several passages, He does talk about the importance of hard work.

- We are expected to work and work hard for God's glory. We must remember **it is His work that we are working together with Him to accomplish** and not Him working with us to accomplish our work.

WITHOUT MEANING, NO RESULTS, OR USELESS

To receive the grace of God in vain is **to be a recipient of God's unmerited favor, then not allow it to change the way we think and act.**

- **"But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me"** (1 Corinthians 15:10).

RESTORATION AFTER EXILE

Paul wants to communicate a **sense of urgency** by quoting Isaiah 49:8.

- We cannot receive God's grace and then be lulled into complacency. We were once exiled from God's presence, but in His timing, He rescued us from bondage. **Now that we are free, we must get busy working together with Christ to free those still in captivity.**

CAUSE FOR OFFENSE (2 CORINTHIANS 6:3-13)

THE GOSPEL MAKES US LOOK INWARD FIRST

As co-laborers with Christ, we do not let fear of someone being offended by the gospel stop us from speaking the truth of the gospel. However, we must be careful to ensure that our approach does not cause offense.

- **We take great care of our lives, speaking the truth and living the truth so that our ministry will not be discredited.**

"WE COMMEND OURSELVES IN EVERYTHING"

Paul is not claiming to be perfect in all things but is saying that his ministry can be evaluated, and **no major faults will be found.**

- Paul points to his need for endurance in ministry. It was perseverance, not passive waiting, that allowed Paul and his companions to overcome many afflictions, hardships, and difficulties.

JUST AS HE SAID IT WOULD BE (MARK 13:9)

There were many afflictions that Paul endured that were part of the general trials of life. Yet, **there were many sufferings he endured at the hands of others.**

- **The book of Acts (5:40; 16:23-36; 22:19) and many of Paul's letters (2 Corinthians 11:23-26) recount the many beatings, imprisonments, and riots he faced for the gospel's sake.**

POSITIONED TO PREACH (LUKE 21:12-19)

Then Paul mentions **there are trials we willingly choose as co-laborers with Christ.**

- We must **choose to endure hard work** (labor) not for more stuff but for the gospel's sake. Paul mentions the **sleepless nights** and **times of hunger** from his decision to suffer and sacrifice in seeking and serving the Kingdom.

THE POWER OF GOD ON DISPLAY (GENESIS 50:20)

In Paul's life, his trials (2 Corinthians 6:4-5) were greater than most, but **the blessings (2 Corinthians 6-7) the trials produced were also greater than most.**

- We must not focus only on the trials of life but **divert our focus to what those trials produced in us: endurance, character, and hope** (Romans 5:3-5; James 1:2-4).

"WEAPONS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS..."

In vs. 6-7, Paul describes the things the Holy Spirit provided him that granted him the ability to discern between things that are seen and unseen. In vs. 8-10, **he distinguished between what others thought of him and what God thought of him.**

- **Which estimation is most important to us (Galatians 1:10)?**

"SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE"

Practicing Ephesians 4:15, **Paul had loved them with an open heart earning the right to speak openly with them.**

- He spoke to them as his children and requested that they open their hearts to him. This wasn't meant to be demeaning, but **to communicate his affection, care, and concern for them.**

UNEQUALLY YOKED (2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-18)

"AN OX AND A DONKEY TOGETHER" (DEUTERONOMY 22:10)

This idea of Believers not being yoked together with unbelievers comes from Deuteronomy which stated **two different animals should not be joined together.**

- When yoked together, an ox and a donkey with differing stature and abilities could hurt the often stubborn donkey, while the ox carried the majority **of the load and tired quicker.**

MOST COMMON APPLICATION

These verses in Deuteronomy and 2 Corinthians are most often applied to marriage by saying that a **Believer should not seek out and enter into a marriage with an unbeliever.**

- This principle is true because the believing spouse is **prone to be drawn back into unbelief or have struggles and conflict throughout their marriage.**

THE TWO ARE INCOMPATIBLE

In this passage, Paul is speaking to the idea of **allowing the world to influence a Believer's thinking.**

- If we allow ourselves to be conformed to the ways of this world, then **we are not being transformed by the renewing of our minds, and we have joined together with unbelievers in an ungodly way.**

AN ISSUE OF INFLUENCE

Paul made it clear in 1 Corinthians 5:9-13, that he is not suggesting we are to never be around unbelievers.

- We have been designed to be like a ship in the water while still not allowing the water in the ship. **"Do not be deceived: 'Bad company corrupts good morals'"** (1 Corinthians 15:33).

"WE ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD"

Paul paraphrases Jeremiah 31:9 to tell the Corinthians what awaits them if they would separate from worldly influence: **a deep intimate relationship with God, the Father.**

- God is not distant from us (James 4:8), He is personally present with us, living in us, making us the temple of the living God, and **we should protect His temple from being defiled.**

UNION WITH THE WORLD IS ENMITY WITH GOD

- We cannot accept reconciliation with God and continue to live in sin. We are deceived if we think we can receive freedom through Jesus but refuse to be changed.
- Our behavior should reflect who we are in Christ and not who we once were in the world.
- **We must stop holding to the old worldly way of life and tether ourselves to Christ.**