

Through the Bible - 2 Corinthians - Part 2

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes the inner life of a servant of God, the importance of living for Christ, and the dignity of being His ambassador in the world.

Duration: 57:33

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 2:4, 2 Corinthians 3:5, 2 Corinthians 4:1, 2 Corinthians 6:3-4, 2 Corinthians 7:2, 2 Corinthians 8:20-21, 2 Corinthians 11:19

Topics: "Through The Bible"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the qualities and characteristics of the apostle Paul as a servant of God. He emphasizes that Paul was called by God and had a deep love for those he served. Paul depended entirely on God and did not rely on human resources. He also never gave up despite facing hardships and challenges. The speaker encourages believers to be sincere, anointed with the Holy Spirit, and to conduct themselves as ambassadors of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life.

Transcript

Let's turn this evening to 2nd Corinthians and continue where we left off in the morning. We look at chapter 5. We saw that 2nd Corinthians describes the inner life of the man of God, whom God can use to do His work on earth. There are a number of things we see here, which we can consider.

And I believe if you are serious about serving God as He wants us to, the Lord has given us the Apostle Paul as an example. An example that we can follow, because he said, Follow me as I follow Christ. Jesus is our example.

But sometimes we wonder how to deal with the practical situations which we face. For example, we don't see Jesus establishing churches and appointing elders and things like that. And there we have an example in the Apostle Paul.

And a man who went through a lot of persecution in his life. And he reveals to us the inner secret of his life in 2nd Corinthians more than any other letter. In verse 9, he speaks about his ambition.

See, all young people have ambitions. The world is full of young people who have ambitions. The problem is they've got the wrong ambitions.

A lot of people, their ambition today is to make money or become great or famous. Or do research and get a name for themselves. So many things.

Paul also had an ambition when he was converted. He says, Our ambition, we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent. That means whether we are in heaven or absent from heaven.

In the previous context, he says our home is in heaven. And whether we are there or here, it doesn't make a difference. Whether we are at home with the Lord, like it says in verse 8, or absent from the body.

It doesn't make a difference whether I'm there or here. My ambition is to please Him. In other words, when I get to heaven, listen to this carefully.

My ambition and goal is not going to change. Can you honestly say that? That when you get to heaven, your ambition and goal is not going to change. A lot of believers whose ambition on earth is something else.

Think that once they die, they get to heaven. Okay, then we'll have an ambition to please God. No, he says whether at home or absent.

Whether I'm here or there, it makes no difference. My ambition is going to be exactly the same. And that is the man who is in tune with God.

Because he's in tune with heaven's values. And he will be the most effective servant of God on earth. Because he's in tune with heaven.

The trouble with a lot of Christian workers today is they are not in tune with God or heaven. And then he says, verse 11, he speaks about the fear of the Lord. In the King James Version, it says the terror of the Lord.

And knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men. In what context is he saying that? He's saying that in verse 10, we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. That everyone may be rewarded in his body for the things that he has done.

Whether good or bad. So, he says, I know that one day I'm going to stand at the judgment seat of Christ. And I'm going to be evaluated for every single thing that I ever did in my whole life.

Whether it's good or bad, the words, the thoughts, the motives, what I did with my body. It's all going to be evaluated. And I'm going to be rewarded accordingly.

Or I'm going to lose the reward. See, this judgment seat of Christ is different from the judgment, the great white throne judgment of God. Which is only for unbelievers.

This is a judgment seat only for believers. Believers are going to be judged and rewarded according to their faithfulness. And he says, since that is true, we know the fear of the Lord, we are accountable.

It's something like, supposing you're working for a company. And they give you 500,000 rupees in cash. And say, please get on the train here and take this to our headquarters in Delhi.

I don't think you'll get much sleep on that train. In the three nights you spend in it. Because you can't afford to lose this.

And I don't think you'll take any of that money and live lavishly on the journey all along. Because when you reach the other end and you present this to the headquarters of your company. You'll have to account for every rupee in that packet they gave you.

And you'd be so careful. You would not leave the compartment, leaving that package alone there. Now, Paul realized that life is like that.

The number of days God gives me, 365 days a year. Many opportunities He gives me, He gives me time, He gives me money. He's given me intelligence, He's given me many, many things in this body.

And when I reach the other end of the journey. I'm going to be evaluated for every single day of my life on earth. And so the same care that this man has who is going in the train.

With that money, Paul had with his life. He says, I know the fear of the Lord. Therefore, I persuade men.

And then he goes on to say. It is the love of Christ that controls us. There are two things that should motivate us in our life.

One is the reverence and fear of the Lord, mentioned in verse 11. And the other is the love of Christ. The love of Christ controls me, he says.

He was motivated by love in everything he did. And that was the secret of his life. And then he tells us in verse 15.

You know, we've already considered in Romans 6. This great truth that Paul kept on speaking about. In the last part of verse 14. If one died, all died with him.

He speaks about it in Romans. He speaks about it in Corinthians. He speaks about it in Galatians.

