

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 26TH, 2024 // 2 CORINTHIANS

ABOVE REPROACH (2 CORINTHIANS 6:3-4A) PAUL'S MINISTRY

Paul has spoken of the beauty of the salvation God has provided through Jesus and the ministry he has now received to proclaim that salvation so people may be reconciled to God and be made new in Jesus.

- Nothing for us has changed since Paul. We, too, have this ministry given to us so that people might hear, repent, and believe.

NO ROOM FOR BLAME

Because of the importance of this calling on Paul, he wants both **his life** and **his ministry** to be above reproach. Paul's private life and public ministry could not be separated.

- The Scriptures teach whatever is in our hearts will eventually spill into the public eye. **Our call as Christians requires repentant hearts and public integrity.**

DON'T MESS WITH THE NAME

Paul knew that if his ministry came under fire due to some kind of moral failure in his life, then the name of Jesus would be tarnished, as well as all those who work in the ministry for Jesus. Paul couldn't help the false accusations, but he could prevent the personal failures.

- **How we speak and live matters.**

A CLEAR CONSCIENCE

Paul was unafraid to allow his life to be scrutinized by anyone. As a Christian of integrity, Paul was willing to live his life as an open book. Paul wasn't perfect, but his pursuit of Jesus could not be questioned.

- **Can our lives be scrutinized by anyone with no fear of discovering compromising situations? Are we killing willful sin?**

THE PROOF (2 CORINTHIANS 6:4B-13) CHARACTER MADE

Paul proves his integrity by what Jesus is doing in him through persecution, through the Holy Spirit's work, and through the renewing of his mind by the Spirit and by the Word.

- **We are not born as people of character and integrity. These are grown as we daily spend time in the Word, submit to the Spirit, and face adversity & abundance.**

IN PERSECUTION

Following Jesus did not exempt Paul from suffering. He endured afflictions, hardships, and difficulties such as beatings, prison, riots, and physical labors, sleepless nights, and hunger. In each of these he proved that Jesus was sweeter than any persecution he faced.

- **Do our lives prove that nothing will separate us from our love for Jesus?**

THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD AT WORK

Through communing with Jesus, Paul is becoming more like Him. His life is growing in purity, patience, kindness, love, and the power of God, ready to attack the devil and the world system through weapons of righteousness like the knowledge of the Word of truth.

- **We grow to be like Jesus when His Spirit is sanctifying us through the Word.**

THE PARADOXES OF THIS LIFE

Paul's life wasn't always one of persecution. There were times of abundance and good. But he was always aware his best life was still to come. There would be times of glory and good reports, but then times of dishonor and slander. He would be called a deceiver and unknown, but he would know he was truthful and recognized by Jesus and his spiritual family.

- Paul's physical body showed he was dying but he was more alive than ever. The world disciplined him, but they couldn't kill him until Jesus said so. Though he grieved, Paul was constantly rejoicing. Though poor, Paul enriched people spiritually. And this enrichment wasn't material things, but eternal things.

- **Are we captured by the world or by God?**

A FATHER'S LOVE

There was no agenda in Paul concerning the Corinthians other than his love for them and his desire that they walk with Jesus. Because of false teachers, some of them had turned from Paul. Like a father, Paul pursued them.

- **The proof of Paul's integrity was his response to rejection and adversity: faithfulness and love for the people.**

INSULATED (2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-7:1) TWO WAYS TO LIVE

Like two mismatched animals yoked together who work against each other, Paul calls the Corinthians away from the false teachers and to Jesus and His Word. The Corinthians are under new management and should live that way in all they do.

- **The ways of Jesus are contrary to the ways of the world. We must choose.**

WE ARE AT WAR

The world system is under the influence of the devil while the Corinthians were under Christ. There's no common ground between Jesus and the devil—no agreement.

- **The thief wants to steal, kill, and destroy our lives. Jesus wants to give us life more abundantly. We can live in bondage to sin or in freedom to Christ.**

WE ARE HIS TEMPLE

The temple of God isn't a physical building but a people which should remain free from false gods, just as false idols had no place in God's temple. Because God is alive in them, the Corinthians should **come out** of sin, **be separate** from sin, and **not touch unclean things**.

- **Do our habits, interests, passions, and desires point to our love for Jesus?**

IN THE WORLD, NOT OF IT

Since they are sons and daughters of God, Paul calls the Corinthians to live like it. He calls them away from the junk that corrupts the flesh and spirit and calls them to holy living (living in obedience to Christ and His Word).

- **We can't isolate ourselves from the world, so we insulate ourselves as we live in the world.** (1 Corinthians 5:10)

CONSISTENCY

- **Do we try to manage our sin, or do we fight to put sin to death?**
- Does our private life, when no one is looking, match our public image we portray as a Christ follower?
- Are our lives drawing people to Jesus or scattering people away from Him?
- Do others see humble repentance if we fail?

PROVEN CHARACTER

- Do we see our character and integrity becoming more like Jesus as we read and obey the Bible, pray, worship, and live in authentic community?
- When struggles come, and they will, do we display a hope in Jesus that sustains us?
- Whatever is in our heart will spill out when we face rejection and/or adversity.

INSULATED NOT ISOLATED

- Until death or Jesus' return, we daily face choices concerning how we should live.
- **Do our lives display a love for Jesus that is greater than our love for the world?**
- The world and the devil make promises they can't keep. Are we listening to them?
- **Sin enslaves; Jesus gives us freedom and deliverance.**

AN INVENTORY

- Do we unashamedly let our light shine before people so they will glorify God?
- Do we protect our temples from the false gods clamoring for our attention?
- In the ups and downs of living in this world, do we cling tightly to Jesus?
- **No one can serve two masters. Do we find our greatest joy in serving Jesus?**