

(2 Corinthians) ch.5:10-6:2

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living with the awareness of the judgment seat of Christ, being born again and having a new creation, and being ambassadors for Christ by forgiving others from the heart completely.

Duration: 44:33

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:10-11, 2 Corinthians 5:17, 2 Corinthians 6:1, 2 Corinthians 6:3, 2 Corinthians 6:14

Topics: "Judgment Seat", "Personal Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the concept of appearing before the judgment seat of Christ and being rewarded for our deeds. He emphasizes the importance of realizing this truth and living in the fear of the Lord. The speaker uses the example of the apostle Paul to illustrate the qualities of a true servant of God, such as patience and endurance in difficult circumstances. The sermon also highlights the possibility of experiencing personal revival in our lives right now, through faith and confession of our beliefs.

Transcript

Let's turn today to 2nd Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 10. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be rewarded for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. We considered this in our last study, that every one of us is one day going to have to give an answer to God, to the Lord for every single action, thought, word, deed, attitude, motive, that's ever taken place in our bodies.

Many do not realize this, and that is why they live such careless lives here on earth. But Paul says, we know this, we are convinced of it, and therefore we know the fear of the Lord, verse 11. And that teaches us that we cannot know the fear of the Lord, that true reverence for God, unless we believe and live in the light of the fact that every thing that we do and say, we'll have to give an account for.

Jesus said, every idle word that men speak, they'll give an account in the day of judgment. It is this awareness, and living in the light of this awareness, living in the light of the judgment seat of Christ, that proves whether a person truly fears God or not. This phrase, the fear of God, is used by many people in a very light way.

People speak of someone as a God-fearing person. But what is the mark of the fear of God? The mark of the fear of God is that a man lives with such carefulness in his life, in his speech, in his thoughts, in his

attitudes, in his motives, and the way he lives, recognizing that he has to give an account for everything. Yet he says, I hope that we are made manifest in your consciences.

We persuade men, but we are made manifest to God. My uprightness is manifest in the sight of God, he says. He says, I'm not just trying to convince you.

First of all, my uprightness and my motives are plain to God, because he sees through us completely. But he says, I hope also that what I have said is made clear and manifest in your conscience as well. He says, I hope the witness of your conscience is also the same, that you see that our lives are upright.

He says in verse 12, we're not commending ourselves. He says, I'm not saying all this to show you how spiritual I am, but rather giving you an occasion to be proud of us. Paul had to contend with a lot of false apostles there in Corinth who were trying to influence the Corinthians in other directions and not in the ways of the Lord.

But he says, I'm giving you something for you to be proud of, that I can say my uprightness is manifest even to God. So that, he says, you may have something to answer to those who pride themselves in their appearance and not in heart. In other words, there were those in Corinth who gloried in their external appearance, in the external man, in their personality, in their ability to speak and so many things, but not in character.

Those who prided themselves on their external advantages, not on sincerity of heart, to whom the state of their hearts was not as important as their external appearance. He says, I'm giving you something about our own testimony so that you can have something to be proud of us in. And he goes on to say, verse 13, if it looks as if we are mad, we are beside ourselves, it is for God's cause.

He says, I'm willing to let people think I'm out of my senses to talk like this. Well, God knows my motive and I'm mad for God's sake. As we considered in an earlier study, the only reason why Paul wanted to establish his apostleship and his sincerity in serving them was so that they would accept his writings as God's word to them in a day when they didn't have the written New Testament with them.

It's very important to see the reason behind it. We don't need to justify ourselves in that way because the word of God, the written New Testament is here before us. But in Paul's day we need to see they did not have the written New Testament.

And there was a need for people to recognize that Paul was inspired by the spirit and what he was writing as much as those other apostles who had actually lived with Jesus. It was easy for people to accept the eleven for they had actually been with Jesus. But Paul's authority, people were a little more hesitant to accept and yet his authority was just as divine.

