

20260726 2 Corinthians 6 “You are CALLED OUT”

Last , we were reminded that our bodies are like fragile, feeble tents. We are leaky at the seams, and our flaps are tearing off. We learned that to be absent from the body means that we will be in God’s immediate presence when we die. We also learned that when we receive the gospel, we are instantaneously made into new creations. The old has passed away, and all has become new. This is effectuated by the fact that “He who knew no sin was made sin for us so that we might become the wrath of God in Him.” Chapter 5 is absolutely saturated with beautiful spiritual truth and theology.

Paul will now call for holiness. We have learned who we are in Christ and how God brought this about. But we should never confuse this “practical (think practiced) holiness” with our “imputed righteousness,” which was declared in the last verse of Chapter 5. This can lead to the legalistic position of sinless perfection. This is those who argue since we are righteous in Christ we can live without sinning. Hear the words of Paul.

6 We then, as workers together with Him, also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. 2 For He says: “In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you. ”Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

Paul says he is working in partnership with God in pleading that the Corinthians practice holiness. Years ago, after a difficult legal mediation, I stopped by to visit with a rabbi who at the time was teaching me biblical Hebrew. He asked how I was, and I told him I had just gotten beaten up in the mediation. I told him I was discouraged and didn’t know if I could find any real purpose in practicing law. He told me, “You need to understand your purpose. You are working in partnership with God to get chaos out of people’s lives.” WOW! This is what Paul is saying. You and I can serve as “workers together with Him”. What a privilege! What a purpose! And he adds that there’s no better time than now to not only receive the Lord, but to walk in holiness. Paul likewise is pleading with them to not turn away from their belief in the Gospel.

3 We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. 4 But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, 5 in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; 6 by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, 7 by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, 8 by honor and dishonor, 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 yet not killed; 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

Paul says he’s not culpable of doing things that bring condemnation on his ministry. He is proven for the job in how he handles what he has endured. He begins by saying, having patience, he has been through so many hardships. He’s handled them patiently. He has been in need, but he’s learned the secret of living in need. He has learned to be joyful in need and

through all kinds of distress. So often we falsely think that the Christian life should be a carefree life, and the truth is that it is nothing of the sort. How we live out our faith is demonstrated by how we work our way through difficulties. Paul had difficulties far beyond anything that we can imagine.

He was beaten with stripes on his back, and he was thrown into jail. He experienced suffering that very few Christians today have to suffer. He passed through tumults. That means he had to endure chaotic experiences beyond his control. And he had to endure hard work. Paul's life was filled with one difficult effort after another. I know, given my own aches and pains, how difficult it is sometimes just to get a good night's sleep. I think Paul endured many sleepless nights. He also had long fasts. I don't think these were of his own design or doing. I think he often lacked enough to eat.

And how did he endure such things? He gives the list: by staying pure, by seeking the knowledge of the Lord, by exercising great patience, and by being kind. And he adds that all of these virtues were born out of the Holy Spirit being alive and well within him. Through the operation of the Holy Spirit, he was able to love in a supernatural way. He was grounded in the truth of the Word of God. And, he had upon him the whole armor of God. He continues by saying that his resumé includes being slandered and maligned. I like the way Gene Peterson puts these few verses:

"when we're doing our best setting things right; when we're praised, and when we're blamed; slandered, and honored; true to our word, though distrusted; ignored by the world, but recognized by God; terrifically alive, though rumored to be dead; beaten within an inch of our lives, but refusing to die; immersed in tears, yet always filled with deep joy; living on handouts, yet enriching many; having nothing, having it all." (The Message)

Part of what has given Paul legitimacy is the slander he has endured from others. This is so opposite of what we think would prove his sincerity. Who would go through all of this for a lie or for no purpose at all? Paul had been proven through the test of hardship and criticism. Who would put up with all of this for something that wasn't worth suffering for?

Be Holy

11 O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you; our heart is wide open. 12 You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections. [you're holding out on us] 13 Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open.

Paul tells them that he's been wholly sincere and has always had a heart that is open to receive them. He adds that they have sometimes had their own emotions behind closed doors. He's asking them to be genuine and open with him.

