

7/8/12

**SERIES: II CORINTHIANS: THE HEART AND HUMILITY OF A
MAN OF GOD, WEEK 25**

TITLE: ENDURING HARDSHIPS IN SERVING CHRIST

TEXT: II CORINTHIANS 6:3-10

**INTRODUCTION: (1) SOMETIMES WE ARE SURPRISED BY
SUFFERING AND HARDSHIPS AS CHRISTIANS.**

*** FOR SOME REASON WE HAVE IT IN OUR MINDS THAT IF
WE DO WHAT IS RIGHT IN SERVICE TO THE LORD AND DO
WHAT IS RIGHT IN OBEYING THE LORD, EVERYTHING
WILL TURN OUT RIGHT.**

**** THAT EVERYTHING WILL FALL IN LINE IN OUR WAY OF
THINKING.**

***** YET, SERVING THE LORD, MINISTERING FOR THE
LORD, BRINGS ABOUT MOUNTAINTOP AND VALLEY
EXPERIENCES, AS WELL AS ALL THE TERRITORY THAT
LIES IN BETWEEN.**

****** SERVING THE LORD BRINGS HONOR AND DISHONOR,
IT BRINGS VICTORY AND SEEMING DEFEAT, IT BRINGS
COMMENDATION AND CRITICISM.**

(2) THE TRUE SERVANT OF THE LORD IS THE OBJECT OF EVIL REPORT AND GOOD REPORT.

*** AND SOME SPEAK WELL OF THE ZEAL OF A SERVANT OF THE LORD WHILE OTHERS CONDEMN THAT ZEAL.**

**** AND THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS THOSE WHO SERVE JESUS CHRIST AND COMMUNICATE THE GOSPEL OF RECONCILIATION CANNOT EXPECT TO BE POPULAR WITH EVERYONE.**

***** THEIR LOT IS TO BE HONORED AND DISHONORED, RESPECTED AND REVILED.**

****** A TRUE SERVANT OF CHRIST WILL EXPERIENCE THE MOST PROFOUND BLESSINGS AND AT THE SAME TIME SUFFER THE MOST SEVERE DISAPPOINTMENTS.**

(3) JOHN MACARTHUR IN HIS COMMENTARY ON II CORINTHIANS ADDRESSES THIS IRONY AND THE TENSION BETWEEN HONOR AND DISHONOR AMONG PREACHERS, AND I QUOTE:

*** "IT IS AN IRONIC TRUTH THAT THE PREACHER IS OFTEN ONE OF THE MOST LOVED AND RESPECTED OF MEN, YET**

AT THE SAME TIME ONE OF THE MOST HATED AND DESPISED IN HIS COMMUNITY. TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE THE GOSPEL HE PREACHES, HE IS A REVERED SPIRITUAL FATHER, MENTOR AND TEACHER. HE PROCLAIMS TO THEM THE DIVINE TRUTH, ENCOURAGES THEM, GIVES THEM HOPE AND INSTRUCTS THEM IN APPLYING GOD'S WORD. BUT TO THOSE WHO REJECT HIS MESSAGE, HE IS THE JUDGMENTAL VOICE OF CONVICTION, IRRITATION AND AGITATION. TO THEM HE IS A TROUBLEMAKER DISRUPTING THE TRANQUILITY OF THEIR SHAMEFUL LIVES AND TURNING THEIR SINFUL WORLD UPSIDE DOWN."

**** JOHN WENT ON TO SAY: "DURING HIS EARTHLY MINISTRY, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST FACED THE EXTREMES OF BEING ADORED AND DESPISED. WHILE SOME ACCLAIMED HIM AS THE LORD OF HEAVEN, THE FULFILLER OF THEIR HOPES AND DREAMS AND THE SOURCE OF ETERNAL FORGIVENESS, HAPPINESS,**

PEACE, AND JOY, BOWING BEFORE HIM IN WORSHIP, OTHERS DESPISED HIM AS A DEMON-POSSESSED CHARLATAN, A THREAT TO THEIR POWER, A DISTURBER OF THEIR PEACE AND AN ENEMY OF THEIR RELIGION. THAT REJECTION CULMINATED IN THE CRIES OF THE PEOPLE, ‘AWAY WITH HIM, AWAY WITH HIM, CRUCIFY HIM.’” (JOHN 19:15) (END QUOTE)

***** AND DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST, SINCE THE PERFECT SPOTLESS SINLESS SON OF GOD WAS TREATED IN SUCH DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSING WAYS, CAN WE AS HIS FOLLOWERS EXPECT ANY LESS?**

****** SO SHOULD WE BE SURPRISED AT SUFFERING? SHOULD WE BE CAUGHT OFF GUARD THAT WHEN WE DO WHAT IS RIGHT, THINGS MAY GO HAYWIRE?**

(4) THE ANSWER IS NO. AND YES, GOD CAUSES ALL THINGS TO WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD - THOSE WHO LOVE JESUS CHRIST, CALLED TO HIM BY GOD’S DIVINE PURPOSE OF ELECTION, ROMANS 8:28.

