

(Through the Bible) 2 Corinthians 6

by Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith emphasizes the importance of accepting God's grace, living a separate life as believers, and actively practicing the teachings of the Bible.

Duration: 18:58

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 6:4

Topics: "Ministry Challenges", "Reconciliation With God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the characteristics and challenges of the ministry of preaching the word of God. He emphasizes the importance of ministers enduring mental and spiritual hardships with purity, knowledge, longsuffering, kindness, the Holy Ghost, and love unfeigned. The speaker also highlights the contrasts that exist within the ministry, such as being sorrowful yet always rejoicing, poor yet making many rich, and having nothing yet possessing all things. He urges the listeners to be doers of the word and not just hearers, warning against self-deception. The sermon concludes with a call to be reconciled to God through the ministry of reconciliation and to work together with Jesus in spreading the grace of God.

Transcript

We then as workers together with Him, and what a glorious way to view the ministry. I'm working with Jesus. Working together with Him, we beseech you also that you receive not the grace of God in vain.

For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee. But Paul adds, behold, now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation.

Giving no offense in anything that the ministry be not blamed. And so Paul again goes back to the subject of his ministry. His ministry for Jesus Christ.

He views it as being a worker together with Him. And as such, beseeching them that they would not receive this grace of God in vain, but would accept the salvation today. Don't turn aside God's offers to you.

The grace of God, but receive it. Today is the day of salvation. And so Paul said, I seek not to bring any offense to man in anything, because I don't want the ministry to be blamed.

But in all things, proving ourselves to be the ministers of God. Seeking to prove that my ministry really is of God. First of all, in the physical sense.

In patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings. The preposition in, talking about the physical suffering and hardships that Paul endured as a minister of Jesus Christ. Things by which he proved his ministry.

And then changing to the word by, he speaks of the mental things that he endured. By pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, and by love unfeigned. And then going into the spiritual things by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left.

So the ministry, the proof of the ministry, the characteristics of the minister. God give us such ministers today who will so serve the Lord and man. 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 not killed. As sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich. As having nothing and yet possessing all things.

So these interesting contrasts that take place within the ministry. Sorrowful yet always rejoicing, poor yet making many rich, having nothing yet I possess everything because I possess Christ. O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is expanded or enlarged.

I'm expressing myself to you. My heart is just enlarged for your sakes. You are not straightened in us.

This word straightened literally means a narrow place. It came to mean being pressed into a narrow place. Being pressed so hard into a narrow place that it straightens out all the kinks.

And so the idea of straightened is that the crookedness or whatever, you know, if you press hard enough on you, they just flatten you out and you can become straightened. And so being put in pressure in a narrow place, being squeezed in causes this straightening. And the word anguish then developed out of this Greek word.

The anguish of being pressed into a narrow place. Now Paul said to the Corinthians, you haven't been put in a narrow place because of me. But you are straightened in your own bowels.

Now for a recompense in the same, I speak as unto my children. Be also enlarged. You've been put in this pressure.

You've been put in anguish in this narrow place. But my heart is enlarged towards you. Now I pray that you'll be enlarged.

Your heart will be enlarged. You'll be freed from this pressure, from this narrow place. Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.

For what fellowship, communion, oneness hath righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion hath light with darkness? There are many people who believe that theirs is a special case, not really covered by the scripture, and thus they can do what they please. Because it really doesn't apply to their situation. God doesn't, God wasn't really thinking of their situation when he gave the rule.

And thus there are many people who enter into unequal yokes with unbelievers, believing and hoping that things are going to equal out. That God will take care of it. There is an old Greek saying, the dice of the gods are loaded.

That is, you cannot go against God and win. You cannot go against the Word of God and win. Over the years of pastoring, I've had so many young people come in, oh, they are so in love.

Oh, he's the man of their dreams. There's only one thing wrong, he isn't a Christian. But I know that as I live the life of Christ before him, and I walk in love and in meekness and all, I know he'll come to Jesus.

