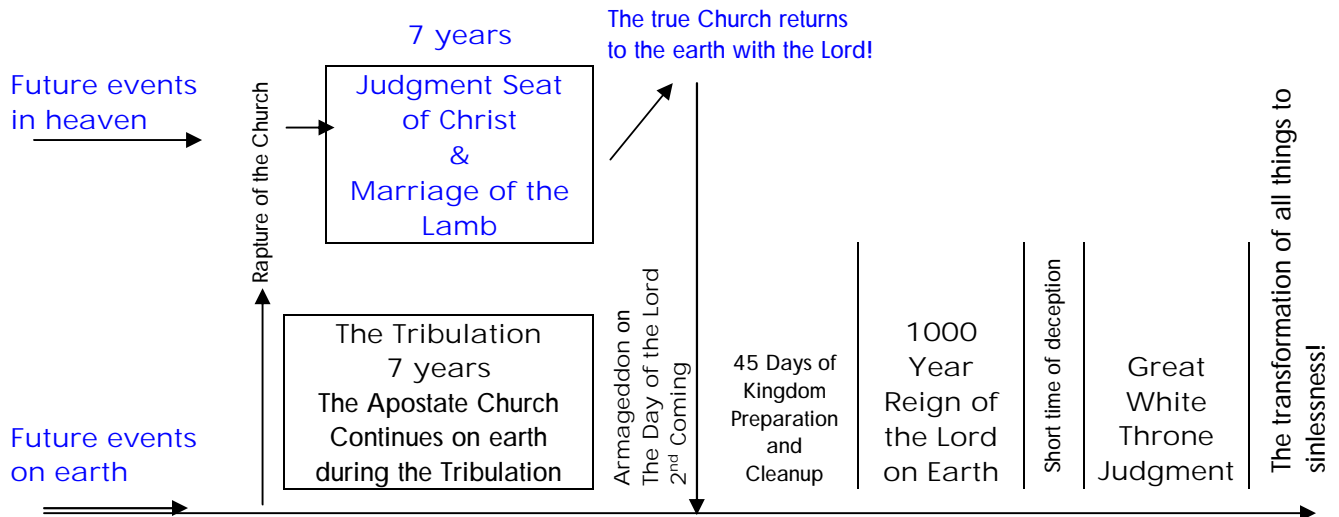


Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians
Lesson 2

As we begin this lesson, let's back track to where we left off in the last lesson. Paul was explaining to the Corinthians why afflictions come and why we struggle in this life. He explains that affliction come to the Christian so they may bring comfort to other Christians and non-Christians. Then he follows up with a wonderful note about the Judgment Seat of Christ which brings hope to the afflicted Christian.

2 Cor. 5: 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Judgment Seat – Those without the Lord will not be at this judgment; they will be at the Great White Throne Judgment at the end of the time of deception after the thousand year reign of Christ here on earth. The Judgment Seat is a time only for believers. It has nothing to do with salvation for only the saved will be there. The purpose of this judgment is to receive the gifts or rewards for what we have done for Christ while we were here on earth. Works will never provide a person with true salvation, yet a person who has had true salvation will always show that salvation by his works. Here at the Judgment Seat those works of the saints will be rewarded.



2 Cor. 5:11 Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences. **12** We are not again commending ourselves to you but *are* giving you an occasion to be proud of us, that you may have *an answer* for those who take pride in appearance, and not in heart. **13** For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you. **14** For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; **15** and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. **16** Therefore from now on we recognize no man according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him thus* no longer. **17** Therefore if any man is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. **18** Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, **19** namely, that God

was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

The Love of Christ Controls us – Paul is making the comparison between those who are more concerned with “appearances” than “heart.” He wants the Corinthians to be proud of his heart rather than his “appearance” and here Paul is actually speaking about his physical appearance in the city of Corinth. There are these “chieftain apostles” in the city trying to discredit Paul. They are concerned with only outward appearances and works of the law. Paul will call these false prophets/preachers later on in the text. The NIV translates them as “super apostles.” This is not a positive term. They are not apostles at all! Where the love of Christ is directing Paul’s every step, these chieftain apostles have sought to control the Corinthians with their own brand of Christianity, but it is a false Christianity. Paul wants the Corinthians to have an answer for the chieftain apostles. He wants them to put their faith in Paul’s heart and the Christ who reconciled them all!

Ministry of Reconciliation – Through Christ we are new creatures and are reconciled to Him, but the task of winning the unreconciled to God is committed to us. It is a high and holy calling, but supremely difficult, because the unreconciled are difficult to win over. Jews without Christ are unreconciled and difficult to win. Yet, we must be loyal to God and present the winning gospel to men. It is the purpose of every saint!