*** HOWEVER, THAT GOOD MAY NOT APPEAR TO BE GOOD FROM OUR LIMITED VANTAGE POINT, FROM OUR LIMITED PERSPECTIVE.**

**** SERVING THE LORD MAY CAUSE PAIN AND AN UPROAR. THERE WILL BE JOY AND SORROW.**

***** AND POSSIBLY NOWHERE IS SUCH TENSION BETWEEN DISHONOR AND HONOR, BETWEEN SORROW AND JOY, BETTER EXPRESSED THAN IN II CORINTHIANS AND SPECIFICALLY OUR TEXT FOR TODAY.**

****** FOR THE POLARIZED RESPONSES TO THE MINISTRY AND SERVICE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL TO HIS LORD REVEAL HIS ENDURANCE IN MINISTRY.**

(5) HENCE, I'VE TITLED OUR SERMON FOR TODAY, "ENDURING HARDSHIPS IN SERVING CHRIST" AS WE WORK OUR WAY THROUGH II CORINTHIANS 6:3-10.

*** AND UNDER THAT THEME WE'LL LOOK AT 4 POINTS:**

**** NO. 1 THE PROOF OF MINISTRY, VV. 3&4A; NO. 2 THE PERIL OF MINISTRY, VV. 4B&5; NO. 3 THE POWER OF MINISTRY, VV. 6&7; AND NO. 4, THE PARADOXES OF MINISTRY, VV. 8-10.**

***** SO WE'LL LOOK AT THE PROOF, THE PERIL, THE POWER AND THE PARADOXES OF MINISTRY UNDER THE TITLE OF "ENDURING HARDSHIPS IN SERVING CHRIST."**

****** AND WITH THAT TITLE AND OUTLINE AS OUR GUIDE, LOOK AT V. 3 PLEASE WHERE WE'LL START TO SEE OUR FIRST POINT TODAY, THE PROOF OF MINISTRY.**

I. THE PROOF OF MINISTRY, (READ V. 3)

A. NOW LET ME QUICKLY RESET THE CONTEXT. WE LOOKED AT VV. 1&2 OF II CORINTHIANS 6 LAST WEEK AND V. 2 GRAMMATICALLY IS A PARENTHESIS, SO V. 3 IS CLOSELY CONNECTED TO V. 1 AND II CORINTHIANS 5:20, WHERE PAUL CALLED HIMSELF AN AMBASSADOR FOR CHRIST.

*** THEREFORE AS WAS FITTING FOR A FELLOW WORKER OF GOD, V. 1 (WORKING TOGETHER WITH HIM) WHO WAS ACTING AS AN AMBASSADOR FOR CHRIST, 5:20, PAUL TRIED TO PUT NO STUMBLING BLOCK IN ANYONE'S PATH, LEST THE MINISTRY SHOULD INCUR DISCREDIT.**

**** AND THAT VARIOUS ACCUSATIONS WOULD BE MADE AGAINST PAUL, TRYING TO DISCREDIT HIS MINISTRY AND HIS APOSTLESHIP WAS INEVITABLE BY FALSE TEACHERS AND FALSE APOSTLES, PAUL'S ENEMIES AT CORINTH, WHICH WE HAVE TALKED ABOUT THROUGH OUR STUDY OF II CORINTHIANS.**

***** WELL, PAUL'S CONCERN WAS THAT SUCH ACCUSATIONS, THAT FALSE CHARGES WOULD NOT BE TRUE WHEN IT CAME TO HIS CHARACTER AND LIFE, THE WAY HE LIVED.**

****** AND YES THERE WOULD BE LIES COMMUNICATED ABOUT HIM, AND YES, HE WAS NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF RECONCILIATION, AND CRITICIZING HIM FOR PROCLAIMING THE TRUTH WAS FINE WITH PAUL. GUILTY OF ALL OF THE ABOVE.**

1. HOWEVER WHEN IT CAME TO HIS CHARACTER, INTEGRITY AND LIFE, PAUL DID NOT WANT THOSE THINGS TO BE A STUMBLING BLOCK, AN OBSTACLE, AN OFFENCE TO TRIP UP SOMEONE AND POINT THE FINGER.

