

- ◆ Vs. 2 What two truths about our relationship with God does Paul remind them about?
- ◆ Vs. 3 How should the believer approach their ministry and their witness before the world?
- ◆ Why is this so important to the witness of the believer and to the message of Christ Jesus?
- ◆ Vs. 4 What attitude should the believer take in all parts of their lives?
- ◆ Vs. 5-10 How does Paul contrast the life of a believer as they minister for the Lord?
- ◆ How should this help us in our daily lives when things are not going the way we want them to?

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INTRODUCTION TO THE 2ND LETTER TO THE CHURCH AT CORINTH

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- ◆ Author: Paul
- ◆ Date: sometime during the period of 55-57 A.D.
- ◆ Place of Writing: Macedonia see 2 Cor. 7.5; 8.1; 9.2-4
- ◆ This is now the fourth letter Paul will write to the church at Corinth. (the first and third letters have never been found) He has visited the church twice before and the current letter is his way of preparing for his third visit. Paul is the founding pastor of the church at Corinth.

WHY THE LETTER

- ◆ 2 Cor. 1.23-2.4 What were the reasons Paul wrote to the Corinthians instead of visiting them?
- ◆ 2 Cor. 13.10 What does Paul hope to accomplish with writing this letter to them at Corinth before he visits them again?

- ◆ 2 Cor. 9.1-5 Vs. 5 What is Paul expecting the church at Corinth to have ready when he comes?

- ◆ Vss. 3-4 Why is he writing to remind them of this?

- ◆ Vs. 2 How does Paul try to use other churches to get them to keep their commitment?

- ◆ 2 Cor. 12.20-21 What is Paul afraid he may find at the church?

- ◆ How do you think these concerns effected his writing of the letter to them?

- ◆ 2 Cor. 13.1-6 Vs. 1 Why is Paul reminding them at the church in Corinth of the power of the testimony of witnesses?

- ◆ Vs. 2 Even as he sends the letter to them what warning does he give to those who do not change and continue to live sinful lives?

- ◆ How is a person's life change when they accept Jesus as their personal savior?

- ◆ What does this change have to do with our understanding of what it means to minister or serve Jesus?

- ◆ 2 Cor. [6:1] *And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain— [2] for He says,*
"AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU." Behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," behold, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION"—

- [3] giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the **MINISTRY** will not be discredited, [4] but in everything commending ourselves as **SERVANTS** of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, [5] in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, [6] in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, [7] in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left, [8] by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; regarded as deceivers and yet true; [9] as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, [10] as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.."* (emphasis added)

- ◆ Vs. 1 How should the believer view their service or ministry?

- ◆ 2 Cor. 4.1-2 *"Therefore, since we have this **MINISTRY**, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."* (emphasis added)
- ◆ What changes had occurred in the life of Paul that made it possible for him to minister for Jesus?
- ◆ How did Paul approach his responsibility for sharing with those he came in contact with?
- ◆ Why would this approach have made his life a constant conflict between joy and suffering?
- ◆ 2 Cor. 5. 17-21 *"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the **MINISTRY** of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation."* (emphasis added)
- ◆ NOTE: The word reconcile or reconciliation means 'to mutually change.' We are change from a sinner into a son or daughter of God. God changes from the judge of our sins to our Heavenly Father. Thus the prayer of the believer is "Our Father who is in heaven..."
- ◆ Vs. 3 What were the Corinthians wanting to know about the ministry of Paul? (note: the majority of this letter is Paul dealing with this question or problem.)
- ◆ Vs. 5 What does Paul ask them to do?
- ◆ How should a believer decided if they are right with Christ?
- ◆ Vs. 6 What is Paul saying about his own life and ministry here?
- ◆ 2 Cor. 13.7 What is one purpose for Paul to write the letter?
- ◆ What have some in the church accused Paul of doing?
- ◆ NOTE: because of this Paul spends a lot of the letter explaining, defending and justifying his ministry and apostleship.

DEFENDING AND DEFINING THE MINISTRY

- ◆ The word Paul uses for ministry literally means service or to be a servant. This word is *diskonia* and it is highlighted in the following verses in the various ways it can be used.

- ◆ Acts 6.1-4 *"Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily **SERVING** of food. So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. "Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. "But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the **MINISTRY** of the word." (emphasis added)*
- ◆ What was missing among the disciples as the church was getting started in Jerusalem?
- ◆ Why was it important that someone be found who could minister (serve) to meet this need?
- ◆ Does everyone minister or serve in the same way?
- ◆ Why is this important for the church to know and apply to their ministries and service?
- ◆ Luke 10.35-42 *Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. But Martha was distracted with all her **PREPARATIONS**; and she came up to Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do*

all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me." But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." (emphasis added)

- ◆ How could Martha's motives and goals be seen as legitimate service or ministry?
- ◆ What was she doing wrong that removed much of the value of her ministry or service?
- ◆ How can this happen to individuals or organizations?
- ◆ Acts 1.15-17 *"At this time Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren ... and said, "Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. "For he was counted among us and received his share in this **MINISTRY**." (emphasis added)*
- ◆ What was lacking in the ministry or service of Judas?
- ◆ What had he allowed to happen to his ministry?