

TEXT- 2 Co 6:1-18 *We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.*

INTRO – The ministry is too often degraded a profession. We are workers together with Him.

Php 2:12 *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

Neh 6:3 *And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?*

Joh 5:17 *But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*

Luke 2:49 *And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*

John 17:4 *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*

Men must work toward the common interest and not of their own interest. We are to work for Him.

We must surrender our wills to Him wholly and without reservation

Paul's driving desire is to not damage the testimony of the church. "Be not blamed."

Paul suffered in cheerful endurance in order to maintain the honor of the ministry. None of these things stopped him. Acts 20:24 *But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*

Job - Job 1:22 *In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.*

Noah –

Joseph, Daniel -

Nehemiah – So built we the wall

I. An Appeal for Examination 2 Cor. 6:1-13

Paul has been defending his life and ministry in the first five chapters. His enemies at Corinth had accused him of wrong methods and motives. How tragic it is when churches and Christians receive God's grace in vain. The Corinthian's were babes in Christ, immature saints, because they failed to grow in grace and knowledge.

Paul had been careful to do nothing that would make others stumble or would in any way discredit the ministry. Paul gives several arguments to prove that his ministry was blameless.

A. The battles he waged (2Co 6:3-5).

"Patience" here means "endurance." It is a picture of the soldier in battle, pressing on to victory in spite of opposition. The battles Paul fought in obedience to Christ were proof of his sincere, unselfish ministry.

1. His trials

"Afflictions," – Put under pressure

"Necessities," – Constraint - needs

"Distresses," – Anguish – Narrowness of a room

"Stripes," - Whipped

"Imprisonments," – Placed in prison for the sake of the gospel

"Tumults," – Disorder and riots

"Labours," – Toil under weariness

"watching's," - Sleeplessness

"fastings," etc. – Without food

2. His Christian character - Distinctions of the servant

How he wrought in order to maintain the honour of the ministry. By "pureness," "knowledge," "long suffering," "kindness," "love"

These are qualities of the Christian workers life.

1 Co 15:58 *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

Paul did not return evil for evil.

B. The reputation he gained 2 Cor. 6:8-10

We have here a series of paradoxes, or seemingly contradictory statements. Sinners see him in one light, the saints in another, just as men look at Jesus with differing opinions.

Paul closed this appeal by reminding them of his love. "As unknown, and yet well known." The world has never yet rightly interpreted and understood the real life of a genuine disciple of Christ. To the world, Paul appeared an ignominious fanatic. John says, "The world knoweth us not." The world does not understand self-sacrificing love, the animating, shaping, directing principle of a godly man's life. It understands ambition, greed, revenge, but not this.

2 Co 6:7-10 *By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,*

8 By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true;

9 As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed;

10 As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

Paul was the same regardless of the world's response

II. An Appeal for Separation 6:13-7:1

Paul presents two major arguments for separation from the world.

A. The argument from principle 6:13-16

These Corinthians were yoking themselves with unbelievers in marriage, business life, and other ways, and were losing their testimonies for Christ. After all, if Christians live like the world, how can they witness to the world?

Note the series of contrasts here: righteousness/unrighteousness; light/darkness; Christ/Belial; believer/unbeliever; temple of God/idols.

This does not mean isolation, retreating from the world; it does mean keeping ourselves from the defilement of the world. It is fine for the ship to be in the water, but when water gets into the ship, look out!

B. The argument from promise 6:17-18

God promises to bless those who keep themselves pure. Worldliness is subtle; it creeps in gradually. This downhill progression begins in friendship with the world ([Jas 4:4](#)); then love for the world ([1 Jn 2:15-17](#)); then conformity to the world ([Rom 12:1-2](#)).

[2Co 7:1-16](#) begins with the verse that should end [2Co 6:1-18](#). This verse summarizes in a compact way what Paul has to say about personal holiness.

(1) Two motives for separation from the world: **love for God** (“dearly beloved”) and the **fear of God**. Both conditions must operate in our lives. Just as the loving wife keeps herself pure because she loves her husband, so the Christian keeps his life clean because he loves Christ.

(2) Two responsibilities: we must cleanse ourselves - perfect holiness.

[1 Jn 1:9](#) affords full cleansing.

(3) Two kinds of sin: filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit. There are sins of action as well as of attitude. The prodigal son was guilty of sins of the flesh, but his elder brother committed sins of the spirit.

CONCL – Separation is the negative; perfecting holiness is the positive. How sad it is to see churches and Christians who are separated from sin, but who have never grown in personal holiness and developed the fruits of the Spirit. The Pharisees were separated from sin, but there was an absence of love and true obedience.