*** WHEN IT CAME TO PAUL'S MORALS, HIS HONESTY AND HIS OVERALL INTEGRITY, HE KNEW AND WANTED TO BE BLAMELESS.**

**** FOR HE DID NOT WANT HIS MINISTRY TO BE DISCREDITED, HE DID NOT WANT ANY STAIN ON HIS VIRTUE THAT WOULD DISCREDIT THE INTEGRITY OF THE GOSPEL OF RECONCILIATION.**

***** BELOVED, PAUL WOULD AVOID ANYTHING THAT WOULD BRING DISGRACE ON CHRIST OR CAUSE SOMEONE TO FIND FAULT, TO POINT THE FINGER AND BY THAT, NOT BELIEVE THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL.**

****** FOR WHAT IS ONE OF THE BIG EXCUSES THAT PEOPLE USE FOR NOT BECOMING A CHRISTIAN? ALL THOSE HYPOCRITES.**

2. HYPOCRITICAL PASTORS, HYPOCRITICAL CHURCHES, HYPOCRITICAL NEIGHBORS, FAMILY MEMBERS, FRIENDS, CO-WORKERS, ETC.

*** I WILL NOT GO TO CHURCH, I WILL NOT BECOME A CHRISTIAN BECAUSE OF ALL THE HYPOCRITES.**

**** WELL, THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS THERE ARE HYPOCRITES IN THE CHURCH AND ALL OF US HAVE A LITTLE HYPOCRISY IN ALL OUR LIVES.**

***** AND EVEN JESUS HAD A HYPOCRITICAL DISCIPLE NAMED JUDAS ISCARIOT. AND CERTAINLY THERE ARE HYPOCRITES IN EVERY AREA OF LIFE, PROFESSING TO BE SOMETHING THEY ARE NOT.**

****** BUT PAUL WANTED TO BE AN EXAMPLE OF BLAMELESSNESS, THAT'S WHY HE SAID IN I CORINTHIANS 9:27 (QUOTE IT). ALSO QUOTE I TIMOTHY 3:1&2&7. (MORALITY, HONESTY, INTEGRITY, KINDNESS, ETC.)**

3. NOW WITH THAT SAID, PAUL AS A CO-WORKER WITH THE LORD AND AS AN AMBASSADOR FOR THE LORD DID NOT WANT TO BE A STUMBLING BLOCK FOR THE LORD THAT HIS SERVICE, HIS MINISTRY TO THE LORD WOULD BE DISCREDITED.

*** THE PROOF OF PAUL'S MINISTRY THAT WAS LEGITIMATELY IN CONTRAST TO THE HYPOCRITICAL FALSE TEACHERS WAS HIS INTEGRITY OF LIFE.**

**** AND IN V. 4A HE ELABORATES ON THIS A LITTLE MORE, HIS AUTHENTICITY, THE PROOF OF HIS MINISTRY. LOOK AT V. 4A PLEASE.**

B. READ V. 4A. NOW PAUL NOT ONLY SOUGHT NEGATIVELY TO AVOID BEING AN OFFENCE, AN OBSTACLE, A STUMBLING BLOCK, PUTTING UP BARRIERS TO FAITH IN CHRIST, BUT POSITIVELY TO BE IN EVERYTHING COMMENDING, APPROVING, DEMONSTRATING HIMSELF AND HIS CO-LABORERS THAT THEY WERE SERVANTS OF GOD, NOT SELF.

*** FOR PAUL AND HIS CO-WORKERS, THEIR LIVES WERE THE ONLY LETTERS OF COMMENDATION THAT MATTERED, THAT PEOPLE WOULD READ.**

**** THEY WANTED TO SHOW, TO PROVE, TO ESTABLISH, TO EXHIBIT BEHAVIOR THAT PEOPLE AROUND THEM COULD SEE CHRIST AND THE GOSPEL.**

**** THEIR COMMENDATION WAS THEIR LIVES, THE WAY THEY LIVED.**

****** AND THIS IS FURTHER ESTABLISHED BY THEIR ENDURANCE IN TIMES OF PERIL, WHICH LEADS US TO OUR 2'D POINT TODAY, THE PERIL OF MINISTRY, LOOK BACK AT V. 4 AGAIN PLEASE.**

II. THE PERIL OF MINISTRY, (READ V. 4)

A. NOW ANOTHER THING THAT COMMENDS FAITHFUL CREDIBLE SERVANTS OF GOD IS THEIR ENDURANCE.

*** AND THE GREEK WORD TRANSLATED ENDURANCE LIT. MEANS STEADFASTNESS, CONSTANCY. AND IN THE N.T. IT IS THE CHARACTERISTIC OF A PERSON WHO IS NOT SWERVED FROM THEIR DELIBERATE PURPOSE IN SERVING CHRIST AND LOYALTY TO THEIR FAITH IN HIM, EVEN BY THEIR GREATEST TRIALS AND SUFFERINGS.**

**** AND IN THE MIDST OF GREAT TRIALS AND SUFFERING THERE IS A TRIUMPHANT ENDURANCE, A TRIUMPHANT STEADFASTNESS, A TRIUMPHANT PATIENCE AND JOY AND FAITH IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING AND TRIALS.**

***** AND SO ENDURING HARDSHIPS IN SERVING CHRIST, MY TITLE OF OUR MESSAGE TODAY, IS THE QUALITY THAT MARKS A FAITHFUL WORKER, A FAITHFUL SERVANT, AND A FAITHFUL AMBASSADOR OF CHRIST.**

THEY DON'T THROW IN THE TOWEL. THEY MAY QUIT FOR AWHILE, BUT THEY CAN'T PERMANENTLY DO THAT. THEY JOYFULLY ENDURE WHICH SHOWS THEIR CREDIBILITY.