In fact, God used him to write more portions of scripture than any of the other apostles. And this is the only reason why he justified his apostleship before them. And so he says, if this looks as if I'm out of my senses to talk such things about myself, well, it is to bring glory to God.

And if we are in our senses in your opinion, then it is for you. It is for your good. Notice again the two things that we considered earlier in verse 13, for the glory of God and your good.

Whether you think we are mad, consider us as seeking the glory of God. If you think we are in our sober senses, then take it as something for your good. Paul was so free from thinking about himself.

He was only concerned about the glory of God and the good of those Corinthian Christians. He had no other ambition, no other desire, nothing else that he thought of. If God was glorified and the Corinthian Christians were built up as a church, he could afford to sacrifice everything that he considered valuable on earth, even his own reputation, his life as well.

When he writes to the Philippians, he speaks about being poured out as a sacrifice for them. He says he'd be glad to do that. This is the spirit of the apostle that made him such a faithful servant of God.

In verse 14 he says, he continues, as we considered right at the beginning of our study of 2 Corinthians, there is no letter in the New Testament that reveals the inner life of the apostle Paul as much as 2 Corinthians. We can say that 2 Corinthians is like an inner biography of the apostle Paul, an inner autobiography. Not an autobiography like we find today where people write about all their external accomplishments.

Of course, Paul could have written a wonderful autobiography of his external accomplishments, of the people he had raised from the dead, the churches he'd established, the number of people in these churches and his travels and so many things. The type of things people write in their prayer letters and reports these days. But Paul wasn't occupied with all that.

He reveals that inner attitude that he had. He revealed his inner self. And this is what we need to follow Paul in.

It's not these external activities that are important. But if we can have the same inner life that Paul had, the love of Christ, he says, controls us. Notice that what he did was because he was gripped by the love of Christ.

A love for Christ from within his own heart. At the same time, the love of Christ which had been put into his heart for the Corinthians and for all men. This love of Christ and for Christ, he says, over masters us.

Controls us means it grips us in such a way it's the thing that motivates us in all that we do. Or as another translation says, the love of Christ leaves us no choice. We have to live for the glory of God.

The very spring of all our actions is the love of Christ. Just think of that, dear friends, if we could say that. In the words we speak to one another.

The love of Christ is the very spring of all our words and all our actions. That's the mark of spirituality. And he says, we judge like this.

We have concluded this, we have come to this conviction. That when Jesus died, everybody died with him. This is the theme of Romans 6. We were crucified.

It's not just that Jesus died, but that we died with Jesus. This is the great mystery, one of the great mysteries that Paul was given revelation in by the Holy Spirit. And which God used Paul to reveal to us.

There is no other apostle who reveals it as clearly as Paul. That we were also crucified with Christ. And notice verse 15.

Why did Jesus Christ die? If you were to ask the average believer that question, he would have one answer. For our sins. And that is part of the answer.

In the first letter to the Corinthians, Paul says that in 1 Corinthians 15, verse 3 and 4. Christ died for our sins. But 2 Corinthians reveals another reason why Christ died. And this is something beyond our sins.

Which we also need to understand. He died so that it says in verse 15. We should no longer live for ourselves but for him.

That's the second reason. You say you believe that Christ died for you. What benefit has it brought you? One, you say your sins are forgiven.

Excellent. What about the second reason? Here in 2 Corinthians 5.15. Have you stopped living for yourself? And for the glory of God? If not, you have not understood the death of Christ on Calvary's cross fully. Remember, he died for our sins.

But he also died that we might no longer live for ourselves. But for his glory all the rest of our life. Let's turn today to 2 Corinthians 5.15. We were considering in our last study the second reason why Christ died.

The first reason we saw in 1 Corinthians 15.3 and 4. Very plainly written, Christ died for our sins. That our sins might be forgiven. If we stop there, we remain carnal Christians, baby Christians all our life.

Until we understand and submit to and accept this second purpose with which Christ died for us. That is, he died for all, 2 Corinthians 5.15. That we who live should no longer live for ourselves. But for him who died and rose again on our behalf.

