

Commentary on 2nd Corinthians chapters 5 and 6, by Chuck Smith 11.12.23

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**Reminder Wednesday Nov 22, no afternoon Bible study.
Thanksgiving Eve service at 6:30**

November memory verse [Isaiah 7:14 \(NKJV\)](#) Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

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CHAPTER 5

Paul talked about how he was constantly facing death for the cause of Jesus Christ. But though he was constantly facing death, various perils, it didn't really trouble him, for he had a correct understanding of death. And I think that this is something that we as Christians need to have: a correct understanding of what death is for the child of God.

And it is because we often do not have a correct understanding, we hear such statements made when a person dies, "Oh, what a shame. He was so young. Oh, how tragic. He had his whole life before him." As though death is some tragedy for the child of God.

Paul faced death, but he didn't worry about it because he knew,

For we know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle [this tent] were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens ([2Cr 5:1](#)).

So Paul realized that the real me is spiritual. I dwell in a body; the body isn't me. It's the house in which I live. And here, Paul reduces it from the house to the tent. Now, whenever you think about a tent, you don't think about a permanent place to live. There's always something very transient and temporary about a tent. And we should look at our bodies as tents; they are not permanent dwelling places for my spirit. My spirit is dwelling presently in this tent while my house is being prepared.

"We know that when this earthly tent is dissolved," when my body goes back to the dust, "that I have a building of God, it's not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

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And so your contrast, the tent which is always thought of in temporal terms, and the "building of God, not made with hands, which is eternal in the heavens."

But I do have a new building that I'm going to move into. It's a building of God. It's going to come to me directly from God. It's not made with hands; it's eternal, compared with the temporary, in the heavens. So for the child of God, death is moving out of the tent and, at this point I'd say the worn out tent, into the beautiful new house, building of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

You remember Jesus said to His disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in Me. For in My Father's house there are many mansions. And I'm going to prepare one for you" ([John 14:1,2](#)). Now our minds immediately go to Beverly Hills, perhaps. And some of these beautiful estates, large column porches and all, and we think, "Oh my. The Lord's going to take me by the hand and lead me up Glory Road, and we'll turn left on Hallelujah Lane and halfway down the lane on the right-hand side, He's going to show me this beautiful white home with these large columns in front and He's going to say, 'Chuck, that's your new mansion.'" Not so. Hate to disappoint you.

The new body that I'm going to get from God is not going to need sleep. So why would I need bedrooms? There are a lot of characteristics of this new body that I'm going to have that it won't require a house to live in. The mansion that the Lord is talking about is the new body He's got for me. I'm living in this tent, but one day I'm going to move into a mansion.

And that's why Paul said, "Hey, you think I'm worried about being bound for Christ? I'm ready to die for Christ." Because he understood what death was to the child of God. It is the moving from the tent into the house. Now he goes on to amplify that.

For in this we groan ([2Cr 5:2](#)), Or while we are still in these bodies, we groan. earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven ([2Cr 5:2](#)):

These bodies subject to weakness, subject to fatigue, subject to pain. In Romans, the eighth chapter, Paul talked about how we groan. And all of creation was groaning together with us as we were "waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, to wit, the redemption of our bodies" ([Romans 8:23](#)). That new body... I'm yearning, I'm desiring to have that new body, that building of God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked ([2Cr 5:3](#)). Now, this completely eliminates any concept or thought of soul sleep. For Paul goes on to declare,

For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed ([2Cr 5:4](#)),

I do not desire to be an unembodied spirit. Now, of course, the goal of the Buddhist is to someday progress into Nirvana. "For all of the problems come to us because of these bodies. And hopefully we will progress from one body into another, into a higher state,

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until finally we are freed from the body and we enter into that unity bliss of the eternal spirit, and we become an essence."

But that isn't the hope of the Christian. We are going to move out of this old tent into the "building of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." And my desire is not to be unclothed, not to be an unembodied spirit.

but [to be] clothed upon [with that new body], that mortality might be swallowed up of life ([2Cr 5:4](#)).