****** AND BELOVED, THERE MUST BE A MARATHON MENTALITY TO DO THAT. FAITHFUL SERVANTS OF THE LORD ARE NOT SPRINTERS BUT LONG DISTANCE RUNNERS, THAT THROUGH GOD'S GRACE AND POWER, GUT IT OUT WHEN THEY HIT THE WALL. THEIR RESERVE IS THE LOVE OF CHRIST AND THE POWER OF GOD, QUOTE II CORINTHIANS 5:14&15.**

1. BELIEVER, JOYFUL ENDURANCE THROUGH PERILS AND TRIALS AND DIFFICULTIES MOTIVATED BY THE LOVE AND DEATH OF CHRIST ON OUR BEHALF MOVES US TO ENDURE HARDSHIPS IN SERVING JESUS CHRIST.

*** NOW AS WE MOVE ON IN V. 4, WHAT WERE SOME OF THOSE HARDSHIPS, THAT PAUL AND HIS CO-WORKERS WENT THROUGH THAT SHOWED THEIR LEGITIMACY AS TRUE SERVANTS OF GOD IN CONTRAST TO FALSE TEACHERS THAT SPRINT AND DROP OUT OR QUIT WHEN DIFFICULT TIMES COME.**

**** WELL IN THE REST OF V. 4, AFFLICTIONS, HARDSHIPS AND DISTRESSES.**

***** AND FIRST OF ALL AFFLICTIONS REFERS TO PRESSURE, TRIBULATION, DISTRESS AND STRAITS THAT CHRISTIANS GO THROUGH.**

****** AND THIS WORD IS USED IN ACTS 14:22 WHERE IT IS TRANSLATED TRIBULATIONS AND SAYS: STRENGTHENING THE SOULS OF THE DISCIPLES, ENCOURAGING THEM TO CONTINUE IN THE FAITH, AND SAYING, “THROUGH MANY TRIBULATIONS WE MUST ENTER THE KINGDOM OF GOD.”**

2. THIS WORD IS ALSO USED IN ACTS 20:23 WHERE PAUL TALKED ABOUT THE “AFFLICTIONS” AWAIT HIM IN JERUSALEM, BUT THAT DIDN’T STOP A TRUE SERVANT OF GOD LIKE PAUL.

*** FOR IT SAYS IN ACTS 20:23 – “EXCEPT THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT SOLEMNLY TESTIFIES TO ME IN EVERY CITY, SAYING THAT BONDS AND AFFLICTIONS AWAIT ME.”**

**** SO PAUL AND HIS CO-LABORERS WENT THROUGH AFFLICTIONS.**

***** AND THEN AS WE GO BACK TO II CORINTHIANS 6:4, THE NEXT WORD PAUL USES IS “HARDSHIPS.”**

****** AND THIS WORD LIT. MEANS NECESSITIES, NEEDS, AND COMPULSION AND IN GENERAL IS A SYNONYM FOR DIFFICULTIES THAT HAPPEN IN A FAITHFUL SERVANT’S**

LIFE THAT ARE INEVITABLE IN THE PRUNING PROCESS OF MAKING US LIKE CHRIST.

3. MOVING ON THE NEXT WORD IS DISTRESSES WHICH REFERS TO BEING CONFINED IN A NARROW SPACE FROM WHICH THERE IS NO ESCAPE, INEVITABLE TRIALS THAT ARE DIFFICULTIES, EXTREME AFFLICTION AND DIRE STRAITS WHICH A PERSON MUST GO THROUGH.

*** AND THEN MOVING ON, THE LIST CONTINUES IN V. 5. LOOK AT V. 5 PLEASE.**

B. READ V. 5. NOW THE FIRST THING THAT PAUL LISTS IN V. 5, THAT HE AND HIS CO-LABORERS WENT THROUGH WAS BEATINGS.

*** AND ACCORDING TO II CORINTHIANS 11:24&25, PAUL HIMSELF WENT THROUGH 8 EXCRUCIATING BEATINGS.**

**** AND BEATINGS IN THE BIBLE REFER TO BLOWS FROM FISTS, BEATING WITH RODS AND BEATING WITH WHIPS.**

***** AND THAT'S WHY PAUL COULD SAY IN GALATIANS 6:17 (QUOTE IT).**

****** PAUL HAD THE SCARS AND WOUNDS IN HIS BODY AS A TRUE SERVANT OF THE LORD IN HIS BEATINGS. HE GOT BEAT UP ON ACCOUNT OF HIS PREACHING AND LIFE.**

1. NEXT, PAUL AND HIS CO-WORKERS WERE IMPRISONED FOR THE LORD, THEY WENT TO JAIL FOR THEIR FAITH AS MANY OF OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS HAVE IN CHINA TODAY, RUSSIA UNDER COMMUNISM AND IN MANY OTHER PLACES TODAY THAT ARE HOSTILE TO THE GOSPEL.