And so we see here that there is a second reason why Christ died. And that is that we might no longer live for our own self or for our own glory. We see here that it's not only that.

Another translation of verse 15 could be that Christ died for us. That we who are alive should no longer live with our own life. That is that life we have received from Adam.

But with his life, the life of Christ who died for us. In other words, we are not to live our life by the strength and power of that which we have received from Adam. But by the strength and power which we receive from the Holy Spirit.

That life of Jesus that comes to us through our dying to our own life. As we bear in our body, 2 Corinthians 4.10. The life, the dying of Jesus, the life of Jesus also is manifested in our body. And the intention is that we live by that life, not by our own.

This is the second purpose with which Christ died. And this is why it's connected with what we read in 2 Corinthians 5.14. That when he died, we died with him. Just like we have seen one day in our life that our sins were laid upon Christ when he hung on the cross.

In the same way we need to see that we died with him when he died on the cross. And that from now on we are no longer to live with our own human life. But rather with that life of Christ which we have partaken of.

Therefore, verse 17, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. The old things are passed away and behold new things have come. All things have become new, it says.

And that's something which we need to look at more carefully. That when we come to Christ, it's not just that God makes us good. But that he makes us completely new.

He's not in the business of making bad people good. But first of all, getting rid of that old garment and putting on a new garment altogether. You remember what Jesus said about a new patch being added to an old garment.

That's not salvation. Salvation is the throwing away of that old garment completely. So that he makes us completely new in Christ.

There is a new creation when a man comes to Christ. He's a new person altogether. That's why it's called a new birth.

It's like a baby being born into the world that never existed before. And spiritually we can say it's exactly the same thing. It's not reformation.

It's not giving up bad habits. It's a completely new creation. Just like the old creation which came out of nothing.

When God created the world, there was no earth existing before that. When he created the stars, there were no stars existing before that. In the same way, here the word used is a creation, a new creation.

Something that didn't exist before. And we need to see that if we have a genuine experience of being born again, then something that did not exist before has begun to exist in our spirits. Eternal life, the life of Jesus which we never had before, is not just a question of a change of an external way of life.

It's a new creation. And this comes through repentance and faith in Christ. We must not be content with a new birth experience that's anything less than a new creation altogether.

And where there is a new creation, the old life has passed away. And it is a completely new life that has come. All things are become new does not mean that we have become like Christ in every single area of our life.

No. But it does mean that a whole new attitude has come in us. For example, towards sin.

Towards the world. That we hate sin. We are crucified to this world.

And a whole new attitude towards God and towards holiness. That we love righteousness now. And we want to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

It is in this sense that all things have become new. Everything has become fresh and new in the sense of our attitude. And because of this, we find that gradually a transformation takes place even in our personality.

So we shouldn't think that a person is going to be changed overnight into the likeness of Christ and quote this verse. We know it's not true. But we know one thing is true that where a person is really born again there will be a completely new attitude towards unrighteousness and iniquity.

You consider the difference for example between a pig and a cat. A pig falls into the dirty water and it loves it, it stays there. A cat may also fall into the dirty water but it will not stay there.

It wants to jump out because of another nature it has. And that's an indication or an illustration of the change that takes place in us. A completely new attitude towards sin.

It doesn't mean we will not fall into sin but it means that if we do fall our attitude towards it will be completely different from what it was before we were born again. In that sense all things have become new. A new attitude towards sin.

A new direction for our life. A new ambition and goal in life compared to the old ambition. All this should really take place when a person is really born again.

But if a person had a very shallow experience of repentance or just an intellectual faith very often he finds such a new attitude has not come and that's partly because many evangelists today are so keen on conversions that they don't bring a person to a thorough repentance and therefore not a proper experience of being born again. But when a person is really thoroughly born again all things indeed pass away and all things have become new in his attitude towards the world, towards sin, towards God, towards human beings towards other believers, towards the church, towards God's word etc. But all this is God's work.