[2 Cor. 5:20](#)Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. [21](#)He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. [2 Cor. 6:1](#)And working together *with Him*, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain- [2](#)for He says, "AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU"; behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," behold, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION"-- [3](#)giving no cause for offense in anything, in order that the ministry be not discredited, [4](#)but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, [5](#)in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, [6](#)in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, [7](#)in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left, [8](#)by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; *regarded* as deceivers and yet true; [9](#)as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, [10](#)as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.

Ambassadors for Christ – Another term for this is in the text as “servants of God.” Servants of God should not do anything that discredits the ministry of God. Paul gives us a check list of “heart items” that we should all possess as Servants of God.

1. Giving no cause for offense in anything, in order that the ministry be not discredited - *causing no one to stumble or giving a reason to be struck out at ... serving without blemish or blot*
2. But in everything commending ourselves as servants of God: *Each of the following words carries a story that can be filled in from Paul’s life as an evangelist.*
 - a. in much endurance - *holding on through life*
 - b. in afflictions – *troubles in life*
 - c. in hardships – *plagues of life*
 - d. in distresses – *in tight places in life*

- e. in beatings – *physical punishment in life*
 - f. in imprisonments – *incarceration of life*
 - g. in tumults - *instabilities of life*
 - h. in labors - *work of life*
 - i. in sleeplessness – *worries that cause insomnia in life*
 - j. in hunger - *times without food in life*
 - k. in purity – *blamelessness in life*
 - l. in knowledge – *learning in life*
 - m. in patience – *slow to act irrational in life*
 - n. in kindness – *gentleness in life*
 - o. in the Holy Spirit – *with God in your life*
 - p. in genuine love - *love that is worthwhile in life*
 - q. in the word of truth – *incorporating Scripture in life*
 - r. in the power of God - *energized in the strength of God in life*
3. By the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left – *offensive weapons that will stand the strain of life*
 4. By glory and dishonor – *dignity or indignity as servants of God in this life*
 5. By evil report and good report – *defamation or praise as servants of God in this life*
 6. *Regarded as deceivers and yet true – thought to be misleaders or truly genuine as servants of God in this life*
 7. As unknown yet well-known – *ignored but fully recognized by God*
 8. As dying yet behold, we live – *in the hazards of earthly life yet living eternally in the Lord*
 9. As punished yet not put to death – *disciplined yet still alive*
 10. As sorrowful yet always rejoicing – *rejoicing even in sorrow*
 11. As poor yet making many rich – *poor in earthly means but wealthy in the eternal*
 12. As having nothing yet possessing all things – *owning nothing in this world yet the Lord providing all things that are needed in the ministry.*

This is Paul's oration to the Corinthians, imploring them to live with praise the Christian life which is a life of the Lord and not of the world. With this said, Paul returns to the story thread.

[2 Cor. 6:11](#) Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide. [12](#) You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections. [13](#) Now in a like exchange- I speak as to children- open wide *to us* also.

Our mouth has spoken freely – our heart is opened wide – Literally Paul is saying that he has liberally given all the direction that is needed and he has held back nothing. Nothing is hidden in his heart about them or the gospel. Paul has laid it all on the table. And even though Paul has written to them all the instruction they need to live as servants of the God, those instructions do not restrain or restrict the Corinthians. The Corinthians are restrained or hemmed in by their own affection or what we would call their “gut.” In their gut they are having problems. Why? They are restrained because of the false teaching that is surrounding them. Watch as Paul draws this conclusion in the following text as Paul speaks to them like they are his children.

[2 Cor. 6:14](#) Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? [15](#) Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? [16](#) Or what agreement has the temple of God with

idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. ¹⁷"Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAR; And I will welcome you. ¹⁸"And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty. **2 Cor. 7:**¹Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Do not be bound together with unbelievers – Most people know this verse from the KJV that states "do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers." It has been used almost exclusively in the idea of marriage relationships. Incorrectly it has been used to say that a Baptist should not marry a Church of Christ, or a Methodist should not marry a Pentecostal, but this is pulling this phrase extremely out of context. On the other hand, these types of marriage unions do set up couples for disharmony and touchy discussions in Christian belief systems. However, the phrase could be used correctly to say that a Christian should not marry an unsaved person or a Muslim, or Buddhist, or any member of a non-Christian religion.

But Paul is using this phrase in a much larger yet surgical context. Remember, in Paul's day there were no denominations. The church had not split yet over how you are baptized or the meaning of the Lord's Supper. The Church had not split over the funding of missionaries or the role of government rule over the religious church. In fact, still at this time in the life of the church, Christianity was an extension or completion of the Jewish faith. After all Christ had come to fulfill the law. On Saturdays the Christians were in the synagogues and on Sunday they were in the home churches. The Jewish faith looked at this with some disdain. In turn, some of the Jews were attending the home churches and trying to persuade the Christians to be faithful to the Law. While Christianity is the daughter of Judaism in the minds of many, it was never supposed to be that way. Christ and Christianity was the last step in Judaism. But Judaism did not accept Christ as the final sacrifice as prophesied by God long before Calvary. This was to be for the benefit of the Gentile world that they may obtain Christ too. Those holding to the full order of the Jewish faith without the recognition of Christ are the ones that Paul is saying to "come out from their midst and be separate." This is not to say that we should not build relationships with lost people in the world and those of other religions too far to do that we would have to leave the world as Paul explained in another letter. This is talking about binding together in worship and faith with people of other religions. The Corinthian church had allowed these "peddlers of faith" to influence the church with an adulterated theology often taking advantage for financial gain. They are corrupting the true theology of the church.