I'm crucified with Christ. One died, all died. This is one of the unique revelations that God gave Paul.

We don't see Peter and John and James writing about it. But they all know about the forgiveness of sins. But one of the unique revelations that God gave Paul.

Was that when Jesus died. In God's eyes, we all died with him. And so he says, if we all died.

And we rose again with him. This is one of Paul's great themes. Verse 15.

That now that we live. We should no longer live for ourselves. But for him who died.

And rose again for us. Now. I've often said.

If you ask people. Why did Christ die? The answer that most people give. Is from 1 Corinthians 15.

Christ died for our sins. Correct. But that's only one part of the answer.

The other part of the answer is here. Verse 15. Christ died.

Read it. It's in your Bible. Christ died.

That we should never again. Live for ourselves. But for him.

How many of you know that Christ died for that purpose? See that's the other side of the coin. One side of the coin says Christ died for our sins. The other side is.

Christ died. That I might never again. Live for myself.

So if you are living for yourself. You are frustrating. The purpose.

With which Christ died. Did you understand that? For example. If you keep on living in sin.

You are taking advantage. Of the fact that Christ died for our sins. You are.

Taking advantage of the grace of God. And anyone. Any believer.

Who lives for himself. We have to say. Has not really understood.

The full purpose. Which Christ died. The aim of the devil is to blind our eyes.

To the full truth of God. If he can. Help us to make us see.

Just a little bit of it. Then he succeeded. Either he tries to prevent us from seeing anything.

And if we see. Something. He makes sure that we don't see the full thing.

He says okay. You've seen Christ died for our sins. I'm going to make sure you don't see anymore.

But Christ died that we might never again. Live for ourselves. He died to deliver us from a self.

Centered life. And then we discover. When we put these two verses together.

1 Corinthians 15:3 and this verse. That the root of all sin. Is self-centeredness.

That a man lives in sin. Because he lives for himself. And as long as you live for it.

Yourself. You will never have victory over sin. It's like keeping the root.

Of a tree still there. And every time. Something comes out from that.

You're chopping it off. Cutting it off. It'll keep on coming.

The only solution is pull out the root. And then you won't have to keep on. Using your scissors.

To keep cutting off that plant. That keeps coming up from that root. Now many people.

They've got rid of sin on the surface. But the root is still there. The root of living for oneself.

Now I want to say to all of you. My brothers and sisters. That you'll never get victory over sin.

As long as you live for yourself. That's impossible. Because the root is there.

And you can pray. And cry and fast. You say Lord.

Deal with this root. Help me to die. Once and for all.

To decide in my life. That from this day onwards. I will never make a decision.

With me as the center of my life. I will never make a decision in terms of. How will this benefit me.

Do you know the number of people. Who make decisions in Christian work. By this question.

How will this benefit me. How will this. Benefit my family.

While you keep making decisions like that. That's how every unconverted. Godless sinner in the world.

Also makes decisions. How do they make their decisions. How will this benefit me and my family.

And you do Christian work. And you also ask the same question. How will this benefit me and my family.

You are no different from him. Except that he is probably an atheist. And you go to church.

Inside you are just the same. Jesus died. To deliver us from that.

So that never again in our life. Do we make a decision by. How will this.

Benefit me. But we make a decision by. Will this glorify God.

How will this benefit God. And his kingdom. And his purpose.

If I can find people here. Who are determined to live like that. From today.

How will. My life benefit God. How can this decision I take.

Benefit God. How will my going and living in this place. Benefit God and his kingdom.

And his purpose. How will my choosing to settle down in this place. Benefit God and his purpose.

How will my working with this group. Or that church of this organization. Benefit God and his purpose.

I tell you. You get a hundred people like that. We can turn India upside down.

It's very difficult. The vast majority of people in Christian work. I tell you.

I have seen it for 41 years. Seek their own. They have never understood this verse.

That we are not supposed to live for ourselves anymore. They skip verses like that. And go to verses like.

Verse 17. I have seen all things are passed away. And all things are become new.

We have become a new creation. Let me ask you. Even if you go to verse 17.

What are the old things that are passed away. That should have passed away. That is living for myself.

Has it passed away. Everything become new. Has my ambition become new.

Have my goals become new. Okay. Verse 20.

We are ambassadors for Christ. And we are entreating you. That's a tremendous calling.

To be an ambassador. For Jesus Christ. And that is why.

There is a dignity. About us. Let me ask you a question.

Even the ambassador. Of some very poor country. In India.

Will have a certain dignity about him. And then. The bigger the country.

And the more powerful the country. The more the dignity. In an ambassador.

Now we live in a world. Where we have one super power. The United States of America.

Think of the ambassador of the United States of America. In India. Can you imagine the dignity.

With which he conducts himself. Because he knows. That he is representing.

The one super power in the world. Okay. He won't do anything cheap.

Or undignified. He won't. Go like a beggar.

Asking people for money. And he won't do anything. Which dishonors the name of his country.