Verse 18. All these things are out from God. It's God who does all this so that all the glory goes to Him.

It's not man who can do it. He is the one who has made us at peace with Himself. Reconciling the world to Himself.

Reconciled us to Himself through Christ. He is the one who has made us at peace with Himself through Christ. It's God who took the initiative.

And now He has given us the ministry of reconciliation. Ministry of reconciliation means the work of making peace. Think of that dear friends, that our calling is to make peace.

No quarrelsome person can ever be a servant of Christ. That's impossible. How can a quarrelsome person ever make peace if he himself is quarreling? The spirit of quarreling must be driven out of us completely so that it doesn't exist in us.

It always takes two people to have a quarrel and if one person refuses to quarrel there will be no quarrel. And we as servants of God must have a testimony that it is impossible for anyone to kick up a quarrel with us. Or even to get into a controversy with us.

Our calling is to make peace. To make peace between man and God. To make peace between ourselves and those who are not at peace with us as much as it lies within our ability.

And to make peace between man and man. He says God was in Christ, verse 19, reconciling the whole world to himself. Making peace between the world and himself through the death of Christ.

And now he does not want to reckon their sins against them anymore. He doesn't want to charge man's transgressions to their account. Think of having this spirit.

This is the spirit of one who makes peace. That he does not want to remember a person's sins against him. God could make peace because it says he was not interested in holding, charging men's transgressions to their account.

As human beings we have such a dirty lust to hold a charge against people for something they said or did to us many years ago. Such people can never make peace. They cannot be ministers of reconciliation.

God could be the author of peace because he was eager not to charge men with the sins that they have committed against him. Do you want to be a minister of God? A minister of reconciliation? Do you want to have a ministry of reconciliation as it says in verse 18? How did Paul have it? He says God gave it to us. But God gave it to him because God saw in him that same spirit of not wanting to count people's trespasses against them as it says in verse 19.

And therefore he's committed to us also the word of reconciliation. We need to first partake of this part of God's nature. This forgiving part of forgiving others freely, completely.

And then we too can be ministers of reconciliation. Let's turn now to 2nd Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 20. We were considering in our last study about this ministry of reconciliation of making peace.

That's why God calls us to be at peace with others so that we can have this ministry of making peace between men and God. And that's why it's important that we also first of all forgive all who have harmed us because this ministry of reconciliation involves God eagerly desiring not to count man's trespasses against him as it says in verse 19. We cannot preach that message that God wants to forgive you if we ourselves do not have that same spirit of forgiving others totally and completely as God desires to forgive them.

Therefore, verse 20, we are ambassadors for Christ. No one can be an ambassador for Christ unless he has completely forgiven all other human beings from his heart for every single thing that they have done against him. This is the reason why there are very few who are really ambassadors for Christ.

It's very easy to speak a message on God's eagerness to forgive you. But in the new covenant, if we are to be servants of the new covenant as it says we considered in 2nd Corinthians chapter 3 and verse 6 it's not enough that we have a message, the letters on our lips but that that spirit is in our heart and in our life. The spirit of forgiveness, not just forgiveness but an eagerness to forgive others and to overlook their wrongs not to remember the sins that others have committed against us.

No one who doesn't have the spirit can ever be an ambassador for Christ. It is impossible. It's not a question of saying it with our lips.

Remember this, dear friends. The most important qualification to be an ambassador for Christ to take this message of reconciliation to others is to forgive others from the heart completely. Every single person must be forgiven.

And then he says, therefore, God has made us his ambassadors his envoys, his representatives the representatives of Christ here in this world. We can think of an ambassador of another country living in our country, representing that country to us in India. That's what we see here.

An ambassador of heaven, an ambassador of Christ living on this earth, representing heaven representing the cause of God to an unconverted world. As though God were entreating you through us as though God were making a request to you through us God makes an appeal to you, he says, through us. And he says, we pray you, we beg you on behalf of Christ make your peace with God.

