

Series: Words of Counsel and Correction

THAT THE MINISTRY BE NOT BLAMED

2 CORINTHIANS 6

Text: 2 Corinthians 6:3

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³ Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:

Introduction:

As one reads this letter to the church at Corinth reveals that it was a most difficult place for Paul to minister.

He faced great adversity and opposition by some very influential people within the church.

Things were difficult, but Paul refused to succumb to the pressure. He was determined to carry out the work he had been called to do at Corinth.

I want us to consider the exhortation as we consider that the ministry be not blamed.

Note:

1. THE PRIORITY OF THE MINISTRY (VS. 3-4)

2 Corinthians 6:3-4

³ Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: ⁴ But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

Paul was well acquainted with the adversity. He had faced those who sought to destroy his ministry and mar his character. He knew that they sought any means necessary to defeat him and his work.

- Paul was determined to rise above the adversity and carry himself with integrity and confidence. He was committed to preventing any occasion for a substantiated accusation.
- We too need to realize that our lives are being watched and closely scrutinized by the world. They have heard the claims of others. They have encountered those who claimed Christ and yet lived as wicked and ungodly as the world. We are to live our lives and serve the Lord in such a way that we **give no offence in anything, that the ministry of God be not blamed.** The word offence has the idea of “a stumbling block; to lead someone astray.”

- In every area of life we are to present ourselves in a way that pleases, honors, and testifies to the goodness of our Lord.
- We are to represent the Lord in every area of life, wherever we are at all times.

We have considered the Priority of Ministry note secondly:

2. THE PRESSURES OF MINISTRY (VS. 4-5)

2 Corinthians 6:4-5

⁴ But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, ⁵ In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;

If anyone understood the pressures of ministry, Paul did.

He had endured much affliction and persecution for the cause of Christ.

Here he charges the believer to face such difficulty with dignity and honor.

The world is watching to see how we handle difficulties.

We are never a better witness than when we maintain our commitment to the Lord in the midst of a trial or storm.

Let's consider the pressures Paul mentioned.

- ***Much Patience*** – steadfast endurance even in adversity
- ***Afflictions*** – pressure, strain, or tension that comes from without and within
- ***Necessities*** – inescapable hardships; day to day sorrows and struggles of life
- ***Distresses*** – calamities, tight places, inescapable situations. Being backed into a corner with no way of escape.
- ***Stripes*** – scourging, beatings, lashings, or whipping.
- ***Imprisonments*** – Paul was imprisoned 7 times for preaching the gospel
- ***Tumults*** – an uprising or attack from a fierce and angry mob
- ***Labors*** – Laboring to the point of exhaustion

- **Watchings** – Sleepless nights keeping watch.
(We are instructed to watch and pray. How long has it been since we gave up sleep for the cause of Christ?)
- **Fastings** – Depriving the body of food.

Much of what Paul speaks of in these verses is completely foreign to us.

We live in a land where we are free to serve the Lord and worship Him.

We have never faced much of what Paul did.

We ought to thank the Lord that we have been spared such difficulty.

However, it should trouble us that we accomplish no more than we do for the Lord.

Many today are seeking a reason to abandon the work of the Lord.

We have all had our feelings hurt by someone's comments.

We have all been ridiculed for our faith, but that is no reason to give up on ministry.

We have suffered nothing compared to many who have gone before us.

Note: Hebrews 12:3-4

Hebrews 12:3-4

³ For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. ⁴ Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

If our lives are never challenged or resisted by the world, are we doing much for the cause of Christ?

We have considered the Priority of Ministry and the Pressure of Ministry note thirdly:

3. THE POWER OF MINISTRY (VS. 6-7)

You may be wondering how is it possible to endure the pressure of the ministry in such a way that the ministry be not blamable.

Note the little word “BY. In verse 6”

2 Corinthians 6:6-7

⁶ By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, ⁷ By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

Paul gives a list of things that make it possible to endure the pressure of the ministry.

Note this list:

- ***Purity*** (pureness) – innocent, cleanliness, free from dirt, filth and pollution of the world; free from immoral and unjust behavior and motive. It means to be spotless, holy, righteous, godly, and just.
- ***Knowledge*** – An understanding of the Word of God accomplished by a commitment to study and meditation of the Word of God.
- ***Longsuffering*** – patience, bearing and suffering a long time with people, especially when they are wrong, unjust, abusive, slanderous, and injurious.
- ***Kindness*** – Goodness of heart and behavior. It is being kind and good, gentle and sweet even when others are abusive and evil, severe and hurting, unappreciative and unthankful.
- ***By the Holy Spirit*** – in the presence, power, and gifts of the Spirit.

- ***Love Unfeigned*** – love that is not counterfeited or faked; love that is sincere, genuine, and pure; love that is unlimited, selfless, and sacrificial.
- ***By the Word of Truth*** – the preaching and teaching of the truth, not the philosophies or ideas of men
- ***By the Power of God*** – The power of God was essential in Paul’s ministry and it is essential in ours today.
- ***By the Armor of Righteousness*** – the righteousness and justification of Christ

Though this is not an exhaustive list of the elements necessary for the power of God in ministry, but certainly these things are essential.

We will never achieve power and victory if we aren’t committed to securing these things in our lives.

We have considered the Priority of Ministry and the Pressure of Ministry and Power of Ministry note lastly:

4. THE PASSION FOR MINISTRY (VS. 8-10)

2 Corinthians 6:8-10

⁸ By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; ⁹ As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; ¹⁰ As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

Here Paul reveals his passion for ministry through what seems like contradictions that in fact reveal great truth.

This confirms:

A. The Reality

Paul speaks of several opposites in the verses. He reveals that life is filled with ups and downs.

We are faced with acceptance as well as rejection.

At times we are embraced and at others we are ridiculed or mocked.

There are times of rejoicing and times of sorrow.

We all face the changes that life brings, but even in the midst of these changes we are still upheld by the hand of the Lord.

We are never forsaken by Him.

Note not only the reality but also:

B. The Responsibility

As we face the changes and difficulties of life, we must desire to make the most of those opportunities as well.

Paul was determined to use every opportunity as a chance to share the gospel.

When he was honored and when he was dishonored, when in sorrow or rejoicing, it made no difference, Paul desired to share the love of Christ!

If we are waiting on the perfect opportunity to be used of the Lord, we likely won't be used much.

If we wait until everything is just as we desire, we likely won't share our faith or witness often.

We need to search every circumstance for an opportunity to be a witness and minister for Christ.

C. The Reward (vs. 10)

2 Corinthians 6:10

¹⁰ As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; **as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.**

If anyone had the chance to be negative and give up, Paul did.

He faced as much adversity as any servant of the Lord.

Paul didn't look at things from the typical perspective.

He may have had nothing as far as this world was concerned, he may have been mistreated and rejected by his own brethren, but Paul realized that even in loss he possessed all things in Christ.

We likely won't receive much reward from this world or even in this life, but the Lord has prepared a blessing beyond our comprehension in the life to come.

Even in this life we may face adversity, but we are rich in the goodness and grace of our Lord.

Close:

Let's go back to our text verse.

2 Corinthians 6:3

³ Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed:

May our lives be lived in such a way that we give no offence in anything that the ministry be not blamed.

