

"Paul's Partnership with the Gospel"

Part 1

2 Corinthians 6:1-7:1

Introduction: Before we get into the chapter which is before us I want to back up and consider how Paul has been leading us up a spiritual mountain toward the summit.

In chapter 5 Paul reminded his readers that death is not to be feared. He did not fear death but instead he viewed death as the means to get from this sin filled world to his eternal resting place. He wrote of the glorified body which awaits all who are saved and how we all groan in anticipation of the day when we shall receive the new body.

He then reminded his readers of the Judgment Seat of Christ and how we will all give an account of our lives when we one day stand before the Lord. It was Paul's desire that all of this would encourage his readers to step up and be committed to serving the Lord.

Paul then went on to higher ground. He wrote of the love of Jesus Christ and how Jesus' love motivated him to live a life fully surrendered over to service. It was this great love which pressed him from all sides and controlled him.

Paul then climbed the mountain to an even higher level. He pointed his readers to the change which takes place in every person who rests their faith in Jesus Christ. He explained how we are IN CHRIST and in this new position we are different. Our priorities, our values and our views are all changed. It was Paul's desire that this Truth would cause all believers to change their view of this world. You see, as Paul leads us up this spiritual mountain he is hoping that our view of these new horizons will cause us all to see how empty this world really is.

Just when we think that Paul may have reached the summit he begins to climb again. Now he has led us to the summit which is Calvary. He explains that God was in Christ and He was reconciling the world unto Himself. Calvary shows us just how far God's love will go. Then Paul takes one more step up and he tells how Jesus became sin for us so that we could become the righteousness of God. Here on the summit he has reminded all believers that we have been commissioned and we are ambassadors for Jesus Christ.

Now as Paul has brought us to this summit where we can now get the proper view of the world and our new life in Christ he is going to sit down and share with us his commitment to the ministry.

I. **The Greatness of the Ministry**

Notice 2 Corinthians 6:1a

This is an amazing statement which Paul makes here. As we sit upon the summit and Paul begins to speak he tells us that all believers are workers together with Him. The words "with him" are in italics which mean they have been added by the translators but they certainly do belong here.

Notice 2 Corinthians 5:20

We are in this world IN CHRIST'S STEAD and we are given the Holy Spirit and so we are workers together with Him. This is a profound statement. The Creator of this world has chosen to allow you and me to work together with Him.

There are many professions which people strive for just to be able to work alongside a famous person or to work with someone who is just outstanding in their field. There are others who strive to hold a position at some special place in this world just to be able to say they live here or they work in this area or they work with so and so.

But we must understand that no matter where someone works, no matter where they live, and no matter whom they work with, all of these pales in comparison to the believer's privilege. We are workers together with the God of this universe. Let me show you some other verses.

1 Corinthians 3:9

⁹ ***For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.***

Mark 16:19-20

¹⁹ *So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.*

²⁰ *And they went forth, and preached every where, ***the Lord working with them***, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.*

Let me get you back to the thought of the verse again. We are workers together with Him. Notice the words of David Guzik on this:

"Paul never said God works together with us. It isn't our work that God helps us with. It is His work that He asks us to do together with Him. Instead of trying to persuade God to help us with our work, we need to find out what God's work is, and do it with Him!"

How true this is that it is not our work but it is God's and I need to also add that as we work together with Him it is God who causes the work to bring about fruit.

1 Corinthians 3:6-8

⁶ *I have planted, Apollos watered; but **God gave the increase.***

⁷ *So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.*

⁸ *Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.*

We who work with God are not to think highly of ourselves when God blesses our work because the increase is all of God. Whatever the fruit is which comes it is all from God.

Psalm 62:11

¹¹ *God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this: that power belongeth unto God.*

Ephesians 3:20-21

²⁰ *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.*

²¹ *Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*

A. The Plea to Serve

Notice 2 Corinthians 6:1 again.

Now there are some who believe that Paul is pleading with the Corinthians to be saved here. But that is not the context and besides that they are already saved. Let me remind you how he opened his first letter to them.

1 Corinthians 1:2-6

² *Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's:*

³ *Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

⁴ *I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;*

⁵ *That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge;*

⁶ *Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you:*

There is therefore no doubt that he is writing to believers. Now then this raises a question, "What is Paul speaking about when he pleads with them not to receive the grace of God in vain?"

To answer the question we must consider the context. He is speaking of being ambassadors for Christ and how all believers are commissioned to carry the message of reconciliation out into the world. Then he reminds them they he and they are fellow workers with God. So the context here is all about service.

Let me explain the plea which Paul makes here. They and we are living in the age of grace. Each believer has been given at least one spiritual gift from God.

Ephesians 4:8-12

⁸ *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*

⁹ *(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?*

¹⁰ *He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)*

¹¹ *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*

¹² *For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:*

Here we see that after Jesus died He gave gifts unto men and He gave those gifts for the work of the ministry.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11

⁷ *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.*

⁸ *For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;*

⁹ *To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;*

¹⁰ *To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:*

¹¹ *But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.*

From these 2 passages we can clearly see that each believer is given at least one spiritual gift. Now let me show you what else we are given.

Ephesians 4:7

⁷ But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Here Paul tells us that not only are we given spiritual gifts but we are also given GRACE according to the measure of the gift. Let me explain what this means. We are given spiritual gifts and along with the gift we are given the grace to exercise the gift. In other words, no one can say that God gave them a gift but it is not possible for them to exercise the gift. Whatever the gift is which you have you also have the grace to exercise that very gift or gifts.

Now let me get us back to 2 Corinthians 6:1. One way in which a believer can frustrate the grace of God or receive the grace of God in vain is to NOT exercise their gift or we could say to not serve as the ambassadors which we have been called to be.

Let me show you what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15.

1 Corinthians 15:10

¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Now let me stretch this out even further. We live in the age of grace. The Holy Spirit is striving to bring people to repentance but this age will not last forever. I cannot help but think of the words of Genesis 6.

Genesis 6:3a

³ And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man.

So here is the point: we have the great privilege of being fellow workers with God and He has gifted us for the ministry. But when we chose to NOT exercise our gift then we are receiving the grace of God in vain.

Let me show you the words of Guzik on this thought:

"Grace isn't given because of any works, past, present or promised; yet it is given to encourage work, not to say work is unnecessary. God doesn't want us to receive His grace

and become passive. Paul knew that God gives His grace, we work hard, and the work of God is done."

Let me show you what Pater wrote.

1 Peter 4:10

¹⁰ *As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

We have an opportunity to invest into the lives of others by exercising our gifts but the sad point is few people get involved.

Luke 10:2

² *Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.*

Conclusion:

One day we shall stand before the Lord and answer as to how we have used what God has entrusted to us as believers. One gift which all believers have is the gift of GRACE which enables us to exercise our gifts. On that day we will answer for what we did with the grace given to each of us.

2 Corinthians 5:10

¹⁰ *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad [worthless].*