Now, we have a lot of difficulty in understanding the state of the believer between now and the rapture of the church. Have their spirits gone to be with God, their bodies in the grave awaiting a renewing of that body? It is interesting that Paul the apostle, when he was talking about the resurrection in his first epistle, likened to it... likened the resurrection to a seed planted into the ground and dying. But then Paul made an interesting statement. He said that the body that comes forth from the ground is not the body that you planted, because all you planted was a bare grain. And God gave to it a body that pleased Him, so is the resurrection of the dead.

Now, there are a lot of people that are hoping for some kind of a resurrection of this body in which it's presently living. I'm personally looking for a far superior model. Not a renewing or rejuvenating or whatever of this body. I'm ready to move out of the tent. I'm ready to move into the new house. The "building of God, not made with hands."

Couple of things. First Thessalonians, chapter four is one that people often question, because Paul there seems to be talking about the order of the resurrection. And there Paul declares, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with the voice of the archangel, the trump of God: the dead in Christ shall rise first: And we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with Him in the air, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" ([1 Thessalonians 4:16,17](#)). And so it brings confusion to them, thinking that somehow our spirits may be with God, but there will be a re-uniting of our bodies and our spirits at the time of the resurrection. Somehow this body is going to be rejuvenated.

Now the Thessalonian believers were troubled, because Paul had taught them the fact that Jesus was coming to establish His kingdom. But after Paul left, some of the believers there had died. And the rest of them were disappointed. They said, "Oh, what a shame. They died before Jesus came. They won't have a chance to enjoy the kingdom now. How tragic. They can't enjoy the kingdom of God because they died before Jesus came." So Paul was writing this section in chapter four as comfort to those who were concerned over their loved ones who had died before the Lord had come back for the church and established His kingdom.

"Now concerning those that have gone asleep in Christ, I'm going to write unto you that you sorrow not, as those who have no hope. For we know that if Jesus both died and rose again, so then those that are asleep in Christ shall He bring with Him at His

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coming." Now the Bible teaches that the Lord is coming for us in the clouds of the air. When He comes for us, those who were asleep in Christ will be coming with Him for "we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord will not precede them which sleep" ([1 Thessalonians 4:13-15](#)). The word *prevent* there is a poor translation, really, as far as our present-day understanding of the word. The Greek word is *precede*. We are not going to precede those. They have preceded us. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." That's correct, they have risen first. We're not going to precede them. "Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up when the Lord comes with them in the clouds of heaven to receive us, then we will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

As Chuck Missler so ably points out on many occasions, God dwells outside of time. We dwell within the framework of time presently. But one of these days, I, too, will move outside of the time domain. I will no longer be bounded by time. For I will move, at death, into the eternal, which is outside of this time dimension. In the eternal, there is no past, present and future. In the eternal, there is only present. As God sought to describe it through His name, "I AM THAT I AM" ([Exodus 3:14](#)). Now, our minds are so bound by the time dimensions that we cannot even think apart from time, apart from a beginning and an ending. My mind cannot even grasp or conceive the concept of timelessness. But I will as I enter into the eternal.

Now, being in the eternal where everything is now in the present, I am, all of time, then, is bound then in it. And you'd be able to look at the beginning and the ending of time at just one glance, one view, which God can do because He's outside of time. And God proves that He can, because He tells you of these things that are going to be happening down here, though maybe we are only at this point. Yet God goes ahead and speaks of things that are going to be taking place out at this point, because He can see them as already existing. And God, oftentimes, speaks of things as existing, though they haven't yet existed in the framework of time, because God knows they're going to exist. And so He speaks of them, being God, as though they already existed.

Now when I die, I leave the time dimensions. I enter into the eternal where everything is now. So, anything that will ever be, is already. So you can't say, "Well, in the future when the whole body is made up, then the Lord's going to bring me into the heavenly scene." Because I'm into the heavenly scene, I've passed into the eternal. I've passed out of time. And so I've left this time zone thing, I've entered into the eternal the moment my spirit leaves this body. It is my body that holds me within the time framework in the time dimension. And so, those who are asleep in Christ have left the time dimension; they've entered into the eternal where the completion is already now. We'll catch up with them when we leave the time zone, for we, too, will enter into the eternal.

Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God ([2Cr 5:5](#)), God is the One who has created me for this. He has purposed this for us.

who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit ([2Cr 5:5](#)).

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The down payment, so to speak. Or as they refer to earnest money. "Show me you really mean it. You want to buy my car? Look, I've got an ad in the paper, fellow, you say you're going to come back in fifteen minutes, how do I know? What if someone calls me in five minutes, wants to buy the car, has the cash, you see. You really want to buy it? Give me some earnest money. Show your intentions."

God showed His intention of your full redemption by giving to you now the Holy Spirit. Of course, Paul refers to this also in the second chapter of Ephesians being "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession" ([Ephesians 1:13,14](#)).

Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) [But] we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord ([2Cr 5:6-8](#)).

That's what I really desire. Now I know that, as long as I am living in this body, I'm at home in this body or this body is my home, I'm absent from dwelling there in the kingdom of God. But I would rather, I'm willing rather to move out of this old body that I might be present with the Lord in His kingdom. So death releases me. It releases my spirit from this body that it might move into the new house, the building of God, where there I will dwell with the Lord forever.

Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him [well pleasing unto him] ([2Cr 5:9](#)).

So, my desire is that my life might be pleasing to God, while I'm living in this body. And when I ultimately move out of the body, my chief desire is that my life be pleasing to God again, that Jesus might be able to say to me, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou has been faithful in the little things, now I will make thee ruler over many: enter into the glory of the Lord" ([Matthew 25:21](#)). The desire, the real driving purpose behind my life is to be pleasing to God.

Paul, in writing to the Philippians, said, "That Christ might be glorified in my body, whether by life or by death, I really don't care. I just want to be pleasing. I want the Lord to be glorified through me."

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 [which] he hath done, whether it be good or bad ([2Cr 5:10](#)).

Now, this is not to be confused with the great white throne judgment of God in Revelation, chapter twenty, where the sinners will all appear before the judgment bar of God. That's something entirely different than the believer's coming before the bema seat of Christ. This bema seat of Christ is much like the Olympics judges' seat, where the participants in the various contests would come before the bema seat, and the

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judges would lay on their heads the wreaths, laurel or olive, to indicate their success in their particular event. Instead of the gold, silver, and bronze medals, they received something far more corruptible in those days of the Olympics. They received these wreaths made out of laurel or out of olive branches and all, and they were placed on their head.

And that's what Paul was talking about: how that they train, they exercise, they discipline their bodies for a corruptible crown, but we are working for an incorruptible crown. But how they put us to shame in the discipline that they exercise for that corruptible crown, and how carelessly so often we run the race for the incorruptible crown.

The Bible teaches that our works are going to be judged by fire. And those works which are wood, hay, and stubble will be consumed. Those works of ours which can survive this fire we will then be rewarded for. A lot of things that are done in the name of Christ will receive no reward at all in heaven. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, beginning the sixth chapter said, "Take heed to yourself that you do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of men: for I say unto you, you have your reward" ([Matthew 6:1,2](#)). Our works are to be judged what sort they are, or what the motive was behind them. And Jesus illustrated this principle in how we pray, how we give, how we mortify the flesh.

There are two ways of praying. One is to pray to be heard of men and to be known by men as a man of prayer. To receive the approval, favor, awe of men because I am a godly man of prayer. Or there are prayers that are unto God: prayers in the closet, the secret prayers, and I'm not really concerned about man hearing me pray, but about God.

But the problem is, as I am doing that, I'm really fouling up my future as far as the rewards from God are concerned. My works are going to be judged. I will stand before the judgment seat of Christ. There will be a fiery judgment, and those works coming from the wrong motivations will be burned. Those that endure the fire I'll be rewarded for, as the Lord gives to me that crown of righteousness, and my position in the heavenly kingdom will be determined much by my faithfulness to the responsibilities that God has given to me now.