No. Can you imagine the ambassador of the United States of America. Coming to your house and say.

Can you please give us some money. To help our country. Can you imagine that.

If such a white man. Comes with a suit and tie. And says.

I am an ambassador of America. We want some money. Because our country is having a tough time.

Even ten rupees will do. You will say you are a liar. You are not the ambassador of the United States.

I cannot believe. That the ambassador of the United States. Behave like that.

But if another man comes. And says I am an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ. Can you please give ten rupees for our work.

We say yeah sure. Why do we believe the other person. Because we believe the ambassador of America.

Is way up there. And the ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ. Is way down here.

A beggar. Do you know. That there is one super power in the universe.

Not the world. The world super power we know. I am talking about the super power in the universe.

Which is that. That is God. It is the kingdom of God.

It is Jesus Christ. And if that chap may be the ambassador of the greatest super power in the world. But with all humility.

I can say that I am an ambassador. Of the super power in the world. Of the universe.

Not just the world. And that is what you are. At least that is what you say you are.

But do you conduct yourself. With the dignity of an ambassador. Of the one super power in the whole universe.

I tell you the thing that has. Grieved my heart. And made me so sad.
Is when I see the name of Jesus Christ. Dishonored. By the undignified.
Cheap way. In which. People go around begging.
And say they are ambassadors for Jesus Christ. Very very sad. I. You know there is a verse in Psalm 50.
Which says the Lord says if I were hungry. I wouldn't tell you. I own the cattle on a thousand hills.
God says. And that is what a servant of God says. If I were hungry I wouldn't tell you.
I tell my. Master in heaven. If you are in touch with him.
He will listen to you. You see an ambassador. In a country has to always be in touch.
With his home country. He cannot afford to be out of touch. With his home country even for a single day.
This is how. We are called to live. I long with all my heart.
To see the day in India. When we shall have servants of God. They may be very poor.
They may not afford. May be able to afford anything more than a bicycle. Maybe they cannot even afford a scooter.
But. I want to see men and women. Who have got a dignity.
Even if they are poor. And they wear very simple clothes. And they can only wear chapels.
And ride a cycle. And live in some village. But with a dignity of an ambassador.
Of the greatest super power. In the universe. Is that the impression we get.
Of Christian workers. No. India has got a picture of Christian workers.
Who are beggars. They are just dignified beggars. Always asking for money.
Always running after rich people. What a tragedy. That's not.
An ambassador of Jesus Christ. Always remember my brother, sister. If you are a servant of God.
You are an ambassador of Jesus Christ. Wherever you go. When you travel in a train.
Remember you are an ambassador of Jesus Christ. When you travel in a bus. You are an ambassador of Jesus Christ.
Wherever you go. You are an ambassador of Jesus Christ. Chapter 6. He speaks here.
In verses 3 to 10. About the way he. Conducts himself as a servant of God.
He says in nothing. I want the ministry. Giving no offense.
Verse 3 to anyone. So that the ministry does not get a bad name. As an ambassador.

He doesn't want to do anything. That will bring a bad name on the ministry. And so in everything.
This is a wonderful verse. In everything. Verse 4. I want to commend myself as a servant of God.
In endurance. In affliction. In everything.
In hardships. In distress, in beatings, in imprisonments. Labor, sleeplessness, hunger.
Purity, knowledge. Patience, kindness. And so on.
Sometimes verse 8. Glory. Sometimes dishonor. People appreciate us.
People condemn us. Evil report. Good report.
People say good things about us. People say bad things about us. But we are the same servants of God.
In good report, bad report. When people slander us. People say good things.
Some people call us deceivers. Some people call us true servants of God. To both we manifest ourselves.
As servants of God. To the world we are unknown. But among God's people.
We are well known. Verse 9. As dying but yet we live. We go through so many sufferings.
But we don't die. Till God's time comes. We live.
And as punished. Or disciplined by God. But not put to death.
Sorrowful but yet rejoicing. Sorrowful because we are concerned. About so many people lost in sin.
Concerned. Because so many believers are carnal. That's the sorrow.
Not sorrow because people are hurting me. Sorrowful because of the sorrows of other people. And yet
always rejoicing.
Because I join the Lord. As poor. Yet making many people rich.
Spiritually. Having nothing. Yet possessing all things.
I possess all of heaven and earth. It's at my disposal. Whatever I need.
God provides me. But in actual terms. Bank account may be low.
And we may be living at times from day to day. God takes care of us. This is how Paul lived.
He did not believe in a prosperity gospel at all. And then he says about his heart. Towards these
Corinthians.
The Corinthians were very narrow hearted. Towards Paul. And Paul said.
Our heart is wide open to you. I believe that's very important. In our service to other people.
That our hearts must always be wide open. Towards them. Even if they are.

Verse 12. Narrow hearted towards us. You are restrained.

In your own affections. You are narrow hearted towards me. But I am wide hearted towards you.

There is a little poem I read. Once. Which said something like this.