And I said, yes, but the scripture says, be not unequally yoked with an unbeliever. Oh, but you know, we love each other. And I know, I know he's going to change.

And they are determined to marry in spite of the counsel of the Word of God otherwise. And in scores of case after case after case after case after case, a year, two years down the road, I sit with the same young lady who is completely torn up. Oh, I wish I had listened to you.

I'm living in a hell. I don't think I ever really loved him. Oh, this is horrible.

Do I have to stay in this state? You know, and their lives messed up because they thought that they could go against God's command and win and come out ahead. Be not unequally yoked together with an unbeliever. Now, this does not and is not limited to just marriage.

This goes to many different types of yokes where you are brought together with an unbeliever and you are always in an unequal situation. Watch it. You're always in an unequal situation if you're yoked with an unbeliever.

You see, they don't follow the same rules that you follow. They don't live by the same ethic that you live by. And to lie won't bother them.

To cheat won't bother them. To fudge won't bother them. But it will you.

And I've had so many businessmen who have come to me. Bemoaning the fact that their partner wants to do that which is illegal. They don't want to report all of the profits.

They want to keep a double set of books. What shall I do? They've entered into an unequal yoke. What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion hath light with darkness? What concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part has he that believes with an infidel? You're trying to bring together unequal things.

The results are always disastrous. What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. This old tent is nonetheless the temple of the living God.

What, Paul said, know ye not that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you? You are not your own. You've been bought with a price. What relationship can there possibly be with the temple of God and with idols? For God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them.

And I will be their God and they shall be my people. Wherefore, come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord. And touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you and will be a father unto you.

And ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. So, God's call for His people to separation. You are to be different from the world.

You cannot have real communion with the world. You have no common ground of meeting. You're trying to bring two diverse situations together.

You're trying to join together the life of the flesh with the life of the spirit. They cannot commingle. It's an unequal yoke.

So, God's call for you is to come apart, be separate, saith the Lord. Don't touch the unclean thing. And God said, I will be a father and ye will be my sons and daughters.

As a child of God, you do live different than a person who is not a child of God. You're expected to live differently. Living by different standards, living for different purposes.

If you only love those that love you, what do ye more than others? Even the publicans do the same. Love those that hate you. Do good unto those that despitefully use you.

Pray for those that persecute you. And so shall ye be the children of the Father. You see, Jesus is declaring you're to be different.

You're a new creation. The old things have passed away. Everything has become new.

And God now lays claim to you as His son, as His daughter. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. For he that hath the love of the world in his heart hath not the love of the Father.

The cry of the Spirit, be ye reconciled to God. The ministry of reconciliation. You can only be reconciled to God as you come into the life of the Spirit, denying the flesh, denying yourself, the self-centered life, and taking up your cross to follow Him.

And that's the challenge of the Spirit of God to our hearts tonight. May we respond in Jesus' name. Father, we thank You for Your Word.

And may Thy Spirit take Thy Word tonight as a sharp two-edged sword. And may He cut deep into our hearts to expose those things that are there in order that He might heal. Heal our relationship with You.

And heal us so that we might be reconciled unto God through Jesus our Lord. Bless Thy Word now. May it take root and may it grow forth and bring forth fruit unto Thy glory.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. And now be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

For he who hears the Word of God and does not do it is likened to a man who is looking into a mirror and sees the truth about himself. But as soon as he walks away, he forgets what he saw. How easy that is, isn't it? We have an image of ourselves.

We look in a mirror many times and we're shocked at the truth. But as soon as we walk away, we embrace our image again. We forget what we saw.

I don't want to acknowledge what I saw. I like my image of myself better than I like the reality of myself. See, my image of myself, I'm still in shape.

Far from reality. So is the man who hears the Word of God, acknowledges the ideal, but then doesn't live by it. He's deceived.

He's living in a delusion, a dangerous delusion. So with a psalmist, may we pray. Search me, O God, and know my heart.

Try me and know my thoughts. And see if there is a way of wickedness in me. And God, lead me in the way everlasting.

In Jesus' name.

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