Now, do not confuse this with salvation. Salvation is God's gift to you through your faith in Jesus Christ. "By grace are you saved through faith; that not of yourself: it is a gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" ([Ephesians 2:8,9](#)). So don't confuse this with your salvation, which many people do. There is nothing I can do of works to enhance my salvation. That's complete. My righteousness is complete in Jesus Christ. And yet, my works are to be judged before the bema seat or the judgment seat of Christ, that I might receive the reward, or in some cases, the loss of reward because of the improper motivations behind the works.

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So, those works which remain after the fiery judgment, they're put in the crucible of fire and they're determined what sort they are. Those gold and silver, refined, God will say, "Well done, blessed, you know, here's your reward."

"We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive for the things that were done in his body, according to what he has done, whether it be good or bad," as far as my works for the Lord.

Knowing therefore the terror [fear] of the Lord ([2Cr 5:11](#)),

And that word *terror* is an old English word which has lost its... it has come to a totally new meaning. The word is the *fear* of the Lord. And I don't think that we really properly understand the fear of the Lord. You see, for many years, I feared that the Lord might hurt me because I had a wrong concept of God. Now I fear that I might hurt the Lord. And I think that that's what the fear of the Lord really is. The fear that I might hurt Him by my failure to do what He wants me to do. My failure of living up to His expectations or desires. "Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord,"

we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences. For we commend not ourselves again unto you ([2Cr 5:11-12](#)),

Now, again, the false teachers that have followed Paul in Corinth, those Judaizers and others who were sort of speaking in a degrading way of the grace that Paul had taught. They also were putting down Paul himself as an authority. They had challenged his apostleship. "He's just some renegade." And they were saying mean things about Paul. But Paul said, "I don't have to have letters of recommendation to you as others need letters of recommendation. You are my letters of recommendation. Your faith in Christ bears witness to the authenticity of my ministry. Your faith in Jesus really validates my apostleship. So, we are not commending ourselves again unto you."

but [we] give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart ([2Cr 5:12](#)).

So for those who were loyal friends of Paul, Paul said, "Look, I'm writing these things, not that I'm commending myself to you, but when these guys come along and give their, you know, wild stories and reports about me, at least you'll have something to answer them with." Those men who "glory in appearance." And there are, unfortunately, a lot of those people today who still "glory in appearance, and not in heart."

They'd accused Paul of being crazy. They said, "That guy is crazy." It's interesting that Paul on other occasions is also thought to be crazy. You remember when Paul was making his defense before Agrippa. Festus finally cried out, "Paul you're crazy. Your much learning has made you mad." And so, that was something that followed Paul around, because he was a radical and his detractors were saying, "Oh, the guy's crazy." And so Paul said, "If I am crazy... " And that word *beside ourselves*, it means a person

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who is to the point of talking to himself. So I say, "Yes, I want to go there. Are you sure you want to go there? Yes, I want to go there. Well, why you want to go there? Well, I just want to go there, you know." And a guy gets to talking to himself. He's beside himself, there's two persons, you know. And so here I am, and here I am, and we're having a conversation back and forth. And he's beside himself. So Paul said,

For whether we be beside ourselves [if I'm beside myself], it is to God: or whether we be sober [I have a sound mind], it is for your cause ([2Cr 5:13](#)).

So, Paul answering the detractors. But then he goes on to declare,

For the love of Christ constraineth us ([2Cr 5:14](#));

Paul introduces here the subject of the love of Christ as a constraining force within his life. He's not really talking here about motivations to ministry, though we so often hear this taught as motivation to ministry. Whenever Paul talked of the love of Christ, he was thinking of one thing: the cross of Jesus Christ. The only way God has ever sought to show or to prove that He loved you was by sending His Son to die for your sins. And whenever God wants to declare His love for you, He always declares it through the cross.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" ([1 John 4:10](#)). For God commended, or demonstrated His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly" ([Romans 5:8](#)). "For God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son" ([John 3:16](#)). And always God's love for you is tied up in the death of Jesus Christ for you. And they never thought of the love of God apart from the cross, because that is God's demonstration, His supreme demonstration of His love. "Greater love has no man than this, that a man will lay down his life for his friends" ([John 15:13](#)).