They drew a circle. That pushed me out. They called me a heretic.

And various names like that. And drew a circle. Which only included their own people.

But love. And wisdom. Told me how to win the victory.

I drew a circle. That took them also inside. That's God's way.

Let the other people draw a circle. Which does not include you. We are the only ones.

If you love. And you have wisdom. You will draw a bigger circle.

And take them in. That's how Paul was. His heart was large.

You cannot serve God. If your heart is narrow. Just towards people in your denomination.

Or people who agree with you in everything. People who see everything exactly like you. Many people are like that.

But your own service for God will be limited. Unless your heart is large. Towards all of God's people.

Then we have this wonderful verse. About working together with unbelievers. Verse 14.

Do not be bound together with unbelievers. Do not be yoked together. There was an old testament law.

That you must not yoke an ox and a donkey together. You must not be yoked in partnership. With unbelievers in business.

For example. Because in business. They may want to do some cheating.

And unrighteous practices. Which you don't agree with. In Christian work.

You cannot. It's not just with unbelievers. With people who don't have your sense of values.

That is an unequal yoke. See your standards are so high. And his standards are so low.

Can you imagine putting a yoke. Between two bullocks. One whose height is this much.

And one whose height is this much. It will be difficult for them to plough together. Unequal.

You may say he is a believer. But look at his sense of values. He allows a lot of things.

Which you will not allow. So that's an unequal yoke. In marriage.

If you marry someone. Who does not have your sense of values. And your goal and your vision.

That's an unequal yoke. Don't be unequally yoked together. With unbelievers.

Because what partnership. Has righteousness with lawlessness. And light with darkness.

So here it speaks about. Calling us to be separate. Verse 17.

Therefore come out from their midst. And be separate. Don't mingle with people.

Who don't know the Lord. In work. I'm not saying in your office.

Or in your neighborhood. Or your relatives. We have to mingle with unbelievers in the world.

But when you work. For example. I want to speak very plainly here.

And well. I hope you don't get offended with the truth. But I find there are people.

Who are believers. In some denominational churches. And in those denominations.

The leaders of those churches. Are unconverted. I mean they themselves will say.

Our bishop is unconverted. I say then what in the world. Are you doing in a church.

Where your leader is unconverted. The leader doesn't know God. If he's not born again.

The Bible says he's a child of the devil. And it doesn't make a difference. Whether he's an arch bishop.

Or a bishop or anything. If he's not born again. God's not going to see.

Whether he's got a cross around his neck. Or wears a purple dress or a white dress. Is he born again.

I'm really amazed. At people who say. I'm born again.

But my bishop, my leader is not born again. What are you doing sitting in that group then. You should be getting out of there.

How can you follow a leader. Who's a child of the devil. Or don't you believe.

That there are only two categories. Of people in the world. According to 1 John 3 10.

Those who are children of God and children of the devil. That's what it says. I believe a lot of believers don't believe that.

They think somehow. Because God sees a cross around the neck. He'll take him to heaven.

I'm sorry to say he won't. He sees the heart. Don't be fooled.

There's a lot of compromise. In the lives of many believers. And it's not only people who are unconverted.

There are people who know. That their pastor. Is a crook.

He's just out to make money. I say what in the world are you doing. Following such a pastor.

Your leader is a crook. And you're following him. Sitting in that church.

Sad. Jesus said the blind leaders. Lead the blind people.

They both fall into the ditch. If you want to avoid the ditch. Don't follow these blind leaders.

That's true. Be not unequally yoked. Together with unbelievers.

Come out and be separate. And touch not the unclean thing. I will be a father to you.

I have never in my life regretted. Obeying that command. And when you obey that command.

Chapter 7 verse 1. Having these promises beloved. Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement. Of flesh and spirit.

Perfecting holiness in the fear of God. If you want to perfect holiness. In your life.

You have to cleanse yourself. From all filthiness. Of flesh and spirit.

These external filthiness of associations. That defile you. The internal filthiness of motive.

Attitude. Cleanse yourself. And perfect holiness.

God's will is. Are you holy? You must perfect your holiness. And you can only do it in the fear of God.

If you are afraid of men. You are afraid. What will that person say? What will my relative say? What will my uncle say? What will my auntie say? I want to tell you.

You will never perfect holiness in your whole life. You got to perfect holiness in the fear of God. You got to fear only one person.

God. That's all. But God is sending his word.

Stand for that. And then Paul says in verse 2 again. I've got a lot of room in my heart for you.

Please make some room in your heart for me. Have I taken advantage of you? No. Have I wronged any of you? Have I corrupted any of you? No.

Then why don't you receive me? In chapter 7. We read of. You know. When Paul wrote that very verse 11.

We read of that very strong rebuke. That he gave to the church in Corinth. In the first letter.

Telling them. You put that man out of your midst. You are allowing that man to live there.

And you are corrupting your church. And when they got that letter. They really took it seriously.

And it says. I caused you sorrow. Verse 8. By my letter.