*** NEXT IS TUMULTS, WHICH REFERS TO MOB VIOLENCE, CIVIL DISTURBANCES AND RIOTS.**

**** AND WE READ IN SCRIPTURE THAT THESE THINGS WERE A PRETTY REGULAR OCCURRENCE FOR PAUL. HE STIRRED UP A LOT OF CONTROVERSY, EMOTIONS, AND HOSTILITY WITH HIS PREACHING THE GOSPEL OF RECONCILIATION.**

***** BUT MOVING ON THE NEXT WORD IS LABORS. AND THE WORD LABORS HERE REFERS TO VERY HARD WORK THAT IS SO INTENSE IT LEADS TO EXHAUSTION.**

****** AND PAUL LABORED IN THE WORD AND DOCTRINE IN PREACHING AND TEACHING. HE WORKED HARD WITH HIS HANDS TO SUPPORT HIMSELF. HE WORKED HARD IN EVANGELIZING AND EQUIPPING AND ESTABLISHING CHURCHES.**

2. AND THE RESULT OF THAT HARD WORK BECAUSE OF THE TIME IT TOOK WAS SLEEPLESSNESS, THE NEXT THING IN THE LIST HERE.

*** TRAVELING WAS EXTRA HARD IN THAT DAY, ON TOP OF THAT PAUL'S PASSION WAS MINISTRY, SO HE BYPASSED SLEEP IN DOING THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY. AND NO DOUBT PAUL SPENT SEASONS IN PRAYER, MOST LIKELY LIKE OUR LORD, ALL NIGHT. PAUL NEEDED TO REDEEM THE TIME AND IT WAS PROBABLY NOT A MATTER THAT HE HAD INSOMNIA, HE PROBABLY SLEPT LIKE A BABY WITH THE PEACE OF GOD IN HIS HEART AND FROM BEING EXHAUSTED, HE MOST LIKELY CHOSE NOT TO SLEEP.**

**** AND THEN LAST ON PAUL'S LIST OF NEGATIVE THINGS HE WENT THROUGH PHYSICALLY FOR HIS LORD WAS BEING IN HUNGER.**

***** AND NO DOUBT, AT TIMES PAUL AND HIS COLLABORERS LACKED THE BASIC NECESSITIES OF FOOD AND DRINK. II CORINTHIANS 11:27 SAYS: "IN HUNGER AND THIRST, OFTEN WITHOUT FOOD."**

****** AND PAUL DEPENDED ON OTHERS WHEN TRAVELING, HAVING VERY LITTLE MONEY AND BASICALLY THERE WERE NO RESTAURANTS WHERE YOU COULD GET A MEAL IF YOU HAD THE MONEY.**

3. THERE WERE NO VALUE MEALS OR MENUS AT A MCDONALDS OR A WENDY'S, NO COUPONS, NO GIFT CARDS, NO FOOD STAMPS, NOTHING LIKE THOSE THINGS.

*** IT WAS COMMON FOR PAUL AND HIS CO-WORKERS TO BE HUNGRY, NOT STARVING, BUT HUNGRY.**

**** NOW HOW DID HE DO IT? WHAT GAVE HIM THIS GREAT ENDURANCE OF MINISTRY FOR THE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL? WHAT SET HIM APART FROM RELIGIOUS HUCKSTERS WHO THOUGHT GAIN WAS GODLINESS?**

***** WELL, THE ANSWER IS GIVEN IN VV. 6&7 WHERE WE'LL SEE OUR THIRD POINT TODAY, THE POWER OF MINISTRY. LOOK AT V. 6 PLEASE.**

III. THE POWER OF MINISTRY, (READ V. 6)

A. NOW BEGINNING IN V.6, WE ARE GOING TO SEE 8 POSITIVE QUALITIES THAT ARE FRUITS AND RESULTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK IN PAUL'S LIFE AND HIS MINISTRY TEAM.

*** IT IS TO SAY, WHAT GAVE PAUL THE POWER HE NEEDED TO ENDURE IN HARDSHIP FOR HIS LORD? WHAT**

GAVE PAUL THE POWER HE NEEDED TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL? WHAT GAVE HIM THE CHARACTER QUALITIES THAT WOULD GIVE NO OFFENCE IN ANYTHING THAT THE MINISTRY WOULD NOT BE BLAMED?