Now what is the necessity for Paul to write all these things to Corinthian Christians? Do Christians have to make their peace with God? He's writing to Christians, he's not writing to unbelievers. He's writing to Christians and he says, we beg you on behalf of Christ make your peace with God. Those are amazing words.

There are many Christians who think, I've accepted Christ, I'm born again I'm at peace with God, I'm quite all right. And yet it is possible for us to have done things which are on our conscience that have not been confessed, that have not been cleansed away. It could be that there are wrong attitudes towards other believers that have not been confessed and forsaken, maybe restitution that's not been done and to such the word of God still comes.

To such believers, make your peace with God. Take that seriously, making your peace with God. He says, because God has made Christ to be sin for us.

He who knew no sin, Christ knew nothing of sin. There was no sin in him. He never sinned, he had no knowledge of sin experientially.

And yet God made him to be sin for us on our behalf. Amazing words. I think the depth of what it means, we will never understand till eternity.

What does it mean that Christ was made sin for us? This is much more than the fact that he died for our sins. There's much more in this verse than that. To understand that Jesus hung on Calvary's cross as a substitute, taking the punishment that I should have got, taking the punishment for our sins, that we can understand.

We can see that even on earth where somebody is willing to take the punishment on behalf of somebody else. But this is much more than that. It says he was made sin on our behalf.

And all the suffering involved in that. And it's not just written that Christ was made sin on our behalf, it is specified that it is one who knew no sin who was made sin on our behalf. And we can get a faint picture of this if we can think of someone who was brought up in very hygienic surroundings who suddenly is made to live in a dirty slum.

You can imagine how his whole being will revolt against the filthiness and the squalor and the rottenness of life in that slum. And yet that's a very faint picture. It probably just gives us a millionth of an idea of the type of suffering Jesus went through.

Being pure, having come from heaven with the purity of heaven in his heart to encounter sin and to be made sin for us. Words can never be adequate to explain all that that verse means. But there's something of the mystery of the suffering of Jesus on Calvary's cross.

And there we get an idea of what Jesus actually shrank from in the garden of Gethsemane. The possibility of a loss of fellowship with the Father because he was going to be made sin and God the Father could not look at sin. And so we see here that he became sin and there we see the depth and greatness of his love for us.

God allowed Christ who knew no sin to be made sin for us with one purpose. That we might become the righteousness of God in him. That we might be made good with the goodness of God.

Just think of that. The extent to which Jesus was willing to become sin so that we might become righteous. Dear friends, if you want to understand what the nature of Christ is you've got to see it there.

And it's when we see that nature of Christ that we discover how selfish even the best among us are. What a lot of selfishness there is when we think only of our own sanctification. Jesus became sin in order that

we might be sanctified.

In order that we might be holy. Think to be able to live in such a way for other people that we no longer think in terms of our gain and our own profit. But only that others might come and make their peace with God and become holy.

Only such people can be ambassadors for Christ. Those who are eager that God's blessing may come to others and not just to themselves. So we must never rest content with the fact that God's blessed us.

No, we are called to be ambassadors. Then we need to ask ourselves whether we are worthy ambassadors. Do we have the spirit of the one whom we are representing? Or is it just a certain message we are conveying with our life? Then we are ministers of the old covenant.

But, Paul says as far as we are concerned we are ambassadors for Christ. Verse 20. And he goes on in chapter 6 verse 1 to say we are workers together with him.

We are God's fellow workers. He said that earlier in 1 Corinthians 3 in his first letter. That he was a co-worker with God.

And he says here also we are workers together with God. God is a partner in our business he says. In this business of bringing people to Christ.

Bringing people to peace with God. God is a partner with us. And he says I appeal to you not to accept the favor of God, the grace of God and then to waste it.

Just think of that one exhortation of receiving the grace of God in vain. Or as another translation says to fail to use the grace of God. Many people think of the grace of God as only involving the forgiveness of our sins.