And so, as Paul says, "For the love of Christ constrains me," his mind is now taken to the death of Christ for mankind.

because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead ([2Cr 5:14](#)):

The love of Christ forces me to this conclusion. The fact that He died for all indicates that all men then were dead. Paul said in [Ephesians 2](#), "And you hath He made alive, who were dead as the result of your trespasses and sins" ([Ephesians 2:1](#)). "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" ([Romans 3:23](#)). "The soul that sinneth, it shall surely die" ([Ezekiel 18:4](#)). If those scriptures both be correct, then the assumption must be made that all natural men are dead; that is, spiritually dead, which is the separation of a man's consciousness from God.

Jesus said, "If you live and believe in me, you will never die" ([John 11:26](#)). That's why I say, "Don't believe it if the papers write I've died." I cannot die. I will move, yes, thank God for that. But I won't die. For I will never be separated from God, because of Jesus'

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death for me. Never for a moment will I be separated from Him. And that's what real death is. Physical death, the separation of your consciousness from your body, you're not to worry or be fearful about that. But what you really need to fear is the separation of your spirit from God for eternity, that's what you ought to be concerned about. Now, it's interesting that the opposite is true in most cases.

Most people are so concerned about their physical death, but think nothing of spiritual death. But Jesus said, "Don't be afraid of those who can kill your body, and after that have no power. But rather fear Him who after the body is dead is able to cast both soul and spirit into Gehenna; I say unto you, fear ye Him" ([Luke 12:4,5](#)). "So, we thus judge, we come to the logical conclusion if Jesus died for all men, then it must be that all men were dead."

And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves ([2Cr 5:15](#)),

Now, that is the mark of the flesh life. Even as there is physical death and spiritual death, there is physical life and spiritual life. And we have passed from death into life through the work of the Holy Spirit and as the result of the work of Jesus Christ. And "you hath He made alive who were dead in your trespasses and sins."

Now having come into this new life, I now have a new center, and that is God. The old life of the flesh was centered around me. It was a self-centered life. But Christ died for me that I would no longer be living for myself. No longer living the self-centered life, only seeking to gratify the needs of my own body. And now living a God-centered life, the life of the Spirit in fellowship with God, I am living to satisfy and to please God. Before, I lived to satisfy and please myself. The life of the flesh.

The life of the flesh creates the mind of the flesh. If my body is ruling, if I am body, soul and spirit and the body is ruling, then my mind is under the control of my body and what I am thinking about is the body needs. That's what occupies my thinking. What shall I eat? What shall I drink? What shall I wear?

Now, that's why Christ died for you. That you might be freed from the bondage of corruption, the bondage of your flesh. That you might be able now to live a whole new life in a new dimension, in the dimension of the Spirit. "For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit is life and joy and peace" ([Romans 8:6](#)).

Now for this cause, Jesus died, that we "should henceforth not live to ourselves,"

but unto him which died for them, and rose again. ([2Cr 5:15](#)).

And so, as Paul the apostle said, "For me to live is Christ" ([Philippians 1:21](#)). He said, "I've been crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; and yet it is not I, but Christ who is living in me. And the life that I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved

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me, and who gave Himself for me" ([Galatians 2:20](#)). That we should no longer "live unto ourselves, but now live for him who died for us, and rose again."

Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh ([2Cr 5:16](#)):

"From now on," Paul said, "I'm not concerned in the fleshly man. The exploits, whatever, I'm not concerned in knowing a man after the flesh." Though this is how, he said, "I once knew Christ." At one time, Jesus Christ was to Paul the apostle a heretic, a leader of a new sect that was a threat to Judaism. And he went about to stamp out this new sect. He once knew Christ after the flesh. But no more, he said. "That's not the way I know Him now." He now knows Him after the Spirit, and he has received that life and power from Him.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [or creation]: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new ([2Cr 5:17](#)).

So many people in church are deceived into thinking that their attendance at church is going to buy them a place in the kingdom of God. Their giving to the church is going to secure their place in heaven. Their faithfulness to the church. Church attendance, church membership, church contributions cannot do anything towards your eternal life. And these things can be a deception.