**** WELL, THE ANSWER TO THOSE QUESTIONS IS FOUND IN THE MIDDLE PHRASE IN V. 6 “IN THE HOLY SPIRIT” OR “BY THE HOLY SPIRIT” IN THE NKJV.**

***** PAUL WAS EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, LED BY THE SPIRIT, WALKING IN THE SPIRIT AND FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

****** AND WHAT ARE THE FRUITS, THE RESULTS, THE EVIDENCES OF BEING LED AND DIRECTED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT?**

1. WELL, THE FIRST FRUIT IS PURITY, THE BEGINNING OF V. 6, MORAL UPRIGHTNESS, BEING CHASTE, UPRIGHTNESS OF LIFE.

*** NO. 2 IS KNOWLEDGE. IT IS UNDERSTANDING THE SCRIPTURES, FOR WHO TEACHES US THE WORD OF GOD ULTIMATELY, THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE MASTER TEACHER,**

THE RESIDENT TRUTH TEACHER. PAUL KNEW THE TRUTH AND WAS INSPIRED TO WRITE IT OUT, INSPIRED BY THE SPIRIT.

**** SO PAUL GAVE OUT TRUTH, WROTE TRUTH AND LIVED THE TRUTH BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

***** NO. 3 IS PATIENCE IN V. 6 AND PATIENCE OR LONGSUFFERING IS A FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IN GALATIANS 5:22, IT IS THE ABILITY TO SUFFER LONG AND TO FORBEAR IN CIRCUMSTANCES.**

****** NEXT AND NO. 4 IS KINDNESS, ANOTHER FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT FOLLOWING PATIENCE IN THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IN GALATIANS 5:22. WE ARE TALKING ABOUT GOODNESS IN ACTION.**

2. AND THEN LASTLY IN V. 6 IS GENUINE LOVE, OR SINCERE LOVE. AND WHAT IS THE FIRST FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IN GALATIANS 5:22?

*** THE ANSWER IS LOVE, AGAPE LOVE, IS THE LOVE TALKED ABOUT IN GALATIANS 5:22 AND HERE IN II CORINTHIANS 6:6. AND ACCORDING TO ROMANS 5:5 THIS KIND OF LOVE IS GOD'S LOVE, A GIVING, SACRIFICIAL, ENDURING LOVE (QUOTE ROMANS 5:5).**

**** SO LOVE IS A FRUIT OF BEING IN THE SPIRIT. AND THE LIST CONTINUES IN V. 7. LOOK AT V. 7 PLEASE.**

B. READ V. 7. NOW AS THIS POSITIVE LIST CONTINUES PAUL TALKS ABOUT THE WORD OF TRUTH WHICH IS MOST LIKELY THE GOSPEL, THE MESSAGE THAT GOD RECONCILES SINNERS TO HIMSELF.

*** AND WHO GIVES OUT THE WORD OF TRUTH IN WRITTEN FORM FOUND IN THE BIBLE? THE ANSWER IS THE HOLY SPIRIT. QUOTE II TIMOTHY 3:16&17 AND II PETER 1:20&21.**

**** SO THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE AUTHOR OF TRUTH, THE WORD OF TRUTH, THE MESSAGE THAT PAUL PROCLAIMED AND WAS THE BASIS AND SOURCE OF HIS PREACHING.**

***** AND THEN MOVING ON IN V. 7, AND HOW DOES ONE PREACH OR PROCLAIM THE WORD OF TRUTH IN THE POWER OF GOD AND IN A HOLY BOLDNESS?**

****** THE ANSWER AGAIN IS IN THE SPIRIT OF GOD, THROUGH THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT, QUOTE ACTS 1:8, ACTS 4:31.**

1. AND THEN IN ROMANS 15:19 PAUL WOULD SAY: "IN THE POWER OF SIGNS AND WONDERS, IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT; SO THAT FROM JERUSALEM AND ROUND

ABOUT AS FAR AS ILLYRICUM I HAVE FULLY PREACHED THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.”

*** AND HAVING THE POWER OF GOD IN OUR LIVES COMES THROUGH THE FILLING, BEING CONTROLLED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

**** THEN ONE LAST RESULT OR FRUIT OF BEING IN THE SPIRIT IS USING THE WEAPONS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR THE RIGHT HAND AND THE LEFT.**

***** AND SOME MAKE REFERENCE HERE TO THE ARMOR OF GOD LISTED IN EPHESIANS 6:10-18. AND CERTAINLY WE NEED TO BE STRONG IN THE LORD AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD.**

****** BUT TO ADD TO THAT ARMOR, MORE WEAPONS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS ARE DESCRIBED II CORINTHIANS 10:3-5, WHERE IT SAYS: (QUOTE THEM)**

2. AND BELOVED, HERE OUR WARFARE IS A WARFARE OF THOUGHTS, IDEAS, REASONINGS, PHILOSOPHICAL IDEOLOGIES AND FALSE RELIGIONS THAT ARE IDEOLOGICAL FORTS IN WHICH PEOPLE BARRICADE THEMSELVES AGAINST THE GOSPEL OF RECONCILIATION AND ULTIMATELY AGAINST GOD.