14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what

accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said:



***“I will dwell in them
And walk among them.
I will be their God,
And they shall be My people.”
17 Therefore
“Come out from among them
And be separate, says the Lord.
Do not touch what is unclean,
And I will receive you.”
18 “I will be a Father to you,
And you shall be My sons and daughters,
Says the Lord Almighty.”***

Often, this passage is quoted as a warning against marrying someone on a different spiritual plane or with a lower spiritual maturity than we are. This is true and is certainly good advice,

but this passage is SO MUCH MORE than marital or premarital advice. Being “unequally yoked” with anyone is a guarantee of conflict.

I used to drive horses, and horses that pull a carriage in a pair must be similar in many ways. They must have a similar gait. They must have a similar size. To work best, they must be a “matched pair.” They need to walk in harmony with one another, especially in strength, speed, and temperament. If they are not, the pair will never be effective and efficient. They will probably both end up injured. Horses need to be matched for the following reasons:

1 Consistent pace

- If one horse is naturally faster or slower, the pair won’t move smoothly, causing wasted effort.

2 Balanced pulling strength

- If one horse is much stronger, it can overpower the other, leading to strain and inefficiency (and potentially injury). It will literally wear a sore in

3 Synchronization of effort

- Horses must “agree” in how they respond to cues (tone, reins, commands). Mismatched responsiveness causes constant correction.

4 Safety and stability

- Uneven behavior can cause jerking, misalignment, or the weaker horse getting dragged into strain.

5 Better teamwork

- A properly matched pair can “pull as one,” making the load manageable and the work effective.

This is all analogous to the Christian life. We don’t do well at all when we are “paired up” with anyone or anything related to the world. First and foremost, we are “called out” from the world. Those familiar with Spanish know the word “Iglesia.” This word comes straight out of the Greek language from the word “Ecclesia.” That word means we are “called out”. We are called out from the world. We are to be of the world but not in the world.

For Christians, this is walking a constant tightrope. Let me take the liberty to give you several examples of how being equally yoked is so necessary:

- In a marriage – When a believer marries an unbeliever or a weak believer, there will be constant tension. One person will want to walk in holiness (separateness), and the other will be blown to and fro by what the world says is the model for marriage. It always ends in disaster. It will affect EVERY facet of the marriage. The couple will be at cross-purposes regarding their views on finances. They will be at odds with one another in how they relate to each other sexually. They will be confused as to their respective roles in marriage. Let me explain these a bit.
- The financial incompatibility will include how they give to God's work. It will result in conflict over serving others out of a love for Jesus. One will act purely out of a profit motive, and the other will have a generous heart for giving. Think of it as self vs. others. An unbelieving spouse will bring the world into the sexual relationship, introducing pornography and ultimately sexual deviancy. Relationships with others will be seen completely differently: one will be driven by what they can get out of them, and a believing spouse will be focused on what they can pour into a relationship.
- In business – In my opinion, a believer and an unbeliever will have a very difficult time being in business together. One will be driven by the world's priorities and preferences, and the other will focus on the Kingdom of God. The two are incompatible. I’m not saying that a believer and an unbeliever can’t be in business together, but I’m saying that strain is inevitable.
- In all other Intimate Relationships – I am not talking about love relationships or sexual relationships here. I am talking about relationships in general. We shouldn’t share our intimate and most personal thoughts with an unbeliever. It is dangerous. It’s hard enough just to share them with other believers, but to share them with an unbeliever invites conflict and betrayal. Why is this? Paul answers it right here, “For what communion has light with darkness?” How can Christ be in accord with Belial? That means how the priorities of Jesus can be in agreement with the devil?

These directives and admonitions help the believer to live a more peaceful life. It is hard enough to get along with other believers. Don’t “get in bed” with unbelievers. Don’t go into business with unbelievers. Don’t share intimacies with unbelievers. Don’t open your heart to unbelievers. They are on a different wavelength. Maintain great care and caution in this area, or you will bring trouble, hardship, and disaster into your life.



Life is hard enough without inviting trouble. Interestingly, it comes back to walking in the Spirit.

As we walk in the Spirit (listening to the whispers of the Holy Spirit and obeying them), we will know with whom we should associate and with whom we might share a common purpose. Exercise caution. He has called you out of darkness into the light. Be careful not to crawl back

into darkness and into the spiritual confusion and chaos that it brings.

Let us pray.