And so prayer, if you're regarding sin in your heart, sin breaks your connection with God, and prayer is meaningless. Oh, it's worse than that. It's deceptive, because you have a tendency to still rest on the fact, "Well, I pray, you know. I know I'm not doing what I should; I know I'm not living right, but I still pray." But prayer becomes, in that case, a deceptive thing. It's the changed life. It's the new life manifested by the fact that the old things are passed away. You cannot continue to live after the flesh and walk after the flesh. The life of the flesh and the life of the Spirit are mutually exclusive. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. And if you sow to the flesh, of the flesh you're going to reap; and if you sow to the Spirit, of the Spirit you will reap. But the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these" ([Galatians 6:7,8](#)). And Paul gives us that horrible list, the works of the flesh, of which, unfortunately, we are all too familiar. "Strife, envying, deceit, murders, lies, fornication, adultery." But Paul said, "Let no man think that if he is doing these things, he is going to inherit the kingdom of heaven" ([Galatians 5:19-21](#)).

How much time do you spend living after the Spirit, and how much time do you spend living after the flesh? He's a new creature, the old things are passed away and behold, all things are become new.

And all things are [now] of God ([2Cr 5:18](#)),

Not some of the things in my life. Well, God has His place. I believe that God should have the place in every man's life and every man should have a place for God. No, He

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wants more than a place in your life. He wants the totality of your life. "All things are of God,"

who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors of Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God ([2Cr 5:18-20](#)).

So this glorious work of reconciliation. God, in His love, created man; created man in His image, in His government of light and life. That man might live in fellowship with God and know the glory, the joy, the beauty of living in fellowship with God. But man turned from that. Turned his back on God. Walked away from God. And he began to experience the miseries of life without God. The emptiness, the hopelessness, the despair of life without God. And God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son to die for man's sins in order that through the death of Christ, man might be brought back to God or reconciled to God. And so Paul said, "I'm God's ambassador, and I'm here representing Jesus Christ, and I'm saying for Him, 'Be ye reconciled to God.'" Come back into fellowship with God. Come back into the government of light and life. Know again the joy, the glory, the blessing of walking in the Spirit. The life of the Spirit. The life after the Spirit.

For he [God] hath made him [Jesus Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in [through] him ([2Cr 5:21](#)).

Here is one of the most glorious scriptures in the New Testament, as we see what God has done for us in Christ in reconciling us to Himself. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we turned every one of us to our own ways; and God laid on Him the iniquities of us all" ([Isaiah 53:6](#)). "God made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin."

Jesus knew no sin. Absolutely pure. Absolutely holy. Absolutely righteous. But God laid on Him every horrible, vile deed that has ever been done by perverted, fallen man. Now, can you imagine what a shock that must have been? No wonder He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" ([Matthew 27:46](#)) As He tasted of death for every man, that separation from God, that spiritual death. That cry that came from His lips upon the cross was made in order that you might not have to make it for eternity. There, as God laid upon Him our sins, He was reconciling man to God. And so He became what we were, in order that He might make us what He is.

Love divine, all loves excelling. The love of Jesus Christ, who was willing to take all of my ugliness, all of my sin and bear in His body, there on the cross, my sins. The love of God who was willing to allow His Son to become sin for us. He who knew no sin and die in our place. Now you see why the greatest sin that any man can ever commit is the sin of rejecting this love of God offered to him through Jesus Christ. You see, that's the only sin for which a man will ever be judged.

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You won't have to face the great white throne judgment of God because you were a cheat, a thief, a liar, a prostitute, a murderer, an adulterer, fornicator. You'll face the great white throne judgment of God if you have rejected the love of God offered to you through Jesus Christ. That's the greatest sin.

Jesus said, "I didn't come into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Me might be saved. And he that believeth is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, seeing he has not believed on the only begotten Son of God. This is the condemnation, that light came into the world, but men would not come to the light" ([John 3:17-19](#)). That's what it's going to be. God has offered salvation, but you didn't take it. God has offered love, but you rejected it. No hope. For there remains no further or no other sacrifice. There's nothing else you can do for the atoning of your sin, for being reconciled to God. No other way you can be reconciled to God.

