

"Paul's Partnership with the Gospel"

Part 4

2 Corinthians 6:1-7:1

Introduction: Last week in our study of 2 Corinthians 6 we looked at the need of PATIENCE in the life of the believer. The word PATIENCE means ENDURANCE. No matter what it was that Paul faced in his ministry he refused to give up and he refused to react in a way that would harm the message or the ministry. We are currently looking at the Method of Paul's ministry.

I. The Method

a. What we should avoid.

Notice 2 Corinthians 6:3

b. What we should pursue.

Notice 2 Corinthians 6:4-5

"Patience" is the key word in these 2 verses. In whatever Paul faced he accepted it as the path which God had given to him to walk and he learned to adapt. Let us notice some of what Paul faced because this will fit into our lesson tonight.

2 Corinthians 11:23-28

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.

²⁴ Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

²⁵ Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

²⁶ In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

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

²⁸ *Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.*

Then we read the words he recorded in Philippians 4.

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.*

1. Christ in Paul

In the book of Galatians Paul recorded something which we need to see because the statement from Galatians can be seen in Paul's life and what is listed here in 2 Corinthians 6.

Galatians 2:20

²⁰ *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

Paul's life was a constant manifestation of the Holy Spirit who lived within him.

Application:

This SHOULD also be true of our lives also. As we have talked about many times we are to live our lives controlled by the Spirit of God so that Jesus Christ will be seen in our lives. Now, the life of Christ should be seen in us the most when we are squeezed by the trials and the difficulties of this life. It is easy to walk like Christ when there is no pressure or when everyone around us is befriending us. But the True test of being controlled by the Spirit is when the pressure is on or when someone treats us unfairly in life or when life is just flat out difficult.

No matter the situation Paul faced people could see Jesus Christ in him.

Notice 2 Corinthians 6:6

Here begins a list of the boundaries which Paul existed within Paul's life. Let us walk through the list which Paul gives us here so that we can see what was seen in Paul's life when the pressure was very great.

Pureness - No matter the situation and no matter the pressure Paul was sure to exercise pureness within his life. Paul was very careful to keep himself unspotted from the world. He never conformed to the ways of the world in the midst of the pressure.

Application:

In verse 3 Paul had stated that for us who are fellow workers with God we must be very careful not to give an offence of any kind so as to harm the ministry or the message. One way we do this is to remain unspotted from the world and to live a life of pureness.

James 1:27

²⁷ Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Notice what Paul wrote to Timothy.

1 Timothy 4:12

¹² Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

There may be times when the pressures of life hit and there will be the temptation to "go the way of the world" in an attempt to escape the pressure. But to "go the way of the world" will mean you must lie, cheat, or practice some other kind of deception. Sometimes people attempt to justify the deception by pointing to the pressure or by pointing to how "the world" handles these same situations.

This is not being led by the Spirit and it is not exercising faith. Faith stays within the boundaries of purity no matter how great the pressure.

Knowledge - This was the source which Paul drawled from as he faced the trials and the pressures of life. Paul knew that God's Word was a bottomless well which he could drink from in a world that was dry and barren.

Application:

Facing the trials and the pressures of life can be extremely draining and exhausting. But there is a well which we can run to and drawl the needed nourishment and refreshment which we need for our everyday lives. The greater the knowledge the greater the stability.

Psalm 1:1-4

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

² But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

³ And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

⁴ The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

2 Peter 1:2-8

² Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord.

³ According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

⁴ Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

⁵ And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

⁶ And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

⁷ And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

⁸ For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Longsuffering - This word speaks of patience with other people. It has the idea of being slow to avenge wrongs which other have done to us. Paul was a man who was mistreated by many others but he was also a man who practiced longsuffering with those

who had wronged him. Paul understood that life was not about him but it was about magnifying Jesus Christ and if he must be mistreated in order for the life of Christ to be seen then Paul would accept that and he would be longsuffering.

Application:

If we are going to show forth Jesus we too must be longsuffering when it comes to dealing with other people. There will be times when others mistreat us or take advantage of us or use their words to damage our reputation, but these are never reasons to seek revenge.

Luke 23:33-34

³³ *And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.*

³⁴ *Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.*

1 Peter 3:8-11

⁸ *Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:*

⁹ *Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.*

¹⁰ *For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:*

¹¹ *Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.*

Kindness - This word speaks of doing good to others when the opportunity presents itself.

Galatians 6:10

¹⁰ *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*

Holy Ghost - This was Paul's source of power and control at all times but especially when he was in the midst of a trial or in a situation where he felt pressure. His control by

the Spirit was exactly why Paul was able to respond as he did in the midst of all that was listed previously. It is God's desire that each of us be filled with the Spirit.

Ephesians 3:14-19

¹⁴ *For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

¹⁵ *Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*

¹⁶ *That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;*

¹⁷ *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,*

¹⁸ *May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;*

¹⁹ *And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

Ephesians 5:18

¹⁸ *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*

Love unfeigned - This was a love without hypocrisy. This was a sincere love. The fact that this is listed after the Holy Ghost is very fitting for this is the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23

²² *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,*

²³ *Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

Notice 2 Corinthians 6:7

Here Paul lists 3 more controlling aspects in his life.

The Word of Truth - It was the Truth of God's Word which established the boundaries within the life of Paul. He would do nothing to violate God's Truth for that would have given his critics opportunity to blame the ministry.

Application:

We too must walk by the Truth of God's Word as we face the trials and the pressures of life. It is true that we have liberty in Christ but we must not go beyond what the Word of God permits.

The power of God - This was the source from which Paul received the strength to manifest Christ in the face of adversity. This power comes as we are surrendered over to the Spirit of God.

The armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left - This was the cautions with which Paul served the Lord. He was always watching and he was always careful not to allow anything in his life which could lead him to sin or compromise.

The words of Paul in Romans illuminate these thoughts wonderfully.

Romans 13:11-14

¹¹ And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

¹² The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

¹³ Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

¹⁴ But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Conclusion:

This is the result of Christ living in the believer.