

2Corinthians – Week 21

I. **(FRAME)** Review (2Cor. 6:1-2)

A. Do not receive the grace of God in vain

i. The grace of God was effectual in Paul's life (1Cor. 15:10)

1. He worked hard to be pleasing to God in everything he did!

ii. Vain grace is ineffectual!

1. It does not produce godliness and uprightness! (cf. Titus 2:11-12)

B. Paul quotes Isaiah 49:8 to stress the importance of responding quickly and positively to the grace of God because...

i. *"Now is the favorable time and the day of salvation"*

1. God will forgive your ineffectualness should you repent today!

2. Let the grace of God that saves you become effectual in you, causing you to live for Him who died and rose for you!

II. Continuation

A. **(FRAME)** What does a life impacted and made effectual by the grace of God look like?

i. Paul uses a description of his ministry to show what effectual grace looks like...

1. 2Cor. 6:3 (ESV), *"We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry,"*

a. **(FRAME)** It puts no stumbling blocks in other people's way.

i. Paul would not do anything that would discredit the gospel and cause others not to have anything to do with Christianity!

1. Keep in mind that a stumbling block is also anything that causes other disciples to sin!

ii. Paul practiced what he preached:

1. He did not ask for financial support from the Corinthian because he did not want to hinder the gospel (cf. 1Cor. 9:12).

iii. A life impacted by the grace of God should strive to be blameless in all he or she does!

1. Nothing about him or her should create a stumbling block!

2. Personal example: I do not dance in weddings at all because my name was mentioned as an excuse to dance in a certain manner.

iv. It is good to note that Paul, being an ambassador wanted to make sure that his actions did not offend those who lived in this "foreign land!"

1. For us...

a. It is good that not speak nastily to those who speak nasty to us.

b. It is good not behave nastily to those who are nasty to us.

c. It is good to practice agape love to those who do not love in return.

d. Remember: godly character impacts the ungodly!

2. Why do so many reject Jesus?

a. Partly because of the poor examples of those who profess to be Christians! (cf. Rom. 2:24)

- B. Paul shows himself to be a genuine minister of God by the hardships that followed ...**
- i. As an ambassador of Christ, one must go to those who are not reconciled and unrepentant, to claim those claimed by Satan!**
 1. It is a dangerous work as the crucifixion of Jesus shows!
 2. The demons do not lay down in weakness and submission when the gospel is preached – they rise up in a desperate attempt to prevent it from taking hold!
 3. The result – at least for Paul and his companions -- was...
 - ii. (FRAME) It suffers for Jesus' sake:**
 1. 2Cor. 6:4-5 (ESV), *“but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵ beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger;”*
 - a. As a servant of God, Paul endured, by God's divine power, Paul endured the following in his ministry...
 - i. Afflictions**
 1. Afflictions in themselves do not commend anyone, but great endurance of afflictions does!
 - a. God is the one that helps us endure!
 - i. (FRAME) Col. 1:11 (ESV), “May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy”**
 - ii. Hardships – to be in need; to lack life's necessities**
 - iii. Calamities (literally, narrowness of room) – this may include tight places or unfavorable circumstances.**
 - iv. Beatings – wounded (flogged five times – 2Cor. 11:23)**
 - v. Imprisonments – jailed (Acts 16:24)**
 - vi. Riots – public commotions that came with preaching (Acts 16:19-20)**
 - vii. Labors – hard work**
 1. He worked night and day to support himself (1Thess. 2:9)
 - viii. Sleepless nights**
 1. Perhaps as a result of his working day and night (or at least partly)
 2. This may also involve the hard work in discharging his duties as an apostle like:
 - a. Sleepless nights while in prisons.
 - b. Sleepless nights when he was being persecuted.
 - c. Sleepless nights dealing with a church problem.
 - d. Sleepless nights praying about a church problem.
 - ix. Hunger – missed meals**
 2. Did all these things cause him to leave Christ? To dishonor Christ? To become bitter? To compromise truth? To react the way an unbeliever would react? No...

- iii. **(FRAME)** It behaves in a godly fashion despite the suffering
 - 1. Despite the hardships, he conducted himself in a way as not to cause a stumbling block to anyone...
 - a. 2Cor. 6:6-7 (ESV), *“by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love; ⁷by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left;”*
 - i. Purity – holiness; spiritual integrity
 - ii. Knowledge – understanding the nature of the ministry; understanding God’s will; understanding divine mysteries; etc.
 - iii. Patience– dealing with difficult people and abusers without retaliation. Patience is reactive, this is, a reaction.
 - iv. Kindness – a sympathetic disposition that has good actions. Kindness is proactive, that is, it prepares, intervenes or controls an expected occurrence or situation).
 - v. Holy Spirit – that is, being led by the Spirit, as opposed to the flesh (cf. Galatians 5:16-24).
 - vi. Genuine love – true agape love, shown by patience, kindness, etc. (1Cor. 13:4-8a).
- iv. **(FRAME)** It is filled with contrasting experiences which are typical of Christian ministry.
 - 1. To be covered next time...