We may have availed of the grace in that way. But it goes on to say here don't receive the grace of God in vain. Don't let it be wasted in your life.

What does that mean? That means though our sins are forgiven. We do not avail of the grace of God for sanctification. To be delivered from that self-centered life where we live for ourselves.

God's grace has come not only to forgive our past. But so that we no longer live for ourselves. But for the glory of God and the good of others.

And if we do not work towards this goal of becoming like Christ in this way. Of living for the glory of God and the good of others. If we are not making that our goal.

Then we are receiving grace of God in vain. And Paul says as an ambassador of Christ. I beseech you to be at peace with God.

As a worker with God we urge you not to receive the grace of God and then to waste it. Let's turn now to 2nd Corinthians chapter 6 and verse 1. As workers together with God. Paul says we urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

The very fact that there is such an exhortation in scripture. Proves that it is possible for believers to receive the grace of God and then to frustrate it. In vain.

That means it doesn't accomplish the purpose for which God gave it. Paul himself says in Galatians chapter 2. That he does not frustrate the grace of God. No.

There is a possibility of that. If we do not understand why God gives us his grace. All could give that testimony in Galatians 2.21. I do not nullify or cancel out or waste or frustrate the grace of God.

And therefore he exhorted the Corinthians. Don't receive the grace of God and waste it. Understand why God gives you grace.

Later on in chapter 12 he explains how that grace is sufficient for every single need in all of our life. To keep us triumphant. Sin shall not have dominion over you.

For you are under grace. Grace is meant to deliver us from sins dominion. So that we live as conquerors.

And if we do not live as conquerors over sin in our life. We can say that we have received the grace of God in vain. We are not allowing it to fulfill the full purpose with which God gave his grace to us in Christ.

The full purpose with which God allowed Christ who knew no sin. 2 Corinthians 5.21 To be sin for us. So that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

Notice that word in 5.21 That we might become the righteousness of God in him. Not just that we might have the righteousness of Christ put to our account. But that we might actually become, be made, be changed into.

It's speaking about sanctification in 2 Corinthians 5.21 Not just justification. And that's the context in which he says chapter 6 verse 1. He says, is the righteousness of God taking over more and more in your life? If not, the grace of God is being frustrated in your life. For he says, verse 2 At the acceptable time I listened to you.

This is a quotation from Isaiah 49 and verse 8. And on the day of salvation I helped you. And when is this acceptable time? Now is the acceptable time. Now is the day of salvation.

And here he's obviously in the context not speaking about salvation from the wrath of God. Which the Corinthians have already experienced. But salvation from the power of sin.

When shall we experience salvation from the power of sin? Shall we postpone it to next year? Shall we say one day in the future, one of these days God will give it to me? No, he says. Not even today. For when you say today, it could be tonight.

No, he says now. Now means at this very moment when we hear God's word. In other words, don't even postpone it till this afternoon.

Or later tonight. Now, this very moment is the day of salvation. Now is the acceptable time.

Call upon the Lord when he is near. Seek the Lord when he can be found, it says. And God is particularly near to us when we read his word and when we hear his word.

And that is why the time when we hear or read the word of God is the acceptable time. Is the day of salvation. Right now, there is no need to postpone it.

Right now, I can have faith that the grace of God can deliver me from sin's dominion. And I say, Lord, I want to trust you for that. So that the grace of God will not be frustrated in my life anymore.

Right from this moment. Even though I may not experience that victory for some time. But I want to begin on that journey right now.

I want to begin by having faith. And confessing what I believe. Chapter 4, verse 13.

I believe and I speak. He has listened to us at this acceptable time. And he says, I helped you.

He is the one who is going to help us. Our confidence is not in ourselves. If this is the day of salvation, we call out.

He says, I helped you. He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. So we can say the hour of God's grace is right here, right now.

And the moment of deliverance is right now. Jesus has come, died and risen. There is no need to wait.

Revival is not something which is around the corner that we have to perpetually wait for. It's something we can experience right now in our personal life. Revival in the church may take time to come because everyone's got to have a year to hear God's word.