Sometimes when God's servants write to us. Or speak to us. They have to speak very hard.

Or write a letter which is very strong. And it causes sorrow. And he says.

But it caused you sorrow only for a while. And I don't regret it. Because the sorrow.

Which is according to the will of God. Produces a repentance. That leads to salvation.

And what earnestness. That repentance brought. Godly sorrow.

Vindication of yourself. What fear, longing, zeal. They were.

They took Paul's letter seriously. And this is how true repentance is. In chapter 8. And chapter 9. Paul writes to them.

To collect money. To give to the poor saints in Jerusalem. Now notice very carefully.

He was not telling them. To collect money for his ministry. Now some people use this passage.

Chapter 8 and chapter 9. Say Paul wrote to people to collect money. We also tell people to collect money. But Paul was not telling people to collect money.

For his ministry. He was not even going to touch one paisa. Of that money himself.

We have every right. To ask rich believers to give money. To help poor believers.

If we don't touch it ourselves. That's the example of the apostle Paul. He never.

Touched one paisa. Of that himself. He trusted God for his needs.

When he could not get enough. He stitched tents and earned something. And sometimes he just went without food.

But he would not lower his standards. Because he was an ambassador. Of the world's greatest.

Universe's greatest superpower. And if he was hungry. He was not going to tell anyone.

Except God. So here he urged them. To collect money.

He said you fellows have got a lot of money. And there in Jerusalem there are poor believers. Please provide for them.

I believe it's good. And a good example here for every servant of God. To have his eyes open.

To see where believers under his responsibility. Are poor. And urge rich believers.

To help them. Very good example. Because those rich believers.

May not know about these poor believers. And so it's good to tell them. Here is someone.

Who can be profited by your money. In fact in the new testament. We never read a single example.

Of any apostle. Or any servant of God. Asking people to give money for their ministry.

Never. They only told God. You will never find an example like that.

Anywhere in scripture. But they did many times urge. That they should give money to the poor.

And so that's what we see. In chapter 8. And we read there of the churches. In Philippi who.

Gladly gave. Even though they were very poor. And then he gives the example of Jesus.

In verse 9. He says you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich. Yet for your sake he became poor.

That you through his poverty. Might become rich. He says think of what Jesus did.

He had everything in heaven. And he came down to earth. And became poor.

And he hung on the cross. Stripped of everything. So that we.

Can become rich. So what is he saying therefore. Is he saying that therefore you should just enjoy your riches.

No. He says follow the example of Jesus. Now some people take that verse.

And say Jesus became poor. So that I can be rich. Now I'm rich.

That's not what he's saying. He says look at the example of Jesus. Who.

Gave up everything for the sake of others. You also be willing to give up everything. For the sake of others.

He's not telling you to be rich. He says if you become rich. Help those people who are poor like Jesus.

Who was rich and came down and became poor. You see how you can take a verse of scripture. And misunderstand it, misquote it.

For your own benefit. You want to justify all the money you make. And that you hoard up for yourself.

And you say well Jesus became poor that I might be rich. But that's not the meaning of that verse. It's so clear in the context.

That that verse means. You follow the example of Jesus. Who helped others who were poor.

And you must help others who are poor. That's the context of the whole chapter. If you take a verse out of context.

You can teach almost anything you like. And then you'll build a cult. Like this prosperity cult today.

And. Verse. 20 and 21.

He says in distributing this money. We are very careful. That nobody should discredit us.

Because we have a great regard. That we must do what is honorable. Not only in the side of the Lord.

But also in the side of men. Paul was very careful in the collecting of this money. That.

Nobody should say that somebody is swiping. Some of this money for himself. So Paul said.

He himself would not. Take that money. Or transport it.

But. We have sent Titus. And we have sent along with Titus.

Another brother. And these two brothers. He would never send one person.

To transport money. Always two people. Who have a good testimony.

And they. Will take that money. And give it to the church in Jerusalem.

It's very important to be very clear. In the matter of money. Now chapter 9. He says.

And verse. 6. Again he is talking about the subject of giving. He says.

If you are very miserly. In your giving. You will reap also like that.

That means if you sow. A little bit of seed. You will get a little bit of a harvest.

If you sow plenty of seed. You will get a bigger harvest. Now many people use this verse.

To urge you to give money to them. Particularly television evangelists. They will say.

You must put seed. Put that seed into our ministry. And here is our address.

And send money here. And you will get a big harvest. These are hucksters and hoaxes.

Who are out to deceive simple believers. Paul was not saying. Put a seed into my ministry.

You know I am serving the Lord. I am doing all these things. Send some money to me.

And you will get a harvest. This is how people misquote the scripture. Was Paul saying that you should give money to him? No.

He says go and give it to other people. Do you remember what Jesus told the rich young ruler. Who came to him.

Beautiful words. Go. Sell what you have.

Give it to the poor. He didn't say sell what you have and come and give the money here. Because we got a lot of needs.

We got to support all these people and their families. No. He said you give your money to the poor.