That's why Satan hates the cross. That's why cults hate the cross. That's why the liberals hate the cross. The cross declares to mankind there is only one way by which you can be reconciled to God. And that's through the cross and the death of Jesus Christ.

I'll tell you what, if I were God and did that much to redeem man, offering my son and giving my son and man would reject and cast him aside, and ignore that spirit of grace, I would do as God does, and God will do. I would say, "You want to live in darkness? That shall be your sentence." And I would cast you into outer darkness throughout eternity, which God is going to do to the fearful and the unbelieving. Those who fail to receive His grace and offers of love through Jesus.

So in Christ's stead, as ambassadors of Christ, we encourage you: Be reconciled to God.

CHAPTER 6

We then, as workers together with him ([2Cr 6:1](#)),

And what a glorious way to view the ministry. I'm working with Jesus, working together with Him.

[We] beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: [but Paul adds] behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.) Giving no offense in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed ([2Cr 6:1-3](#)):

And so, Paul again goes back to the subject of his ministry, his ministry for Jesus Christ. He views it as being a worker together with Him. And as such, beseeching them that they would "not receive this grace of God in vain," but would accept the salvation today. Don't turn aside God's offers to you. The grace of God, receive it. Today is the day of

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salvation. And so Paul said, "I seek not to bring any offense to man in anything, because I don't want the ministry to be blamed."

But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God ([2Cr 6:4](#)),

Seeking to prove that my ministry really is of God, first of all, in the physical sense.

in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings ([2Cr 6:4-5](#));

The preposition *in* talking about the physical suffering and hardships that Paul endured as a minister of Jesus Christ. Things by which he proved his ministry. And then changing to the word *by*, he speaks of the mental things that he endured:

By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned ([2Cr 6:6](#)),

And then going into the spiritual things:

By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left ([2Cr 6:7](#)),

So the ministry, the proof of the ministry. The characteristics of the minister. God give us such ministers today who will so serve the Lord and man.

By honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things ([2Cr 6:8-10](#)).

So, these interesting contrasts that take place within the ministry. "Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, yet I possess everything." Because I possess Christ.

O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is [expanded or] enlarged ([2Cr 6:11](#)).

"I'm expressing myself to you. My heart is just enlarged for your sakes."

Ye are not straitened in us ([2Cr 6:12](#)),

This word *straitened* literally means a narrow place. It came to me being pressed into a narrow place. Being pressed so hard into a narrow place that it straightens out all the kinks. And so, the idea of straiten is that the crookedness or whatever, you know, if you press hard enough on you, it just flattens you out. You become straightened. And so, being put in pressure in a narrow place, being squeezed in causes this straightening.

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And the word *anguish* then developed out of this Greek word. The anguish of being pressed into a narrow place.

Now Paul said to the Corinthians, "You haven't been put in a narrow place because of me."

but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Now for a recompense in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged ([2Cr 6:12-13](#)).

"You've been put in this pressure. You've been put in anguish, in this narrow place. But my heart is enlarged towards you. Now I pray that you'll be enlarged. Your heart will be enlarged. You'll be freed from this pressure, from this narrow place."

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship [communion, oneness] hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? ([2Cr 6:14](#))

There are many people who believe that theirs is a special case not really covered by the scripture, and thus, they can do what they please because it really doesn't apply to their situation. God doesn't, God wasn't really thinking of their situation when He gave the rule. And thus, there are many people who enter into unequal yokes with unbelievers, believing and hoping that things are going to equal out, that God will take care of it.

