

"Paul's Partnership with the Gospel"

Part 3

2 Corinthians 6:1-7:1

Introduction: Two weeks ago we started into 2 Corinthians 6 and as we stepped into this chapter Paul used the Words from the previous chapter to exhort the Corinthians to exercise their spiritual gifts. Let us walk through a short review of what we have looked at so far.

I. **The Greatness of the Ministry**

Notice 2 Corinthians 6:1

II. **The Greatness of the Message**

Notice 2 Corinthians 6:2

III. **The Method**

a. **What we should avoid.**

Notice 2 Corinthians 6:3

b. **What we should pursue.**

Notice 2 Corinthians 6:4a

This verse is in contrast to the preceding verse. We are to be careful not to do anything which would harm the ministry or the message. But instead we are to be willing to die to our own dreams and desires. We are to live in a way that Jesus is seen in us.

2 Corinthians 4:2

² But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

2 Corinthians 4:10-12

¹⁰ Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

¹¹ For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

¹² So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

Now as Paul continues this thought he will give us greater detail as to how we are to live so that others can see Jesus in us.

Notice 2 Corinthians 6:4b-5

Here in these 2 verses Paul allows us to see how and what he had to face as an Apostle of Jesus Christ and at the same time there is a message in these verses for you and me.

The word "PATIENCE" needs to be at the front of every one of the terms which Paul points to here. The word "PATIENCE" here means "endurance". Let me refresh your memory from our study in Hebrews.

Hebrews 12:1

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

This is the very same word here in Hebrews 12:1 and I want to show you again the words of Barclay concerning this verse and word.

"Endurance is needed to run that race. Endurance translates the ancient Greek word hupomone, "which does not mean the patience which sits down and accepts things but the patience which masters them... It is a determination, unhurrying and yet undelaying, which goes steadily on and refuses to be deflected."

This is the same meaning for the word "PATIENCE" here in 2 Corinthians 6:4.

Notice 2 Corinthians 6:4b-5 again.

Paul exercised ENDURANCE/PERSEVERANCE in every one of these situations listed here. We are going to look at each one of these in detail in a moment but before we do we need to see the 3 groups which are here.

Group #1

- ✓ **Afflictions, Necessities, Distresses**

These are "general" difficulties which we all face in our everyday Christian lives.

Group #2

- ✓ **Stripes, Imprisonments, Tumults**

These are difficulties brought on by other people.

Group #3

- ✓ **Labours, Watchings, Fastings**

These are difficulties which Paul faced which were self-inflicted because he was so dedicated to the message and the ministry.

Let us now consider the details of what Paul faced.

1. **Afflictions** - This refers to times of great pressure.

One of the best examples of this high pressure is from the Old Testament.

Daniel 3:14-18

¹⁴ *Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them, Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?*

¹⁵ *Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?*

¹⁶ *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter.*

¹⁷ *If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.*

¹⁸ *But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.*

2. **Necessities** - This refers to the times when Paul did not have what he needed. It could have been times when he did not have the food he needed and it could refer to the times when he did not have the finances he needed. There were often times when Paul did not have the necessities of life but he never allowed this to stop him. He persevered through the times of need.

1 Corinthians 4:11

¹¹ *Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace;*

3. **Distresses** – This word refers to a “narrow place”. To put it in words which we can understand and relate to it would be the same as “finding ourselves in a bind”. It is equivalent of facing a dire situation and not knowing which way to turn.
4. **Stripes** – This refers to wounds inflicted by others. Let me just reference Luke’s words on this.

Acts 16:22-23

²² *And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.*

²³ *And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:*

5. **Imprisonments** – Paul was cast into prison many times for proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
6. **Tumults** – This refers to uprisings of the people.

Acts 19:23-30

²³ *And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.*

²⁴ *For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;*

²⁵ *Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.*

²⁶ *Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:*

²⁷ *So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.*

²⁸ *And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.*

²⁹ *And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul’s companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.*

³⁰ *And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.*

7. **Labours** – This refers to Paul dedicated service.

2 Corinthians 11:23

²³ *Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.*

8. **Watchings** – This refers to sleepless nights.

2 Corinthians 11:27

²⁷ *In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.*

9. **Fastings** – This was setting aside his own personal desires and appetites so as to focus upon prayer for his ministry. Fasting was always connected with sorrow in the Bible. This tells us that Paul's heart was often broken for those he reached out to with the Gospel. Let me show you what Jesus said concerning fasting.

Matthew 9:14-15

¹⁴ *Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?*

¹⁵ *And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.*

Paul fasted often which tells us his heart was broken over the lost sinners of his day.

2 Corinthians 11:27

²⁷ *In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.*

Now let us get back to the thought. Paul endured/persevered through each of these circumstances which he faced in his life. Paul understood that whatever he faced was the path which God had ordained for him to walk.

Acts 9:13-16

¹³ *Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:*

¹⁴ *And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.*

¹⁵ *But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:*

¹⁶ **For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.**

He accepted whatever it was that came his way and in each of these circumstances he learned to trust in the God who saved him.

Philippians 4:11-13

¹¹ *Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

¹² *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.*

¹³ *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

Conclusion:

The opposite of endurance would be quitting or complaining. To Paul quitting was not even an option and to complain would have been a sin. Paul lived his life to bring glory and honor to God.

Application:

Over the years I have heard many believers complaining about the circumstances which they have had to face in their lives. I had one lady tell me that when she stepped into heaven she was going to question God about the path she was given to walk.

Complaining can be very costly for God's people. Israel complained some 14 times in the wilderness.

#1 - The people complained to Moses that because of Him and His talk of a promise land, Pharaoh made things worse for them - Exodus 5:1-22

#2 - The people complained and said to Moses "let us alone" - Exodus 14:11-12

#3 - The people complained about the bitter water - Exodus 15:22

#4 - The people complained about being hungry; God gave them Manna - Exodus 16:1-4

#5 - The people complained about being thirsty - Exodus 17:1-4

#6 - The people forsake the Lord. The Lord orders the Levites to kill 3000 people by the sword, because they worshipped the golden calf. - Exodus 32:28

#7 - The "mixed multitude" of the people complained about food - Numbers 11 - The Lord burns the outskirts of the camp - Moses wants to die - The Lord sends a very great plague.

#8 - Miriam and Aaron complain about Moses' leadership - The Lord curses Miriam with leprosy - Numbers 12:1-12

#9 - The people complained about how difficult it looked to enter the land so they refused to enter the Promise Land. Numbers 14:1-10

#10 - The people complained again and wanted to kill Moses - they tried to select another leader. The Lord seeks to destroy the people with pestilence - Numbers 14:10

#11 - The key leaders rebel against Moses - Numbers 16 - God opens the earth and swallows the offenders!

#12 - The people complained again and they accuse Moses of killing God's people - Numbers 16:41

#13 - The people contended with Moses again because of no water - Moses gets angry Numbers 20:1-5

#14 - The people complained against God and Moses - Numbers 21:4-5 - God finally brings the solution - The fiery serpents to bite them - He shows them their sin-nature.

For those who endure there are great blessings which await them.