And you come. I want you without your money. Where in the world.

Do you find servants of the Lord like that. Who can tell a rich person. Brother I don't want your money.

I want you. Go and give your money to any Christian group or organization. You come to our church.

And let me build you up. Into the likeness of Jesus Christ. We are not one bit interested in your money.

That's how Jesus was. But it's almost impossible to find a pastor like that. Who will tell a rich person in his church.

Give your money somewhere else. And you come here and listen to the word of God. I do it all the time.

We are not interested in your money. We are interested that you become like Christ. In your life.

And if you want to give to the Lord. There are so many places you can give. There are poor people there.

There are poor people there. Paul says give it to them. I am an ambassador of the world's. Universe's greatest super power. So. You take care of these other people. That is the dignity. Of a man of God. Please remember that. In chapter. Nine. He goes on to say. God loves verse seven. A cheerful giver. In the old testament. The emphasis was on how much you give. In the new testament. The emphasis is on how you give. Cheerfully or reluctantly. It's not a question of percentage. A church is not quantity. But quality. You notice that throughout the new testament. You find this emphasis on quality. Your service. Quality. The type of church you build. Quality. Even your giving. Not quantity. Ten percent. But quality. Whatever you give. Give cheerfully. But remember. If you give stingily. You'll reap stingily. I believe there are many many believers. Who are poor. Because they have given. Stingily to God. And therefore they don't have a ministry in their life. They are miserly in their giving. Be large hearted. In your giving to God. Be rich towards God. Many people have gotten to a lot of financial difficulty. Because they have not learned. To give to God generously. In my single days. When I was single. And I didn't have much expense. What God gave me. I could give freely. And through the years. When I got married. And got into a lot of need financially. I can say today. I never had to get into debt. I never had to borrow at any time. Even though there were times of great financial difficulty. Because God repaid. What was given earlier. So learn to give. And you will find. Your financial problems are solved. But give wisely. Don't give to people who ask you to give it to them. Pray. And give where. You find God leads you to give. Particularly where you see the need is greatest. Don't give to people who spend lavishly. And waste God's money. Give where the need is greatest. Give to the poor. Not to the rich. Give to those who are really in need of it. And you will find that. God gives you a rich harvest in your needs. I don't believe it's God's will.

That a believer should be in debt. Or in constant financial problem. Usually such a person.
Has never in his life. Been rich towards God. He's been miserly towards God.
And he finds in his time of need. God is also miserly towards him. So let's learn a lesson from that.
Okay. We go on to chapter 10. And verse 1. Paul says.
I myself urge you. By the meekness and gentleness of Christ. And Paul.
He. He was a great apostle. And these people were just such young believers.
But he humbles himself. Right down to their level. And he says.
I urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ. This is how he always spoke. And he speaks here about.
Something about our thought life. He says. It's important that we.
He speaks about the weapons. Of our warfare in verse 4. Which are powerful. To the destruction of fortresses.
He's speaking about fortresses in our thought life. You know. In our thought life.
He speaks there about. Verse 5. Bringing every thought captive. The last part of verse 5. To the obedience of Christ.
So he's speaking about our thought life. And in verse 4 he says. Our thought life has got fortresses.
You know what a fortress is. An enemy builds a strong fortress. Like a certain.
Dirty thought pattern. That's a fortress. Or a selfish.
Thought pattern. That's another fortress. And.
We just can't seem to conquer this fortress. For Christ. And we find when we sleep at night.
It's all these dirty dreams. That come out of this fortress. Inside our mind.
Is that God's will that we live like that forever? No. God's will is that we bring. Every thought.
Captive. To the obedience of Christ. So we are going to destroy these fortresses.
With weapons. Spiritual weapons. And one of the great weapons.
Is the word of God. If you fill your mind. More and more and more and more.
With the word of God. You'll find these fortresses. Get demolished.
And the soldiers inside those fortress. Get destroyed. See I've been a young man.
Like many of you are. And I've struggled with dirty thoughts. Like all of you are struggling.
And I found this was a solution in my life. My younger days. I meditated and read and read and read.

And flooded my mind with God's word. And a little picture. The Lord gave me was like this.

Our mind is like a bowl. Full of dirty water. Because we put a lot of muck and dirt in it.

In our unconverted days. And our thought life is like a bowl. Full of filthy muck.

And dirty water. And I cannot access that. But if I pour a jug of clean water.

Into that bowl. Gradually that. Water overflows.

It gets diluted. Diluted. And after some years.

That bowl. Becomes clear water. It takes a long time.

That's the effect. The effect of pouring God's word into our mind. That over a period.

Of a number of years. It becomes clean. But if every now and then.

I throw a little bit of dirt inside. Then of course. It will be dirty again.

And by the power of God. We can ask God to give us grace. To bring every thought captive.

That means when I am tempted with a thought. To reject it. Okay.

We go on to verse. Thirteen. Paul speaks here about.

Not boasting beyond our measure. He says. God has appointed a certain sphere.