*** SO WE MUST USE THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT TO TEAR DOWN THESE LIES AND FALSEHOODS, TO ASSAULT ERROR WITH TRUTH.**

**** AND PAUL EMPLOYS THE WEAPONS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS TO FIGHT AGAINST FALSE IDEAS FROM THE RIGHT HAND AND THE LEFT, LITERALLY AN ATTACK FROM ANY QUARTER, FROM ALL DIRECTIONS, FROM ALL SIDES.**

***** WHEREAS OTHERS INTERPRET THE RIGHT HAND AND THE LEFT AS HOLDING WITH THE RIGHT HAND, THE HAND OF POWER THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT AND WITH THE LEFT, THE SHIELD OF FAITH.**

****** BUT REGARDLESS, RIGHTEOUS WEAPONS COME THROUGH AND IN THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, FOR THE POWER OF MINISTRY COMES THROUGH BEING LED, DIRECTED AND WALKING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, THAT IS THE POWER OF MINISTRY WITH ITS FRUIT.**

3. WHICH LEADS US TO ONE LAST POINT TODAY, THE PARADOXES OF MINISTRY. LOOK AT V. 8 PLEASE.

IV. THE PARADOXES OF MINISTRY, (READ V. 8)

A. NOW AS I SAID IN MY INTRODUCTION TODAY, TRUE SERVANTS OF GOD ARE BOTH LOVED AND DESPISED. AND IN VV. 8-10, PAUL COMMUNICATES THE PARADOXICAL CHARACTER OF SERVING THE LORD IN MINISTRY BY A SERIES OF CONTRASTS.

*** AND FIRST OF ALL SERVANT OF GOD EXPERIENCE BOTH GLORY AND DISHONOR. SOME HAD A HIGH OPINION OF PAUL AND HIS CO-LABORERS AND OTHERS EVALUATED THEM AS NOTHING AND TREATED THEM ACCORDINGLY.**

**** PAUL WAS PRAISED BY MANY TRUE BELIEVERS AS GOD'S SERVANT, WHEREAS HIS ENEMIES DESPISED HIM, MALIGNED AND CRITICIZED HIM.**

***** CONSEQUENTLY AND BECAUSE OF THAT IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT SOME GAVE AN EVIL REPORT OF HIM WHILE OTHERS GAVE A GOOD REPORT OF HIS MINISTRY.**

****** PEOPLE WILL LIE ABOUT YOU THAT DON'T LIKE YOU AND THE GOSPEL YOU REPRESENT AND OTHERS THAT KNOW THE LORD AND WALK WITH HIM WILL GIVE GOOD REPORTS ABOUT YOU, JESUS SAID IN MATTHEW 5:10-12 (QUOTE THEM)**

1. MOVING ON, FAITHFUL SERVANTS OF THE LORD CAN ALSO EXPECT TO BE REGARDED AS DECEIVERS AND YET TRUE.

*** AND OF COURSE OUR PERFECT EXAMPLE, THE LORD JESUS WAS REGARDED AS A DECEIVER BY THE FALSE JEWISH RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENT OF THAT DAY AND YET HIS FOLLOWERS KNEW HE WAS THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE.**

**** NOW LOOK AT V. 9 PLEASE.**

B. READ V. 9. NOW PAUL FURTHER COMMUNICATES THE DICHOTOMY OF SERVING THE LORD, THE CONTRASTS, THE ANTITHESIS OF MINISTRY BY SAYING THAT HE WAS UNKNOWN, YET WELL KNOWN.

*** AND ALTHOUGH PAUL'S ENEMIES KNEW WHO HE WAS AND DESPISED HIM, HE WAS LARGELY UNKNOWN TO THE BIG WIGS OF THE WORLD, THE HIGHER UPS, YET WAS WELL KNOWN TO CHRISTIANS IN THE KNOWN WORLD OF THAT DAY.**

**** AND THEN NEXT, THE PARADOXES CONTINUE, "AS DYING YET BEHOLD WE LIVE."**

***** AND PAUL AND HIS ASSOCIATES WERE ALWAYS SEEMINGLY ON THE BRINK OF DEATH AND FACED DEATH THREATS.**

****** BUT DESPITE THEIR THREATS THEY CONTINUED TO LIVE UNDER THE LORD'S PROTECTION AND WOULD LIVE**

UNTIL THE LORD WAS THROUGH WITH THEM AT THEIR APPOINTED TIME OF DEATH.

1. AND PAUL SPECIFICALLY LIVED FOR THE LORD UNTIL HE DIED. LIFE WAS SERVICE TO HIS LORD, DEATH WAS GAIN.

*** AND THEN LAST IN V. 9, “AS PUNISHED AND NOT PUT TO DEATH.”**

**** AND HERE PAUL WAS PUNISHED BY HIS ENEMIES, BUT AGAIN THEY WERE NOT ABLE TO PUT HIM TO DEATH UNTIL GOD HAD ORDAINED IT, HIS APPOINTED TIME OF DEATH.**

***** PAUL WOULD FINISH HIS COURSE, FINISH HIS MINISTRY WITH JOY, ALTHOUGH PUNISHED BY HIS ENEMIES. AND WITH THAT SAID, ONE MORE VERSE OF PARADOXES, LOOK AT V. 10 PLEASE.**

C. READ V. 10. NOW PAUL WAS SORROWFUL AT TIMES. HAVING GREAT SORROW IN HIS HEART FOR THE LOST, HIS JEWISH BROTHERS IN ROMANS 9:1-3, HE HAD SORROW OVER FALSE TEACHING AND THEN HE HAD SORROW OVER THOSE NOT MATURING IN THE FAITH.