But revival in your personal life need not wait even 24 hours. It can begin right now, this very moment. If you are willing to respond to God's word.

Paul continues the theme here in 2 Corinthians 6, 3. Of the type of servant of God that he is. As an ambassador for Christ, he calls himself in chapter 5, verse 20. A co-worker with God, he says in chapter 6, verse 1. And now he comes back to this autobiography of his inner life.

That the whole of 2 Corinthians really deals with. He says, we do not give cause for offense in anything. So that the ministry is not blamed.

He says, I'm very careful not to do anything that will be a stumbling block for another person. Lest our ministry should be discredited. If there's anything he says I do which may cause a stumbling block to another.

I would give it up. Because I don't want my ministry to be discredited by anything I do or say. Think how careful he was not to give offense in any area concerning his personal life.

Which would be a stumbling block to the gospel. Of course, the word of God itself offended many people. That's another thing.

Paul spoke the word of God truthfully. And that itself offended many. That's another matter.

But when it came to Paul's personal life, what does this mean? In other words, if there was something, for example, which Paul felt quite free to do. But he felt that if he did it, it would stumble others. He would be willing to give up the pleasure of doing that.

So that it wouldn't cause another person to stumble. Maybe it's something he could buy. And have for himself.

Nothing sinful, something legitimate. But he says I would rather give it up if my buying and having that thing would cause a stumbling block to another person. Think of how sensitive he was.

That he didn't want the personal satisfaction and pleasure that came out of purchasing something. If that thing was going to cause a stumbling block to another. There are very few who live by this standard.

But those are the spiritual servants of God. Those are the co-workers of God. Those are the ambassadors of Christ.

There are very few like that. Unfortunately. But think that any one of us can be like that if we are willing to pay the price.

You don't have to be a full-time worker. You don't have to give up your secular job. In your secular job, you can be a co-worker of God.

A minister of God, as it says here in 2 Corinthians 6.4. A servant of God. An ambassador for Christ. Further, in verse 4, he says, in every single circumstance.

Instead of giving offense, on the contrary, we seek to commend ourselves or to prove to others that we are genuine servants of God. Whatever we may have to go through, Paul had a great burden that other people should see that he's a servant of God, not by some wretched title that he had before his name. Not by some Bible school degree by which he claimed to be a servant of God.

Not even by the fact that he could do miracles. Because there were people who lived insincere lives who did miracles too. But how does he seek to prove that he's a servant of God? In everything, he wants to prove that he's a genuine servant of God.

How? And we can ask ourselves, how? And as you look in that verse carefully, you find in verse 4, it is through patience. Notice, he doesn't say, I prove myself to be a servant of God by the fact that I raised Eutychus from the dead when he fell down from the window. Or that he had people healed through handkerchiefs that touched his body and went, were sent to people who were sick.

Demons were cast out when handkerchiefs that touched Paul's body were put upon sick people. And yet he doesn't refer to any of these as the proof that he's a servant of God. He says in all things we want to prove ourselves as God's servants in patience, in our afflictions.

When people accuse us falsely that we are patient. In necessities. That means Paul also had hardships, physical hardships, financial hardships.

In distresses. He went through all types of anguish and difficulties. And in all those situations, he lived with patience and endurance.

In stripes, that's when he was flogged by others. He didn't grumble and complain and revile them. He was patient.

In imprisonments, he was patient to let God take his own time to release him from the prison. In tumults and riots. Wherever Paul went, usually there was a riot because he was wholehearted in preaching the truth.

But he was patient there. In the riots. In toils.

In watchings. In fastings. In all these situations described in verses four and five.

He worked to exhaustion. He stayed awake through sleepless nights of watching and even went without food. And in all these things, he lived in patience.

And it is that patience which is the mark of a true servant of God. So if we want to be servants of God, co-workers of God, and ambassadors of Christ, let's seek to acquire that patience that will prove that we are his servants indeed.

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