For my ministry. And he says. I don't have any desire to go outside that sphere.

For Jesus that sphere was Israel. And he hardly ever went outside that. Paul had a certain sphere.

And he says. This is the sphere of my ministry. God has given it to me.

I am not in competition with Peter. I am not in competition with Andrew. I am not in competition with Matthew.

I am not in competition with any others. Thomas has gone to India. I am not in competition with him.

God has given me a sphere. And I am going to work in that sphere. He had a clear understanding.

Of where God had called him to. I find a lot of preachers today. Don't have such a clear understanding.

Of their boundary. And that's why they are always clashing with other people. They are getting into their boundary.

And they are getting into this boundary. Because they don't have an understanding of the boundary. Which God has drawn around them.

Ok. Now we go to chapter 11. Verse 3. He speaks here about how.

Verse 2 he says. I am like. A man who is leading you.

To be engaged to Jesus Christ. To be married to Jesus one day. And I have got a tremendous jealousy.

That you should not fall in love. With anybody else on the way. Think of Abraham's servant.
Who was taking Rebecca. All the way from there 400 miles. To Isaac.
And during that way. If some handsome young fellow came along. And tried to win Rebecca's affections.
What would Eliezer do? Eliezer would say. Get away. This girl is already booked.
She is booked. She is booked for my master's son. He would tell her.
Don't be attracted by all these fellows over here. Paul preserved. Wanted to preserve the church in Corinth.
Like that for Jesus. That's a jealousy. You are reserved for Jesus.
You cannot live for the world. You cannot live for money. You cannot live for honor.
All these other fellows come and want to attract you. I want you to live for God. A true servant of God.
Has got a jealousy like that. For his people. That they should be kept like a pure virgin.
For Christ. And he says. But I am afraid that Satan will come like the old serpent in Eden.
Verse 3. And how very cunningly he drew Eve away. I am concerned that your heart will be drawn away.
From devotion to Jesus Christ.
How do you know. That you have become a backslider. How do you know that you have gone astray.
When you believe some wrong doctrine. No. According to verse 3. You have gone astray the moment.
You lose your devotion to Jesus Christ. You have gone astray. That's the mark.
Of going astray. Every believer. Who has lost his devotion to Jesus Christ.
Has gone astray already. And our job. As servants of God.
Is to preserve them. In devotion to Jesus Christ. That's the most important thing.
And the devil is always seeking. According to this verse. To lead people astray.
From devotion to Jesus Christ. From fervently loving Jesus Christ. What's the use serving him.
What's the use evangelism. What's the use teaching. What's the use building the church.
If we have lost our love for Jesus Christ. The Lord told the church in Ephesus. You do so many good things.
But you don't love me like you did at first. I don't want all your service. Please remember that.
Our calling is to be. To keep ourselves in a devotion to Christ. And to keep others whom we serve.
In devotion to Christ. And then he speaks. In verses 5 to 13.
How he was not a burden to people financially. He says. When I was present with you.

I was not a burden to anyone. Paul was very careful. That he was not a burden to people financially. He tried to work with his own hands. Sometimes he received gifts. Verse 8. From other churches. But in Corinth. They didn't accept his ministry too freely. And we must never receive money from a church. Or from people who don't accept our ministry. We must have a dignity. And keep ourselves aloof. Because when we receive money. It's an act of fellowship. There's nothing wrong in receiving money. If a person has accepted your ministry. But the Corinthians. Had some questions about Paul's ministry. So he didn't receive anything from them. And he said. I'll not be a burden to any of you. And then. In verse 23 onwards. Till the end of the chapter. He speaks of the tremendous trials he went through. Imprisonments. Beaten. 195 stripes on his back. Verse 24. Beaten with rods. Shipwrecked. Many types of dangers. Sleepless nights. Verse 27. And it says here. He was in hunger and thirst. Often without food. Verse 27. In cold and exposure. Which means there were times when he did not have warm clothing to cover himself. He didn't have money to buy warm clothes. He didn't have money to buy food sometimes. All of this. Was what God took him through. To teach him. To make him a mini forerunner. For other people who were suffering. And he went through all that. And he humbles himself. And says. Do you know once I was. Going to be captured in Damascus. And they had to lower me in a basket. Verse 33. Through a window. Now if something like that happened to you. You would not like to talk much about it. It's such a humiliating thing. The great apostle sitting in a basket. And being lowered through a window. But he wants to make himself small. In the eyes of these Corinthians. He doesn't want them to think I'm a great man. He says you know when once I had to escape. I had to sit in a basket. And they lowered me through a window. And I escaped like that. God did not send some mighty angel from heaven. To take me away. I'm just an ordinary man. I had to escape just like other people. Because he says. In chapter 12 verse 6. I don't want you to think of me. Last part of verse 6. More than what you can see. See we have a desire that other people.

Should think more highly of us. But Paul was concerned to lower himself. In chapter 12.

Verse 1. He says about this. Vision he had. He was taken to heaven and for 14 years.