*** HOWEVER, HE COULD ALWAYS REJOICE IN THE LORD. HE CONTINUALLY COULD APPLY PHILIPPIANS 4:4 AND I THESSALONIANS 5:16.**

**** AND TRULY HE HAD GREAT JOY IN THE LORD WITH TIMES OF GREAT SORROW, FOR LIFE FOR PAUL WAS A SEEMING PARADOX OF UNENDING SORROW WITH CONTINUAL JOY IN HIS FOCUS AND TRUST IN HIS SOVEREIGN LORD.**

***** MOVING ON, THE NEXT PARADOX IS: “AS POOR YET MAKING MANY RICH.”**

***** AND THIS IS A NEAT PARADOX FOR PAUL WAS POOR PHYSICALLY IN TERMS OF THE WORLD’S POSSESSIONS, YET GOD MADE THOSE WHO HEARD THE GOSPEL THROUGH PAUL AND REPENTED AND RECEIVED IT, RICH WITH AN ETERNAL INHERITANCE.**

1. BELOVED, THE GOSPEL PAUL PROCLAIMED WAS A TREASURE OF INCALCULABLE WORTH, AND THOSE WHOM GOD GRANTED REPENTANCE AND FAITH IN HEARING IT OBTAINED SPIRITUAL WEALTH BEYOND HUMAN ESTIMATION.

*** PAUL WAS POOR PHYSICALLY AND RICH THROUGH CHRIST ETERNALLY.**

**** AND MAKING HIMSELF POOR TO MAKE OTHERS RICH DID NOT BOTHER PAUL, FOR THOUGH HE APPEARED TO HAVE NOTHING AT THE END OF V. 10, YET HE POSSESSED ALL THINGS.**

***** PAUL DID NOT HAVE A LOT OF WORLDLY GOODS, I GUESS HE DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH FAITH ACCORDING TO THE HEALTH, WEALTH AND PROSPERITY FALSE GOSPEL, BUT IN REALITY POSSESSED ALL THE ETERNAL THINGS THAT REALLY MATTER, RICHES, TREASURE IN HEAVEN. PROVERBS 13:7 SAYS: (QUOTE IT)**

IN WRAP UP: (1) THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH RICHES, PRAISE GOD FOR THOSE WHO HAVE RESOURCES AND GIVE IT TO THE CHURCH AND THE CAUSE OF CHRIST.

*** BUT TO BE RICH IN ETERNAL RICHES IS MORE IMPORTANT AS I TIMOTHY 6:19 SAYS: "STORING UP FOR THEMSELVES THE TREASURE OF A GOOD FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE, SO THAT THEY MAY TAKE HOLD OF THAT WHICH IS LIFE INDEED."**

**** BELOVED, OUR BEST LIFE IS NOT NOW, IT IS AHEAD. AND WE THAT ARE TRUE SERVANTS OF THE LORD, WE SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED BY SUFFERING.**

***** ENDURING HARDSHIPS IN SERVING JESUS CHRIST WAS PAUL'S LOT AND HIS CO-LABORER'S LOT AND WAS MODELED BY JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF.**

***** ACCORDING TO ISAIAH 53:3&4 IT SAYS OF JESUS, JEHOVAH'S SUFFERING SERVANT, THESE WORDS (QUOTE IT).**

(2) NOW IF JESUS SUFFERED HARDSHIPS IN DOING THE FATHER'S WILL AND PAUL AND HIS CO-LABORERS SUFFERED HARDSHIP IN SERVING THEIR LORD, DON'T BE SURPRISED THAT WE WILL.

*** AND SURPRISE COMES BY NOT UNDERSTANDING THE PURPOSE OF SUFFERING, GOD'S GLORY AND OUR GOOD - CHRISTLIKENESS AND HAVING UNMET EXPECTATIONS, A FALSE UNDERSTANDING OF HOW GOD USES SUFFERING.**

**** WE MUST GIVE OUR EXPECTATIONS TO THE LORD TODAY, REJOICE IN HIS SOVEREIGNTY BY KNOWING HIM IN A GREATER WAY THROUGH OUR WALK AND HIS WORD AND HIS SPIRIT EMPOWERING US AND BEING PASSIONATE ABOUT BEING HIS AMBASSADORS PROCLAIMING HIS GOSPEL WITH JOY. (LET'S PRAY)**