2 Cor. 7:²Make room for us *in your hearts*; we wronged no one, we corrupted no one, we took advantage of no one. ³I do not speak to condemn you; for I have said before that you are in our hearts to die together and to live together.

We wronged no one – Unlike the chieftain apostles who were introducing false theology, and harming the Corinthians, Paul and his followers wronged no one.

2 Cor. 7:⁴Great is my confidence in you, great is my boasting on your behalf; I am filled with comfort. I am overflowing with joy in all our affliction. ⁵For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts without, fears within. ⁶But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus; ⁷and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your

zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more. ⁸For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it- *for* I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while- ⁹I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to *the point of* repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to *the will of* God, in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. ¹⁰For the sorrow that is according to *the will of* God produces a repentance without regret, *leading* to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death. ¹¹For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter. ¹²So although I wrote to you *it was* not for the sake of the offender, nor for the sake of the one offended, but that your earnestness on our behalf might be made known to you in the sight of God. ^{13a}For this reason we have been comforted.

Your earnestness might be made known to you – The letters that Paul had written had done their job, or at least one of the letters did the job. They corrected the problems in the church and for that Paul had found comfort in his life, even though he was still in the midst of personal struggles and trials in Macedonia. When Paul speaks of “earnestness,” he is speaking about the “care” with which the Corinthians went about their business of following the instructions written by Paul. The way they completed the task and the attitude they had during that task is important in the sight of God. Yes, there is often hurt in correcting problems but there is comfort on all fronts when that problem is corrected especially among believers. The Corinthians did it right, no matter what any one says and they were innocent and they needed to know that God was watching and He was pleased.

^{2 Cor. 7:13b}And besides our comfort, we rejoiced even much more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. ¹⁴For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I was not put to shame; but as we spoke all things to you in truth, so also our boasting before Titus proved to be *the* truth. ¹⁵And his affection abounds all the more toward you, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling. ¹⁶I rejoice that in everything I have confidence in you.

Titus – If you remember, Paul told us that Titus did not what to go to Corinth. Paul had evidently directed him to go there and minister to them. Titus ultimately spent some time there and he was treated royally by the Corinthians. He did not find all the divisions and problems there that he had heard about and ultimately reported to Paul the wonderful news from Corinth.

^{2 Cor. 8:1}Now, brethren, we *wish to* make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, ²that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. ³For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability *they gave* of their own accord, ⁴begging us with much entreaty for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, ⁵and *this*, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.

The Grace of God in Macedonia – The Macedonians had been great supporters of Paul in the Church as a whole in the past but great poverty had overtaken them. This we see in Paul’s letter to the church in Philippi called Philippians. Even in their poverty the Macedonian church was able to muster support of many kinds to the mission of the church and the support of the saints abroad. They gave of themselves and were recipients of the grace of God.

2 Cor. 8:⁶Consequently we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well.

The Grace of God to Titus – Just as the grace of God had been exhibited in Macedonia, so too Titus had exhibited and found the grace of God in his ministry. He didn't want to go to Corinth but because he did he experienced the grace of God.

2 Cor. 8:⁷But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, see that you abound in this gracious work also. ⁸I am not speaking *this* as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also. ⁹For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich. ¹⁰And I give *my* opinion in this matter, for this is to your advantage, who were the first to begin a year ago not only to do *this*, but also to desire *to do it*. ¹¹But now finish doing it also; that just as *there was* the readiness to desire it, so *there may be* also the completion of it by your ability. ¹²For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what *a man* has, not according to what he does not have. ¹³For *this* is not for the ease of others *and* for your affliction, but by way of equality-- ¹⁴at this present time your abundance *being a supply* for their want, that their abundance also may become *a supply* for your want, that there may be equality; ¹⁵as it is written, "HE WHO *gathered* MUCH DID NOT HAVE TOO MUCH, AND HE WHO *gathered* LITTLE HAD NO LACK."

The Grace of God in Corinth – In the first letter to the Corinthians, Paul instructed the church to begin taking an offering for the saints in Judea. He wanted them to collect the money weekly so they would not have to hurry to gather the offering when he arrived. It has now been a year since they started the collection and Paul wanted them to complete that collection so that it could be sent when he finally made it to Corinth. The amount did not matter but the heart by which the collection was done was most important for the grace of God! Whether the collection was large or small, it would be exactly what was required to supply the need in Jerusalem.