He never told anyone about it. What a man. He kept quiet about these tremendous experiences.

He had. If you were taken up to third heaven. You would be waiting for the next meeting.

To testify about it to everybody. Paul kept quiet about it for 14 years. And then he speaks about this.

Thorn in the flesh he had. Verse 7. Which God gave him. To keep him humble.

It was a messenger of Satan. Verse 7. But even a messenger of Satan. God permitted it.

So that it would keep Paul humble. Sometimes God permits a messenger of Satan. To remain.

Sickness is a messenger of Satan. I told you the other day. Sickness is never from God.

Why do I say that? Jesus said you evil fathers. Know how to give good things to your children. How much more your heavenly father.

Will give good things to those who ask him. I am an evil father. Compared to God.

I will never give sickness to my children. Never. And if an evil father like me.

Will not give sickness to my children. How can almighty God. Give sickness to his children.

That is impossible. Sickness is from the devil. Every sickness.

But sometimes God may permit it. Like here. A messenger of Satan.

Verse 7. The Lord Paul said. Lord take this away. God said no.

I will give you grace. To overcome it. And this sickness will keep you humble.

Because you are being used so mightily Paul. You are in danger of spiritual pride. Sometimes God allows.

Some affliction to be in us. To keep us humble. So that we can serve him.

Finally chapter 13. Verse 4 he says. Jesus was crucified in weakness.

But he lives. Because of the power of God. And he is saying that.

True Christian life. Is one where we are weak. And we live.

By God's power. That is how we conclude this episode. Now.

I want to quickly go through. 12 points. 12 marks.

Of an ambassador of Jesus Christ. In this episode. I will just read them out.

And give you a reference. And you can look it up yourself. Think of these in your life.

Paul. An ambassador of Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 5. Verse 20.

That is what I would say is the title. Of these 12 points. Number 1. He was called by God.

Chapter 1. Verse 1. It is all from 2 Corinthians. He was called by God. An apostle of Jesus Christ.

By the will of God. He did not call himself. God called him.

Very very important. Don't go into a ministry. If God hasn't called you for it.

Number 2. He was utterly sincere. He was utterly sincere. Chapter 1. Verse 12.

One of the most important things. God requires from us. Honesty.

Sincerity. You may have many weaknesses. But if you are honest.

And sincere. You can be a true servant of God. Number 3. He was anointed with the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 1. Verse 22. Whatever your other qualifications may be. If you are not anointed with the Holy Spirit.

Brother. Don't try serving God. Forget it.

Go and do something else. Number 4. He loved. Those whom he served.

He really loved. Those whom he served. Chapter 2. Verse 4. He says.

I want you to know the love I have. Especially for you. Number 5. He depended totally.

On God. Chapter 3. Verse 5. Our sufficiency is from God. He did not depend on any human resource.

He may have used things people gave him. But he did not depend on people. He did not depend on anything human.

He depended totally on God. Number 6. He never gave up. Chapter 4. Verse 1. Since we have this ministry.

We don't lose heart. We never give up. You may be tempted many times to give up in the ministry.

Paul never gave up. Number 7. He was an example to other people. Chapter 6. Verse 3 and 4. In everything.

In commending ourselves. As servants of God. He was an example to others.

By his life and the way he conducted himself. In different situations. Number 8. He never took advantage of anyone.

Chapter 7. Verse 2. He never tried to make other people his servants. To go and do things for him. He never took advantage of the goodness of other people.

He never took advantage of other people's hospitality. Nothing. Number 9. He handled money wisely.

Chapter 8. Verse 20 and 21. And also. Chapter 11.

Verse 19. In money. He says there that he was not a burden to anyone.

He was very careful in handling of money. He never took money from people. Where he felt that they didn't accept his ministry.

He was not a burden to anybody. Number 10. He stayed.

Within the boundaries. That God appointed for him. He stayed within the boundaries God appointed for him.

Chapter 10. Verse 13. We saw that.

Number 11. He was willing to suffer. Chapter 11.

Verse 23 to 33. All those external sufferings. He was willing to suffer.

Chapter 11. Chapter 12. Verse 9 and 10.

With a thorn in the flesh. If God permitted that suffering. He accepted it.

And finally number 12. He longed. To lead believers.

To perfection. Chapter 13. Verse 9. He says we pray.

We rejoice when you are strong. And we pray that you will be made perfect. This was the apostle Paul.

So let me repeat that. He was called by God. He was utterly sincere.

He was anointed with the spirit. He loved those whom he served. He depended totally on God.

He never gave up. He was an example to others. He never took advantage of others.

He handled money wisely. Never being a burden to others. He stayed within the boundaries God appointed for him.

He was willing to suffer. And he longed to lead other believers to perfection. Let's follow in his footsteps.

And serve the Lord like that. Let's pray. Heavenly Father.

We thank you for the example. That you have given to us in this man of God. Help us to follow him as he followed Jesus.

All the days of our life. We pray in Jesus name.

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