There is an old Greek saying: "The dice of the gods are loaded." That is, you cannot go against God and win. You cannot go against the word of God and win. Over the years of pastoring, I've had so many young people come in. Oh, they are so in love. Oh, he's the man of their dreams. There's only one thing wrong: he isn't a Christian. "But I know that as I live the life of Christ before him and I walk in love and in meekness and all, I know he'll come to Jesus." And I said, "Yes, but the scripture says, 'Be not unequally yoked with an unbeliever.'" "Oh, but you know, we love each other. And I know he's going to change." And they are determined to marry in spite of the counsel of the word of God otherwise. And in scores of case after case after case after case after case, a year, two years down the road, I sit with the same young lady who is completely torn up. "Oh, I wish I had listened to you. I'm living in a hell. I don't think I ever really loved him. Oh, this is horrible. Do I have to stay in this state?" And their lives messed up because they thought that they could go against God's command and win and come out ahead. "Be not unequally yoked together with an unbeliever."

Now, this does not and is not limited to just marriage. This goes to many different types of yokes where you are brought together with an unbeliever, and you are always in an unequal situation. Watch it. You're always in an unequal situation if you're yoked with an unbeliever. You see, they don't follow the same rules that you follow. They don't live by the same ethic that you live by. And to lie won't bother them. To cheat won't bother them; but it will you.

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And I've had so many businessmen who have come to me bemoaning the fact that their partner wants to do that which is illegal. "They don't want to report all of the profits. They want to keep a double set of books. What shall I do?" They've entered into an unequal yoke. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion hath light with darkness?"

And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? ([2Cr 6:15](#))

You're trying to bring together unequal things. The results are always disastrous.

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God ([2Cr 6:16](#));

This old tent is nonetheless "the temple of the living God." "What?" Paul said, "Know ye not that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you? You are not your own; you've been bought with a price" ([I Corinthians 6:19](#)). What relationship can there possibly be with the temple of God and with idols?

as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty ([2Cr 6:16-18](#)).

So, God's call for His people to separation. You are to be different from the world. You cannot have real communion with the world. You have no common ground of meeting. You're trying to bring two diverse situations together. You're trying to join together the life of the flesh with the life of the Spirit. They cannot co-mingle. It's an unequal yoke. So, God's call for you is to come apart. "Be separate, saith the Lord. Don't touch the unclean thing. And God said, I will be a Father, and ye will be my sons and daughters."

As a child of God, you do live different than a person who is not a child of God. You're expected to live differently. Living by different standards, living for different purposes. "If you only love those that love you, what do ye more than others? Even the publicans do the same. But love those that hate you, do good unto those that despitefully use you, pray for those that persecute you; And so shall ye be the children of the Father" ([Matthew 5:44-46](#)).

You see, Jesus is declaring, "You're to be different. You're a new creation." "The old things have passed away; everything is become new" ([II Corinthians 5:17](#)). And God now lays claim to you as His son, as His daughter.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. For he that hath the love of the world in his heart hath not the love of the Father" ([I John 2:15](#)). The cry of the Spirit, "Be ye reconciled to God." The ministry of reconciliation. You can only be reconciled to

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God as you come into the life of the Spirit, denying the flesh, denying yourself, the self-centered life. And taking up your cross to follow Him. And that's the challenge of the Spirit of God to our hearts tonight. May we respond in Jesus' name.

Father, we thank You for Your word. And may Thy Spirit take Thy word tonight as a sharp, two-edged sword and may He cut deep into our hearts to expose those things that are there, in order that He might heal. Heal our relationship with You that we might be reconciled unto God through Jesus our Lord. Bless Thy word now, may it take root and may it grow forth and bring forth fruit unto Thy glory. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

And now, "be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For he who hears the word of God, and does not do it, is like unto a man who is looking into a mirror: And sees the truth about himself, but as soon as he walks away, he forgets what he saw" ([James 1:22-24](#)). How easy that is, isn't it? We have an image of ourselves. We look in a mirror many times and we're shocked at the truth. But as soon as we walk away, we embrace our image again. We forget what we saw.

I don't want to acknowledge what I saw. I like my image of myself better than I like the reality of myself. In my image of myself, I'm still in shape. Far from reality. So is the man who hears the word of God, acknowledges the ideal, but then doesn't live by it. He's deceived. He's living in a delusion, a dangerous delusion. So with the psalmist may we pray, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there is a way of wickedness in me, and God, lead me in the way everlasting" ([Psalm 139:23-24](#)). In Jesus' name.